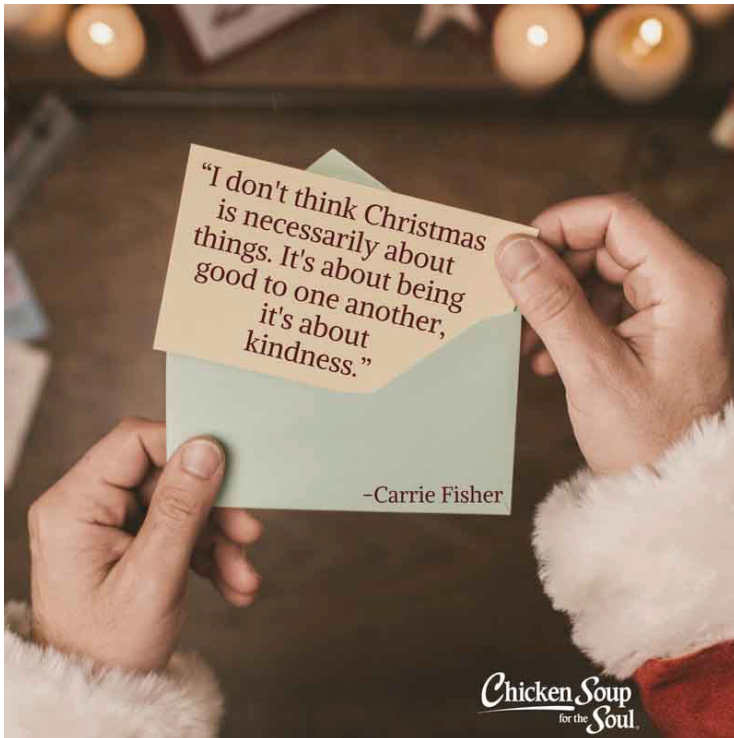


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- 1- Recycling trailers
- 1- Chicken Soup for the Soul
- 1- Johnson Agency Ad
- 2- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 2- Bowling scores
- 3- Farmers Union PSA
- 3- State Minimum wage going up
- 3- Unemployment insurance is reduced
- 3- Pairings for Redfield Classics
- 4- Varsity Stat Sheet - Britton-Hecla
- 5- Junior Varsity Stat Sheet - Britton-Hecla
- 6- C Game Stat Sheet - Britton-Hecla
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- 11- 2018 Community Events
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## Thursday

Girls basketball hosts Ipswich  
C game is cancelled. JV at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game.

## Friday

1 p.m.: Elementary Christmas Concert  
2 p.m.: Early Dismissal

## JOHNSON AGENCY

Real Estate & Insurance

Jay Johnson, Broker

[www.johnsonagencygroton.com](http://www.johnsonagencygroton.com)

102 N Main St. Office: 605/397-2424  
Groton, SD 57445 Home: 605/397-8565



**Open:** Recycling Trailer in Groton  
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave.

**The cardboard/paper**  
recycling trailer at the school is **Open**

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## Groton Prairie Mixed

**Team Scores:** Shih Tzus 4, Cheetahs, 3, Chipmunks 3, Coyotes 1, Foxes 1, Jackelopes 0

**Men's High Games:** Mike Siegler 212, Chris Kassube 200, Roger Spanier 200

**Women's High Games:** Vicki Walter 176, Darci Spanier 166, Lori Wiley 147

**Men's High Series:** Roger Spanier 565, Mike Siegler 557, Brad Waage 550

**Women's High Series:** Vicki Walter 418, Karen Spanier 404, Dar Larson 397

## Groton Coffee Cup

**Team Standings:** Jungle Lanes 4, James Valley 3, Ten Pins 1, Kens 0

**High Games:** Joyce Walter 199, Vicki Walter 181, Mary Jane Jark 174.

**High Series:** Mary Jane Jark 473, Joyce Walter 468, Vicki Walter 440.

## Conde National

**Team Standings:** Cubs 4, Braves 4, Pirates 3, Mets 1, Colts 0, Giants 0.

**Men's High Games:** Butch Farmen 204; Larry Frohling 201, 187; Lance Frohling 181.

**Men's High Series:** Butch Farmen 563, Larry Frohling 503, Lance Frohling 181.

**Women's High Games:** Vickie Kramp 214; Joyce Walter 180, 177; Mary Larson 173.

**Women's High Series:** Vickie Kramp 501, Joyce Walter 493, Sandy Hoops 481.

## NEW SIGN-ON BONUSES!

☆☆☆ **\$1,500 for CNAs** ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ **\$3,000 for LPNs** ☆☆☆

☆☆☆ **\$4,500 for RNs** ☆☆☆

**Alzheimer's Care Unit Director**

**Medication Aid**

Contact Brynn Pickrel or Nellie Hatfield at 605-397-2365  
or apply in person.



**GROTON**  
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

**1106 N. 2nd Street, Groton**



All auto owners!  
**Save \$2-\$4 /tank**  
& grow your local economy  
by choosing low carbon  
**Super Premium E30's**  
94 octane, more power,  
same mileage, fewer  
carbon deposits, lower  
maintenance costs,  
slashed benzene & related  
genotoxic, carcinogenic  
tailpipe emissions;  
\*see sdfu.org's E30 tab for  
info, E30 prices\locations.

**\*Farmers Union's  
PSA: Courtesy Merle  
Anderson (Merle is 94  
year old founder of Ace  
and legendary ethanol  
supporter... "because it is  
the right thing to do")**

## State Minimum wage going up

The state minimum wage will increase from \$8.65/hour to \$8.85/hour effective Jan. 1, 2018.

The hourly minimum wage for tipped employees will be \$4.425/hour effective Jan. 1, 2018, half the minimum wage for non-tipped employees. Wages and tips combined must equal at least the minimum wage.

## Unemployment Insurance is reduced

Unemployment Insurance (UI) tax rates will be reduced effective Jan. 1, 2018. Legislation in 2017 revised the current UI tax rates to provide a permanent tax break to South Dakota employers. The bill also created an alternate tax table if the Trust Fund balance has enough funds to pay 19 months of benefits. Tax rate notices were mailed to employers the end of October.

## Pairings set for Redfield Pheasant Shoot-outs

Redfield will be hosting a pair of Pheasant Shoot-outs in January.

On Saturday, Jan. 6, the girls will be playing with the following schedule: Langford Area vs. Wolsey-Wessington at 10:30 a.m., Lyman vs. Wilmot at noon; Hitchcock-Tulare vs. Tiospa Zina at 1:30 p.m., St. Francis Indian vs. Groton Area at 3 p.m., Little Wound vs. Northwestern at 4:30 p.m., Sanford Central-Woonsocket vs. Redfield-Doland at 6 p.m. and Irene-Wakonda vs. Warner at 7:30 p.m.

On Saturday, Jan. 13, the boys will be playing with the following schedule: Parkston vs. Flandreau Indian at noon, Little Wound vs. Warner at 1:30 p.m., Aberdeen Christian vs. Platte-Geddes at 3 p.m., Timber Lake vs. Redfield-Doland at 4:30 p.m. and Dell Rapids vs. Groton Area at 6 p.m.

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## Boys Varsity Stat Sheet vs. Britton-Hecla

VISITOR: Groton Area

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT							
20 KEITH, BRANDON	F	0	1	0	1	1	2	1	4	5	4	1	4	1	0	0	16:00
42 DEHOET, BRODYN	C	8	14	1	5	4	6	0	7	7	2	21	3	6	0	0	24:00
3 SIPPEL, ANTHONY	G	2	6	0	3	0	2	0	2	2	2	4	2	2	0	0	24:00
4 DOEDEN, JONNY	G	7	10	4	5	2	2	1	1	2	4	20	1	0	0	2	24:00
5 SHABAZZ, SERIC	G	3	6	2	5	5	6	5	6	11	1	13	7	6	0	1	32:00
10 LANE, MARSHALL		3	4	2	2	1	2	0	1	1	1	9	3	2	0	1	16:00
40 JOHNSON, PEYTON		1	3	0	1	0	0	1	1	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	16:00
55 DIEGEL, TREYTON		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								3	4	7				0			
Team Totals		24	44	9	22	13	20	11	26	37	14	70	20	19	0	4	160

Total FG% - 1st: 14/27 0.519 2nd: 10/17 0.588 Game: 0.545 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 4/12 0.333 2nd: 5/10 0.500 Game: 0.409 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 4/5 0.800 2nd: 9/15 0.600 Game: 0.650 (0,0)

HOME: Britton-Hecla ( )

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT							
0 Haskins, Stanley	*	0	5	0	3	0	0	0	4	4	2	0	2	1	0	1	32:00
2 Hawkins, Tayon	*	6	15	1	3	2	4	0	4	4	3	15	2	6	0	3	32:00
3 Meyer, Kyler	*	8	16	5	11	5	6	1	1	2	2	26	0	2	0	3	24:00
11 Deutsch, Carter	*	3	6	0	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	6	2	1	0	3	32:00
21 Flanery, Jory	*	2	6	1	2	1	2	1	1	2	4	6	0	1	0	0	8:00
1 Zuelke, Trevor		1	2	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	8:00
5 James, Joel		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
13 MacConnell, Skyler		3	5	0	1	2	2	1	0	1	3	8	0	0	0	0	16:00
20 Fosness, Cole		0	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	4	0	0	0	0	1	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								3	6	9				0			
Team Totals		23	56	7	22	10	15	9	16	25	19	63	6	11	0	11	160

Total FG% - 1st: 10/27 0.370 2nd: 13/29 0.448 Game: 0.411 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 4/11 0.364 2nd: 3/11 0.273 Game: 0.318 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 8/10 0.800 2nd: 2/5 0.400 Game: 0.667 (3,0)

SCORE BY PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL
Groton	14	22	13	21	70
Britton-Hecla	16	16	16	15	63

Last FG: Groton 4th-08:00, Britton-Hecla 4th-08:00  
 Largest lead: Groton by 10 4th-08:00, Britton-Hecla by 8 2nd-08:00  
 Score tied: 8 times, Lead changed: 15 times

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## Boys Junior Varsity Stat Sheet vs. Britton-Hecla

VISITOR: Groton Area

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT							
12 SHABAZZ, DARIEN	F	2	8	2	5	0	0	0	0	0	1	6	0	3	0	0	24:00
34 JONES, AUSTIN	F	0	2	0	1	3	4	1	2	3	2	3	1	4	0	3	16:00
40 JOHNSON, PEYTON	C	3	4	0	0	0	1	2	0	2	0	6	0	2	0	2	16:00
14 KURTZ, KADEN	G	2	8	0	2	0	0	3	4	7	2	4	0	2	0	0	24:00
22 GUTHMILLER, CADE	G	4	7	4	6	1	2	1	1	2	3	13	2	3	0	1	32:00
5 COGLEY, JACKSON		0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
20 SIMON, LUCAS		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	8:00
30 LARSON, COLE		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	8:00
32 LARSON, CHANDLER		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	24:00
50 TRAPHAGEN, TRISTAN		0	1	0	0	0	0	1	3	4	1	0	0	1	1	0	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								1	4	5				1			
Team Totals		11	31	6	14	4	7	9	14	23	10	32	4	18	1	6	160

Total FG% - 1st: 4/13 0.308 2nd: 7/18 0.389 Game: 0.355 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 3/8 0.375 2nd: 3/6 0.500 Game: 0.429 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 4/6 0.667 2nd: 0/1 0.000 Game: 0.571 (1,0)

HOME: Britton-Hecla

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS			PF	TP	A	TO	BK	S	MIN
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT							
1 Zuehlke, Trevor	*	2	5	0	0	1	2	1	3	4	3	5	0	2	0	4	24:00
5 James, Joel	*	1	6	0	3	0	2	3	1	4	2	2	1	2	0	2	32:00
20 Fosness, Cole	*	9	19	2	7	2	6	1	2	3	2	22	1	4	0	4	32:00
23 James, Andrew	*	1	4	0	1	0	0	4	5	9	2	2	2	0	0	0	32:00
25 Morris, Tyson	*	2	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	24:00
22 Wade, Dawson		1	2	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	0	8:00
32 Bray, Wyatt		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0:00
45 Nelson, Nick		1	3	0	0	0	0	2	0	2	0	2	0	0	0	0	8:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								3	0	3				1			
Team Totals		17	42	2	13	3	10	14	13	27	10	39	4	10	0	10	160

Total FG% - 1st: 7/20 0.350 2nd: 10/22 0.455 Game: 0.405 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/4 0.000 2nd: 2/9 0.222 Game: 0.154 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 1/2 0.500 2nd: 2/8 0.250 Game: 0.300 (4,0)

SCORE BY PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL
Groton Area	4	11	14	3	32
Britton-Hecla	8	7	14	10	39

Last FG: Add New Team 4th-08:00, Add New Team 4th-08:00  
 Largest lead: Add New Team by 3 1st-08:00, Add New Team by 7 3rd-08:00  
 Score tied: 7 times, Lead changed: 3 times

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## Boys C Game Stat Sheet vs. Britton-Hecla

VISITOR: Groton Area

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS							S	MIN	
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT	PF	TP	A	TO			BK
32 LARSON, CHANDLER	F	2	8	1	1	0	0	3	2	5	3	5	1	2	0	0	16:00
50 TRAPHAGEN, TRISTAN	F	4	7	0	1	1	4	1	2	3	2	9	1	2	0	0	16:00
20 SIMON, LUCAS	G	1	5	0	3	2	2	0	1	1	2	4	0	4	0	2	8:00
3 SCHINKEL, ANTHONY	*	3	6	0	0	2	5	1	6	7	3	8	0	2	0	1	16:00
10 THURSTON, RILEY	*	1	5	1	5	0	0	1	0	1	1	3	0	1	0	0	16:00
4 DEHOET, CYRUS		0	3	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	32:00
5 COGLEY, JACKSON		1	5	0	2	0	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	0	0	1	32:00
22 KASSUBE, HUNTER		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	8:00
34 PAULSON, STEVEN		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	16:00
40 FURNEY, CALEB		0	2	0	0	0	0	1	2	3	1	0	0	2	0	0	0:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								1	4	5				0			
Team Totals		12	41	2	14	5	12	9	20	29	13	31	5	16	0	4	160

Total FG% - 1st: 4/22 0.182 2nd: 8/19 0.421 Game: 0.293 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 0/6 0.000 2nd: 2/8 0.250 Game: 0.143 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 1/2 0.500 2nd: 4/10 0.400 Game: 0.417 (3,0)

HOME: Britton-Hecla

NO PLAYER	P	TOT-FG		3-PT		FT	FTA	REBOUNDS							S	MIN	
		FG	FGA	FG	FGA			OFF	DEF	TOT	PF	TP	A	TO			BK
12 Fredrickson, Aidean	*	2	6	1	4	1	4	0	5	5	2	6	1	1	0	2	24:00
22 Marlow, Boston	*	3	5	0	0	5	11	3	4	7	1	11	0	4	0	3	16:00
25 Unknown,	*	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	0	16:00
32 Bray, Wyatt	*	1	3	0	0	0	0	3	1	4	1	2	0	2	0	1	24:00
33 Unknown,	*	2	7	1	2	0	0	3	1	4	0	5	0	0	0	0	0:00
0 Jones, Mason		1	7	0	1	1	4	0	2	2	1	3	0	3	0	0	24:00
2 Nebrida, Chris		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	16:00
3 Schultz, Jaden		2	3	0	1	0	0	0	1	1	2	4	0	0	0	0	8:00
10 Kraft, Karsten		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	3	0	0	0:00
13 Calstrom, Tate		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	16:00
45 Unknown,		1	1	0	0	0	2	1	2	3	0	2	0	1	0	0	16:00
TEAM REBOUNDS								1	5	6				0			
Team Totals		12	34	2	8	7	21	11	24	35	14	33	3	15	0	6	160

Total FG% - 1st: 7/23 0.304 2nd: 5/11 0.455 Game: 0.353 Deadball  
 3-PT FG% - 1st: 1/7 0.143 2nd: 1/1 1.000 Game: 0.250 Rebounds  
 Total FT% - 1st: 2/8 0.250 2nd: 5/13 0.385 Game: 0.333 (5,0)

SCORE BY PERIODS	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	TOTAL
Groton Area	9	0	12	10	31
Britton-Hecla	4	13	12	4	33

Last FG: Add New Team 4th-08:00, Add New Team 3rd-08:00  
 Largest lead: Add New Team by 5 1st-08:00, Add New Team by 15 3rd-08:00  
 Score tied: 2 times, Lead changed: 2 times



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## Today in Weather History

December 21, 1968: A blizzard visited South Dakota and Minnesota on the 21st and 22nd. Snowfall during the snowstorm was generally 1 to 2 inches in the western part of South Dakota, to 5 to 10 inches in Minnesota, with more than 12 inches in an area from Artichoke Lake in Big Stone County to the southeast in Minnesota, and up to 18 inches in east central and southeast South Dakota. The snowfall, on top of an already-existing 10-inch layer of powdery snow, was whipped by 30-50 mph winds, with some winds over 50 mph in Minnesota, that occasionally reduced visibility to near zero, created snow drifts up to 10 feet or more, stopped almost all forms of traffic, blocked many primary highways for most of Sunday the 22nd, and blocked most of the secondary roads as well as some other roads for nearly a week.

Due to good blizzard warnings and the fact that the blizzard occurred late Saturday through Sunday, the highway patrol reported a minimum of accidents and stranded travelers. Most schools were closed and other activities were curtailed. Many utility lines were down. Record December snowfall amounts were recorded for more than 40 locations in Minnesota. Artichoke Lake in Big Stone County received 16 inches of snow from this storm, by far its largest daily snowfall on record for any month of the year. A Clear Lake, in Deuel County, measured 18 inches of snow, which also remains the largest daily snowfall on record for any month in that location. Watertown and Bryant received nine inches from this blizzard, while Castlewood reported seven inches.

1892 - Portland, OR, was buried under a record 27.5 inches of snow. (21st-24th) (The Weather Channel)

December 21, 1929: An exceptional storm produced snow from the Middle Rio Grande Valley of Texas to southern Arkansas. The storm produced 26 inches of snow near Hillsboro, Texas, and 24 inches in 24 hours in Clifton. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the NWS Office in Dallas / Fort Worth.

1964 - A great warm surge from the Pacific Ocean across Oregon and northern California brought torrential rains on a deep snow cover resulting in record floods. (David Ludlum)

1987 - High winds continued along the eastern slopes of the Rockies. During the morning hours winds gusted to 64 mph at Cheyenne WY, and reached 97 mph near Boulder CO. Gale force winds prevailed across the Great Lakes Region. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1988 - Seven cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Charleston SC with a reading of 78 degrees. A storm in the northwestern U.S. produced 22 inches of snow at Idaho City ID in two days, and up to two feet of snow at Happy Camp CA. Ski resorts in Idaho reported three to six feet of snow on the ground. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Forty cities in the north central U.S., including thirteen in Iowa, reported record low temperatures for the date. Havre and Jordan, MT, tied for honors as the cold spot in the nation with morning lows of 43 degrees below zero, and the temperature remained close to 40 degrees below zero through the daylight hours. Dickinson ND reported a morning low of 33 degrees below zero and a wind chill reading of 86 degrees below zero. The high for the date of 16 degrees below zero at Sioux Falls SD was December record for that location. (The National Weather Summary)

1998 - Cold air spread into the southern San Joaquin Valley of California. For the next four nights, temperatures in the agricultural portions of Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties dropped below 28 degrees for several hours at a time. In some locations, temperatures dipped into the teens. The California citrus industry suffered more than \$600 million in damages due to the extreme cold.

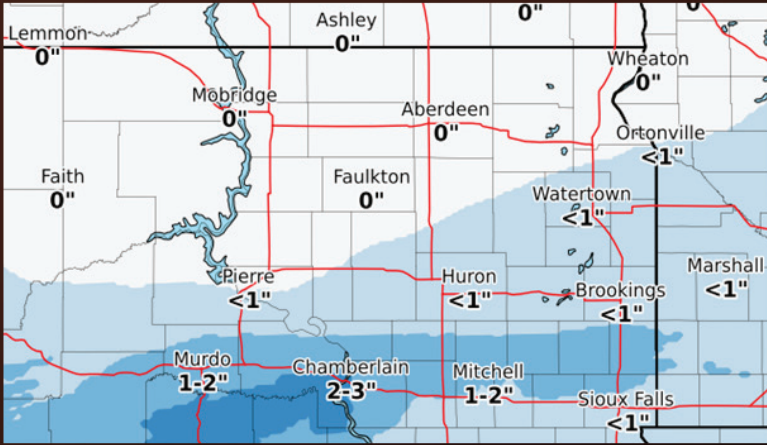
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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
						
Gradual Clearing	Increasing Clouds	Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny
High: 18 °F	Low: 2 °F	High: 27 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: 8 °F	High: 20 °F

## Snow Along I-90

Temperatures in the Teens and 20s  
**Breezy**





Location	Snowfall
Lemmon	0"
Faith	0"
Mobridge	0"
Ashley	0"
Aberdeen	0"
Faulkton	0"
Wheaton	0"
Ortonville	<1"
Watertown	<1"
Pierre	<1"
Huron	<1"
Brookings	<1"
Marshall	<1"
Murdo	1-2"
Chamberlain	2-3"
Mitchell	1-2"
Sioux Falls	<1"

**Cold Tonight!**  
Lows 0-10

Travel Plans?

**Gusty Winds & Light Snow possible Friday**

National Weather Service Aberdeen, SD   Updated: 12/21/2017 5:37 AM Central

Published on: 12/21/2017 at 5:46AM

An area of low pressure will spread accumulating snowfall into southern South Dakota today. Locations along Interstate 90 will have the best potential of seeing 1 to 3 inches of snow. Dry conditions are expected tonight with lows dropping into the single digits above zero. A cold front crossing the region on Friday will bring breezy northwesterly winds, along with a slight chance for light snow.



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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 27.9

Low Outside Temp: 19.6

High Gust: 29

Precip: 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 50° in 1979

Record Low: -31° in 1916

Average High: 24°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Dec: 0.34

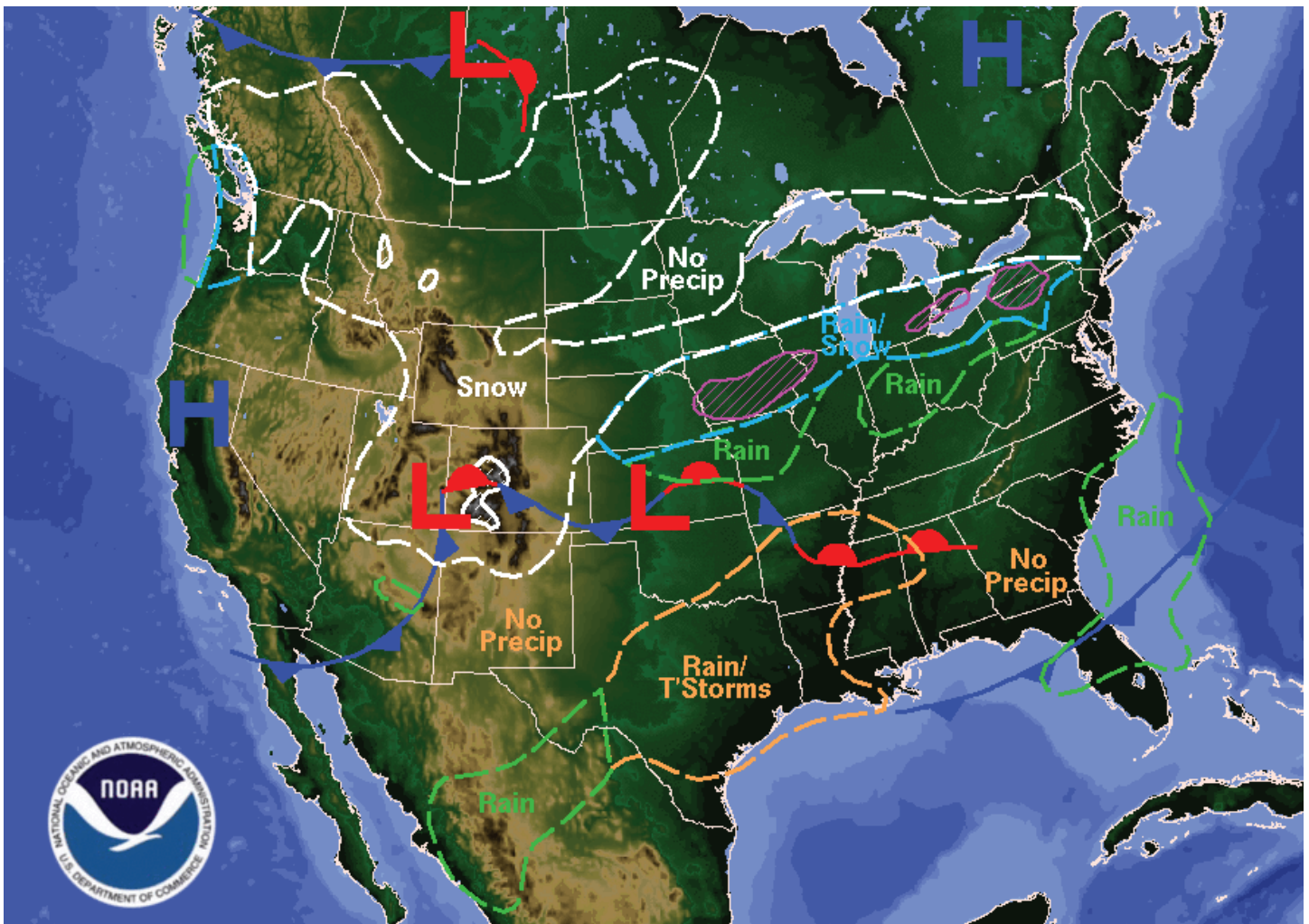
Precip to date in Dec: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.54

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 4:53 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 a.m.



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Dec 21, 2017, issued 4:52 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Mcreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain  
Rain and T'Storms  
Rain and Snow  
Snow  
Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)  
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)  
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)  
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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## CHRIST'S DAY

On Mother's Day we focus all of our attention on our Mothers, recalling and remembering how much they struggled to raise us. Lovingly we shower gifts on them, purchase cards that describe her many sacrifices for us and the unending care she gave to us. She deserves all of the attention and recognition we can give her.

On Father's Day, we turn our thoughts to him – what he has done for us and express our gratitude for the time he spent with us. We recall his efforts to teach us to throw a ball, catch a pass, cast a fishing line or attend a special event. He, too, deserves all the attention and recognition we can give him.

We also give recognition and attention to our Grandparents, to brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and friends and relatives on their special days.

But what will we do that is really special or unique to show our appreciation and gratitude for Christ on His day this year?

Will there be an envelope under the tree with a special love-offering that recognizes His importance in our lives? Will it match the amount we gave others?

Will we sacrifice some of our time to show God's love by being with those who would otherwise be alone and lonely on His day?

Will we share a meal with someone who is hungry? Give some clothes to those who are cold and have little? Spend time reading His story to children?

"In as much as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto Me!"

Prayer: Take Your peace from us Father, until and unless we show others Your love on Your day. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Matthew 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.'

## 2018 Groton SD Community Events

- Groton Lion's Club Bingo- Wednesday Nights 6:30pm at the Groton Legion (Year Round)
- 11/18/2017-3/31/2018 Groton Lion's Club Wheel of Meat- Saturday Nights 7pm at the Groton Legion (Fall/Winter Months)
- 1/28/2018 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 3/24/2018 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/5/2018 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/28/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program at the Cemetery, Lunch to follow at the American Legion (Memorial Day)
- 6/14/2018 Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 6/15/2018 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove
- 6/16/2018 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 7/4/2018 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 7/22/2018 Summer Fest (4th Sunday in July)
- 9/8/2018 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 10/6/2018 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/12/2018 Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2018 Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/10/2018 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
  
- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

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## News from the Associated Press

### SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) \_ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash  
03-10-13-32-33  
(three, ten, thirteen, thirty-two, thirty-three)  
Estimated jackpot: \$46,000

Lotto America  
05-12-23-24-32, Star Ball: 2, ASB: 2  
(five, twelve, twenty-three, twenty-four, thirty-two; Star Ball: two; ASB: two)  
Estimated jackpot: \$16.58 million

Mega Millions  
Estimated jackpot: \$247 million

Powerball  
01-20-61-64-69, Powerball: 20, Power Play: 2  
(one, twenty, sixty-one, sixty-four, sixty-nine; Powerball: twenty; Power Play: two)  
Estimated jackpot: \$269 million

### Wednesday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS' BASKETBALL  
Arlington 65, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 34  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 59, Sioux Falls Washington 56

### 2 elk shot in apparent poaching incident near Pringle

PRINGLE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota wildlife officials are asking for the public's help in solving an apparent elk poaching incident near Pringle.

Officials say two spike elk were shot and left to rot last week.

Conservation Officer Ron Tietsort says residents heard gunshots Dec. 13, and the elk were discovered in a field the next day. The carcasses were found in a field off of Pleasant Valley Road about 12 miles southwest of Pringle.

Tietsort tells the Rapid City Journal a cow season is going on, so it's possible the hunter shot the elk and then saw they were spike elk and left them.

Hunters who shoot the wrong animal are asked to contact South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks right away. Tietsort says officials can work something out and salvage the meat.

## Officials don't expect decline in tourism from Custer fire

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

SIOUX FALL, S.D. (AP) — Elisabeth Weakland has read updates and scrolled through pictures online from a historic wildfire that started last week at South Dakota's Custer State Park, but the Michigan homemaker said her family doesn't plan to cancel their summer trip to the Black Hills.

She had worried that park campgrounds would be damaged, potentially requiring earlier booking, but officials say no main buildings or campsites burned. Weakland said her children are excited to head west for the June trip, and the family plans to book a site for their pop-up camper after the holidays.

"My kids still really want to go out," Weakland said. "It's unfortunate that it happened, but we're still just as excited to get out there."

South Dakota tourism officials don't expect the wildfire to hurt next year's visitor numbers or attendance at the park's famous buffalo roundup. The park reopened on a limited basis Monday, and officials hope it's fully available to visitors by the weekend.

Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen said a silver lining is that the fire burned in December, not during peak travel season. Hagen said the feedback his office has received from people has been sparse and positive, which he counted as encouraging.

"The visitors or potential visitors who've contacted us have really rallied around the state and rallied around the park," Hagen said. "I think when it comes to peak travel season late next spring, we're still going to see those visitors."

Custer State Park is a top South Dakota tourist destination, featuring hills with ponderosa pine and prairie. Visitors often drive to see roaming buffalo, elk and bighorn sheep, and the park hosts the annual buffalo roundup. The park had drawn more than 1.9 million visitors through Nov. 30, and roughly 21,200 people attended the 2017 roundup, according to the Tourism Department.

The fire burned more than 84 square miles (218 square kilometers) in the park and beyond its borders since it started from a downed power line on Dec. 11. More than half the park was burned, making it the largest fire in its nearly 100-year history, Superintendent Matt Snyder said.

But he said the blaze consumed vegetation and grasses without burning hot enough to sterilize the ground. Snyder said moisture over the winter and beyond should allow for a "nice green up like we expect every spring."

Snyder said visitors can expect to see some pockets of burned trees and charred wood, but officials anticipate most of the trees will come back.

December is a quiet time for Custer, Snyder said. The park's four resorts will open like normal come spring, with the peak season running from Memorial Day through the end of September.

"We're not going to miss a beat over this when it comes time for the tourists to come in, and we're going to be ready for them," Snyder said.

Minneapolis firefighter Andre Plante, whose family stays in the same Custer State Park cabin each visit, said he was worried the wildfire would burn it down. But he said the family would have still visited if the cabin hadn't escaped the blaze.

Plante said he enjoys sitting out at night as moonlight reflects off a canyon's walls and the wind blows through the trees. He called it "haunting."

"We fell in love with it the first time we were up there, and we decided it would be our place for summer vacations," said Plante, whose family has their cabin reserved in June. "I'd go there over Disneyland any friggin' day of the week and twice on Sunday."

## Man stands trial for 2015 attack on South Dakota trooper

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Washington state man who was pulled over in South Dakota with about 40 pounds of marijuana (18 kilograms) in the car beat the state trooper who stopped him to within inches of his life, a prosecutor said at the outset of the man's attempted murder trial.

Donald Willingham's trial started Tuesday in Pennington County, the Rapid City Journal reported. The



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35-year-old Renton, Washington, man faces attempted first-degree murder, aggravated assault and drug charges stemming from the October 2015 traffic stop on Interstate 90 east of Rapid City.

Prosecutor Mark Vargo told jurors that Willingham and three friends were driving from Seattle to Chicago with a large amount of the drug and \$30,000 in cash in the car when Trooper Zachary Bader pulled them over for speeding and asked to search the vehicle because he smelled marijuana. He said Willingham severely beat Bader before he and his friends drove off, leaving the trooper lying along the side of the highway and "fighting for his life."

Defense attorney Dennis Doherty told jurors to keep an open mind and not form an opinion until they've heard all the testimony.

Last year, Willingham's friends pleaded guilty to possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and being an accessory to a crime. They agreed to testify against Willingham as part of their plea deals. They're expected to be sentenced this week.

The attempted murder and assault charges against Willingham each carry a maximum penalty of 25 years in prison.

Information from: Rapid City Journal, <http://www.rapidcityjournal.com>

## Nebraska task force outlines priorities for Whiteclay

LINCOLN, Neb. (AP) — A legislative task force has released a list of goals to improve life in Whiteclay, a Nebraska village that sold massive amounts of beer near a South Dakota Indian reservation until state regulators intervened.

The report issued Wednesday calls for a new, permanent cellphone tower in the area to replace one that was vandalized and destroyed by a windstorm. It also suggests finding land for a possible treatment and detox center, a memorial for Whiteclay and additional economic development efforts.

Four stores in Whiteclay sold the equivalent of 3.5 million cans of beer annually next to South Dakota's Pine Ridge Indian Reservation until April, when the Nebraska Liquor Control Commission voted not to renew their licenses. Whiteclay has a population of nine and no full-time law enforcement.

## Correction: Buffer Strips story

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — In a Dec. 19 story about a South Dakota's tax break program that rewards farmers for planting buffer strips between their crops and polluted bodies of water, The Associated Press misspelled South Dakota Farm Bureau Executive Director Krystil Smit's name. The official's surname is "Smit," not "Smith."

A corrected version of the story is below:

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Few South Dakota farmers have taken advantage of Gov. Dennis Daugaard's tax break program that rewards those who plant grass or wildflowers between their crops and polluted lakes, rivers or streams.

The state's Department of Revenue received only 30 applications in the first year of the buffer strip program, the Argus Leader reported.

The governor's program permits farmers who put runoff-absorbing grass or wildflowers between crops and certain water bodies to have their land taxed at 60 percent of its value.

The buffer strip applications amount to about 300 acres of the state's more than 338,000 eligible acres of land. The sparse number of applicants suggests that many qualified landowners were either unaware of the tax break or didn't see enough value to bother signing up.

"Why they didn't all come in and apply, I don't know," said Mike Houdyshell, director of the South Dakota Department of Revenue.

David Ganje is a Rapid City lawyer who specializes in natural resources. Ganje called the buffer strip program "a good idea with weak muscles" in part because it's managed by the Revenue Department.

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"The department has no expertise in environmental or agricultural matters and is not a 'go-to' agency for landowners with questions," said Ganje.

Janell Christiansen of Lennox said she applied to the program after stumbling across an article online. "That was not advertised very well," Christiansen said. "I think I really did luck out."

The governor's office sent out a press release. The Revenue Department posted deadline reminders over Twitter and Facebook. But, there was little to no other formal outreach beyond these efforts.

Getting the word out is critical, according to Krystil Smit of the South Dakota Farm Bureau. "It does emphasize a need for people to be out talking about it," Smit said.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## Mattis is 1st Pentagon chief to visit Guantanamo since 2002

By **ROBERT BURNS, AP National Security Writer**

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba (AP) — U.S. Defense Secretary Jim Mattis visited the American Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to offer holiday greetings to troops Thursday. It was the first trip there by a Pentagon chief in almost 16 years.

Mattis was meeting with troops, not touring the detention facilities or discussing detainee policy options. His stay comes amid uncertainty over the Trump administration's policy on continued use of the military prison.

President Donald Trump hasn't released any Guantanamo prisoners or added any to the list of men who have been officially cleared to go home or to a third country for resettlement.

Mattis is the first defense secretary to visit Guantanamo Bay since Donald Rumsfeld in January 2002, just weeks after the first prisoners arrived from Afghanistan in the early stages of the fight against terrorism. The detention center was set up to hold suspected terrorists shortly after the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Mattis arrived at Guantanamo on Wednesday night and was accompanied by an Associated Press reporter.

Forty-one prisoners remain in detention. Ten have been charged by a military commission. Five have been cleared to leave, but their status is in doubt under the current administration.

That leaves 26 in indefinite confinement, though some eventually could be cleared for release, too, or prosecuted. Lawyers are considering filing new legal challenges, arguing that a policy of no releases means the detainees' confinement no longer can be legally justified as a temporary wartime measure.

President Barack Obama tried to close the detention center, but was thwarted by Congress. Lawmakers objected to transferring detainees to confinement facilities in the United States.

Mattis has said little publicly about Guantanamo Bay since taking office in January. The subject wasn't raised in his Senate confirmation hearing.

In response to written questions submitted to him before that hearing, he said: "I believe that we should develop a repeatable detainee policy that is appropriate for enemy combatants taken prisoner under such circumstances."

Asked whether the U.S. should keep detainees without trial, he said: "Long-term detention is appropriate when an unprivileged enemy belligerent poses a continuing significant threat to the security of the United States."

U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions visited the detention facility in July.

Sessions underscored the administration's support for continued use of the prison. He called it a "perfectly acceptable" place to detain new terrorist suspects, as opposed to holding them in the U.S. and having his own Justice Department try them in civilian courts.

## Car rams into pedestrians in Melbourne; 19 injured

By TREVOR MARSHALLSEA, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Australian police said there is no evidence of a terrorist link to a car ramming attack Thursday in central Melbourne that left 19 people injured.

Police said the driver was a 32-year-old Australian citizen of Afghan decent who has a known history of drug use and mental health issues. The man was known to police for historical minor assault and traffic offenses.

"We don't at this time have any evidence or any intelligence to indicate there's a connection with terrorism," said Victoria state police acting commissioner Shane Patton.

The streets outside the city's iconic Flinders Street railway station were crowded with Christmas shoppers late Thursday afternoon when a white Suzuki SUV ran a red light and sped up to slam into pedestrians crossing the road before crashing into a traffic barrier.

While police had earlier said 14 people had been injured, Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews confirmed that 19 people had been taken to hospitals. The four listed in critical condition are believed to include a preschool-aged child, Australian media reported.

Andrews described the incident as "an act of evil and an act of cowardice, perpetrated against innocent bystanders."

Witnesses described a horrific scene.

"I was crossing Flinders Street on the way to the train station. I heard an engine rev behind me and heard a thump," one man identified only as David said on ABC TV. He said he turned around saw "people literally getting thrown into the air as it hit them."

Bystanders rushed to drag the driver out of the vehicle before police arrived to arrest the man.

Early reports said there were two men in the car, but Patton confirmed the suspect was driving alone.

Confusion had arisen when a second man was seen being apprehended alongside the driver. Patton said this was a 24-year-old man who was seen filming the incident on his mobile phone and found carrying a bag containing three knives.

Patton said that man was taken into custody to determine whether he was connected.

"At this stage we don't believe that to be the case," he said.

Patton said the investigation would involve the force's counter-terrorism unit to ensure "that there isn't that connection, and that there is no ongoing threat," but that this was being treated as a singular incident. He said police were working with Australian intelligence agency ASIO, and with Australian Federal Police, and that there was no intelligence to suggest the man was a person of interest to those bodies.

"We understand he's on a mental health plan and receiving treatment for a mental illness," Patton said.

Patton said while police numbers would be increased around Melbourne in the coming days, there was no increased danger threat surrounding the city over the busy holiday period.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull sent a tweet calling the incident "shocking" and said his thoughts and prayers were with the victims and those treating them.

It is the second time this year that Melbourne, regularly ranked one of the world's most livable cities, has been traumatized by a car attack.

In January, six people were killed and more than 30 were injured when a car was driven up a footpath in Bourke Street, near Thursday's incident. Police arrested the driver, who was known to police for a history of illicit drug use, family violence and mental health problems. Police said the case was not terrorism-related.

There have been a number of car attacks in other parts of the world in recent years, many of them linked to terrorism.

In October a man drove a truck down a New York City bicycle path, killing eight people. The driver is accused of providing material support to the Islamic State group among other charges including murder.

In an August attack, 13 people were killed and more than 100 were wounded when a vehicle rammed into pedestrians on a walking street in Barcelona. London has seen three such attacks this year, two linked to Islamic extremists and another seen as a reprisal attack outside a mosque, killing 13 people altogether.

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A vehicle attack on a shopping street in Stockholm in April killed five people, while an attack on a Christmas market in Berlin last December killed 12.

The deadliest such attack in recent years took place in Nice, France, in July 2016 when a man drove a refrigerated truck weighing about 20 tons into a crowd, killing 86 people.

## Lawmakers hoping to approve a must-pass spending bill

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Republicans early Thursday unveiled a new, stripped-down spending bill to prevent a government shutdown this weekend and allow quarreling lawmakers to punt most of their unfinished business into the new year.

The bill would stave off a government shutdown through Jan. 19 and permit lawmakers to head home for the holidays. It would delay battles over the budget and immigration into January, denying Democrats wins that they had hoped to score this year.

Failure to pass the measure would trigger a government shutdown at midnight Friday, which would amount to a political pratfall just after the GOP scored a major win on a landmark tax bill. With Republicans controlling Washington, they would not have anyone else to blame for a shutdown debacle.

White House counselor Kellyanne Conway said Thursday the "White House is committed to keeping the government open." She added in an appearance on Fox News Channel's "Fox & Friends" that "it would be a shame if the Democrats force a shutdown of the government in the 11th hour of trying to negotiate something."

Despite the perilous situation, GOP leaders are scrambling to rally some frustrated Republicans behind the measure, particularly defense hawks who had hoped to enact record budget increases for the Pentagon this year. The measure does contain about \$5 billion dollars for missile defense upgrades to respond to the threat from North Korea and to repair two destroyers damaged in accidents this year in the Pacific.

A vote is likely Thursday and Senate passage is expected to quickly follow.

The House may also vote on an \$81 billion disaster aid package that's a priority of the Texas and Florida delegations, but its fate is uncertain. The Senate would likely add to the measure and pass it next year. Republicans may unveil changes to the measure Thursday morning.

It also would temporarily extend an expiring overseas wiretapping program aimed at tracking terrorists. It has bipartisan backing, but stout conservatives and some liberals oppose it.

Thursday's version is the third rewrite this week as GOP leaders have struggled to come up with a plan that would unite Republicans. Democratic leaders aren't providing votes to pass the measure, saying Republicans are ignoring promises to protect so-called Dreamer immigrants brought to the country illegally as children. That issue, along with a hoped-for budget deal to undo a spending freeze on both the Pentagon and domestic agencies, would be put off until January.

An earlier plan favored by pro-Pentagon members of the influential Armed Services Committee would have combined the stopgap funding bill, called a continuing resolution, with a \$658 billion Pentagon funding measure. But the idea is a nonstarter with the Senate, especially powerful Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

"The number of options is collapsing down," said Rep. Frank Lucas, R-Okla. "I have faith that at the last possible moment, to paraphrase Churchill, when we have no other choice, we'll do what we need to do."

Includes a short-term, \$2.1 billion fix for an expiring program that pays for veterans to seek care outside the Department of Veterans Affairs system. It also includes a short-term "patch" to make sure the states facing shortfalls from the Children's Health Insurance Program, which pays for health care for 9 million children from low-income families, won't have to purge children from the program.

Meanwhile, the \$81 billion disaster aid bill faced a potential separate vote of its own, but was at risk of languishing because of opposition among some conservatives upset about its cost. Senate action on that bill wouldn't come until next year anyway.

Regardless of how the crisis of the moment will be solved, most of the many items on Capitol Hill's list



of unfinished business are going to be pushed into next year.

Hopes for a bipartisan budget deal to sharply increase spending for both the Pentagon and domestic agencies appeared dead for the year and Democrats were rebuffed in their demands for protections for young immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children. There's significant bipartisan sympathy for these immigrants, but battles over GOP demands for President Donald Trump's border wall and additional funding for immigration agents are proving difficult to resolve.

On Wednesday, Sens. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, announced Wednesday that they would not seek to add the insurance subsidies, which are designed to stabilize the Affordable Care Act's markets. The tax bill repeals the requirement that individuals purchase insurance.

Trying to combine the health measure with the spending bill was a demand of Collins when President Donald Trump and Senate GOP leaders secured her vote for the party's tax cut measure. But House conservatives strongly opposed the move.

House Republicans weren't part of that deal, and with the tax vote over, it became plain that Senate leaders were not able to deliver for her.

## **One bloody Sunday in Myanmar: AP reconstructs army massacre**

**By TODD PITMAN, Associated Press**

UKHIA, Bangladesh (AP) — For six hours he hid in an upstairs room, listening to the crackle of gunfire and the screams of people being slaughtered outside his Myanmar home.

With every footstep that drew near, every cry that pierced the air, 52-year-old Bodru Duza braced for the soldiers to find him, to kill him like all the others who had fled to his compound that morning seeking a safe place to shelter. They were being blindfolded and bound, marched away in small groups, then butchered and shot as they begged for their lives.

What had started out as a quiet Sunday in northwestern Myanmar had spiraled into an incomprehensible hell — one of the bloodiest massacres reported in the Southeast Asian nation since government forces launched a vicious campaign to drive out the country's Rohingya minority in late August.

By the time it was over, there was so much blood on the ground, it had pooled into long rivulets across the uneven earth, among bits of human flesh and the fragments of shattered skulls.

When Duza finally dared to emerge from his hiding place, he wondered how anyone could have survived.

The compound he grew up in was now consumed by an ethereal silence. His wife, daughter, and five young sons were nowhere to be seen. And as he crept toward a backdoor to escape, he stumbled upon the corpse of an unknown boy sprawled on the floor.

"Oh Allah!" he thought. "What have they done to us? What have they done to my family?"

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The Associated Press reported this story with a grant from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

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Duza's family belonged to the ethnic Rohingya Muslim community, which has long been persecuted and denied basic rights in predominantly Buddhist Myanmar. They lived in the village of Maung Nu, where at least 82 Rohingya are believed to have been murdered on Aug. 27.

The massacre was part of a streak of violence that started before dawn two days earlier, when Rohingya insurgents staged an unprecedented wave of 30 attacks on security posts across Rakhine state. At least 14 people were killed.

The assaults triggered one of the greatest catastrophes the Rohingya have ever known: an army counter-offensive that has left hundreds of villages burned and driven 650,000 refugees into Bangladesh. The aid group Doctors Without Borders estimates 6,700 Rohingya civilians were killed in the first month of reprisals alone, and human rights groups have documented three large-scale massacres.

The Associated Press has reconstructed the massacre at Maung Nu as told by 37 survivors now scattered across refugee camps in Bangladesh. Their testimony and exclusive video footage from the massacre site obtained by AP offer evidence, also documented by the United Nations and others, that Myanmar armed



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forces have systematically killed civilians.

Myanmar's military did not respond to repeated requests for comment on this story, and the government — which prohibits journalists from independent travel to northern Rakhine State — did not reply to an AP request for a visit. The army has insisted in the past that not a single innocent has been slain.

For as long as anyone could remember, there was only one place in Maung Nu that was truly considered safe. It was a large two-story residence shared by two of the village's most prominent businessmen — Duza and his brother Zahid Hossain.

Built on a hillside more than half a century ago, the vast home was known for its three-foot-thick walls of hardened mud, which many believed to be bullet-proof and virtually impossible to burn. That mattered in Rakhine state, where the Rohingya population lived in fear of both the military and the area's ethnic Rakhine Buddhists. Although the Rohingya have lived in Myanmar for decades, they are still seen as foreign invaders from Bangladesh who are intent on stealing land.

Despite the tensions, Hossain worked extensively with local army commanders, trading cows and rice and jointly operating a brick-making factory. Both brothers were charismatic, educated and popular. Duza, an affable man who was well-known throughout the area, had previously served as village administrator for 12 years. Many people assumed that neither he nor his compound would be harmed.

After insurgents launched their first attacks a year ago, the government had imposed strict new measures aimed at curbing militant activity. Islamic schools were closed, a curfew was put in place, and authorities ordered the removal of fences and even shrubbery so security forces could see inside private compounds.

But Maung Nu, a village of about 2,000 people also known as Monu Para, remained peaceful. Duza and his brother counted their blessings. They were among the village's wealthiest men. They owned scores of cows and buffalo, and vast acres of rice.

Soon, it would all be gone.

A few hours after midnight on Aug. 25, fierce volleys of gunfire woke the residents of Maung Nu. Rohingya militants had launched a surprise assault on a Border Guard Police post in Hpaung Taw Pyin, less than a kilometer (a mile) to the north.

The fighting lasted until dawn. According to the government, two officers and at least six of the assailants died.

That morning a commander from the army's Light Infantry Battalion 564, based just south of Maung Nu, called the local district administrator, Mohamed Arof, furious.

"Why didn't you tell us about these attacks?" the commander demanded.

"I didn't know anything about it," replied Arof, a Rohingya. "I only heard the shooting, like you."

The same day, police snatched Arof's 15-year-old son from a rice paddy and took him to their camp, where he was hung with a rope along with three other teenagers, according to Arof and several witnesses. It's unclear why the teens were killed, but word of their deaths spread quickly.

Fearing more reprisals from security forces, most of Hpaung Taw Pyin's residents fled. Hundreds of them walked to the homes of friends and relatives in Maung Nu, in the hope they would be safe there.

And for a day, they were.

On Aug. 27, bursts of gunfire echoed across Maung Nu again. This time only the army was shooting.

Several military trucks parked on the village's main road around 9 a.m. and began disgorging troops who fanned out on foot, firing into the air. Peering out a window of her home, 35-year-old Jamila Begum spotted several armed soldiers crossing her yard carrying coils of nylon rope.

Hundreds of people were already on the move, seeking the closest refuge — the hillside compound of Duza and Hossain, which included half a dozen other homes belonging to their relatives and a large rectangular pond. Jamila's family joined them.

Other residents were being rounded up by force and ordered to head to the compound. Some covered inside their homes, wondering what to do. One of them, 18-year-old Mohammadul Hassan, put a woman's veil over his face when troops burst through the front door of his home, guns drawn.

Hassan immediately recognized one of the soldiers — a skinny army staff sergeant named Bajju who was well-known in the village. A member of the 564th Battalion, Bajju had lived in the area for 15 years and

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spoke the Rohingya dialect, according to numerous villagers. Duza said Bajju was also a frequent visitor to his home.

When the soldiers discovered Hassan hiding among several female relatives, they became enraged. He was dragged outside along with two of his brothers, shoved to the ground and kicked until blood poured from his left eye.

As troops ripped clothes off the women and seized their valuables, the three brothers were stripped and tied up. The soldiers marched them to Duza's compound naked, at gunpoint, the sunbaked dirt road burning their bare feet.

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Duza had never seen people so scared.

As the number of Rohingya hiding on his property rose into the hundreds, his wife, a warm woman with an easy smile named Habiba, turned to him and asked, "What's happening? What's going on?"

The answer came when dozens of helmeted soldiers in olive green uniforms arrived around 11 a.m., accompanied by several border guard police.

Their entrance set off a new panic. A few men in Duza's house locked the main wooden doors and climbed the stairs to a balcony, where most of the males already had gathered.

Before joining them, Duza pulled Habiba aside.

"Please take care of our daughter and our sons."

So many people were crammed into their house by then, though, that Habiba soon lost track of all but one child.

Outside, a soldier's voice rose above the others. It was Bajju, and he was calling on everyone to come out, assuring them they would not be harmed. As the minutes passed and nobody emerged, the calls turned menacing, and the sergeant threatened to burn the compound to the ground.

Several bursts of gunfire rang out and a young boy was struck in the forehead. The women recoiled in horror as he lay motionless before them, the back of his skull blown apart.

Seconds later, soldiers broke down the doors and began dragging people out, separating the men from the women.

Mothers and elderly women were ordered onto their knees. Some tried to push back when troops ripped off their headscarves and tore at their clothes. The soldiers first demanded their cell phones, then grabbed at exposed breasts as they snatched gold earrings, necklaces and wads of cash.

About 20 or 25 of the women — mostly attractive and young — were taken away. They were never seen again. The rest eventually were driven, along with their children, into a pair of houses on the property.

The soldiers bound the men's hands behind their backs and ordered them into the dirt courtyard in front of the house, where they were forced face down onto the stifling ground. Most were blindfolded with masking tape or veils taken from the women. A handful who tried to resist were thrown off the balcony head-first.

Troops started to walk across the sea of people, grinding boots into their heads and beating them with rifle butts. Some of the soldiers cursed their prisoners, calling them dirty "kalar," a derogatory word for Muslims that is frequently used in Myanmar.

Duza's brother, Hossain, begged for the violence to stop.

"Why are you doing this?" he cried. "Why are you tying us up?"

There was no answer.

Around noon, a senior officer called a commander on his phone. The officer said they had rounded up 87 men.

"What should we do with them?"

The call ended shortly afterward, and the officer barked an order to his troops.

"Let us begin."

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Duza watched through a slit in a closed window as a soldier plunged a long knife into his brother's neck

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in front of their house. When two of Hossain's sons got up and tried to run, soldiers opened fire.

Duza stepped back in shock. He scrambled to an upstairs room and crawled into the only place he could think of to hide: a foot-high space under a large wooden container normally used to store rice. He covered his legs with rice sacks and curled into a ball, trying to disappear.

Outside, screams like he'd never heard before reverberated across the courtyard.

Several soldiers hammered four-inch nails into the temples of three men on the ground with the butts of their rifles. Four other men were decapitated, including a prominent gray-bearded mullah.

Then a pair of soldiers — one was Bajú — descended on her husband. With two-foot-long machetes, they hacked into his neck from both sides. He crumpled in the dirt, gagging on blood.

Gasping for breath, Jamila stumbled toward the door. She wanted to rush to his side, to help him, to be with him — to die.

But the women in the house pulled her back.

"You can't go," one said, as Jamila collapsed, weeping. "If you go out there, they'll kill all of us."

While women rocked back and forth, several children began praying. In the courtyard, they could hear people begging for their lives.

"Please Allah! Please help us!"

"We're dying!"

When Jamila rose to look out the window again, she saw her 16-year-old son dragged away by the collar of his shirt and tied to a tree, screaming, "I didn't do anything!"

The gunshots rang out. Jamila could not bear to look.

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As the afternoon wore on, the carnage became more methodical.

Men and teenage boys were taken away in small groups and killed by firing squads near a forested area on the edge of the property. In some cases, a soldier blew a whistle beforehand, signaling for them to begin.

Other troops wrapped corpses in orange and green tarps and transported them downhill in three-wheeled push-carts to a pair of army trucks parked on the road. Several witnesses reported seeing soldiers digging pits and dumping bodies into them.

When Mohammad Nasir was marched to the killing ground with six others, he saw more than a dozen cadavers crumpled there under the trees. As those beside him braced for death and called out Islamic creeds — "There is no god but Allah! Mohamed is his prophet!" — Nasir wriggled loose and ran.

He made it to the far side of a small ravine before the first burst of gunfire rang out. Half an hour later, when he had run out of breath, he realized he had been shot in the elbow.

Mohammadul Hassan was taken to a pond just east of the main house. Soldiers ordered him to kneel with his two brothers, then shot them all from behind and rolled them over to make sure they were dead. When Hassan unexpectedly opened his eyes, an officer sitting on the bank walked casually forward and fired a single rifle shot into his chest. Hassan later regained consciousness, stumbled away, and survived.

That afternoon, soldiers began searching the compound for men. At one point, Bajú grabbed Duza's 9-year-old son Mohamed Ahasun, and demanded to know where his father was.

The boy said Duza had left four days earlier for another village. Bajú slapped him, but let him go.

In the tiny, darkened crawl space upstairs, Duza's mind had gone numb. He kept telling himself: "It has to stop ... This has to end somehow." Praying for survival, he waited for the soldiers to discover him, to drag him out by the feet.

But they never did. And when the guns finally fell silent, he crept slowly downstairs, and slipped away.

For the next two weeks, he traveled alone, joining the hordes of Rohingya bound for Bangladesh. They crossed streams and forests and mountains, and finally the Naf River, which separates the two countries.

When Duza got out of a boat and stepped onto Bangladeshi soil, he looked back toward Myanmar and saw half a dozen columns of smoke curling skyward from burning Rohingya homes. His family, he thought, was surely dead.

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There is no way to independently confirm the death toll in Maung Nu. But one handwritten tally seen by

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The AP details the names, ages and professions of 82 people, most of them men and boys from Maung Nu and Hpaung Taw Pyin, who family members say were killed.

They are farmers and students, carpenters, businessmen and teachers. The youngest is seven years old; the oldest, 95.

According to Arof, the village administrator, at least 200 more remain missing and are feared dead.

Most of the survivors struggle to understand why so many of their neighbors were slaughtered. Arof said the army falsely believed they were supporting the insurgency, but something much deeper had driven the killing. The massacres reported since August have stood out for their high casualty toll, their ferocity, and the methodical way in which they were carried out.

"You have to understand ... they hate us," Arof said. "This didn't only happen in our village, it happened everywhere."

In the end, Duza was one of the luckiest survivors.

After weeks spent imagining another life without a family, he found a newly-arrived refugee with a Myanmar phone and asked to use it.

He dialed his wife Habiba's number. A young girl answered.

He could barely believe it. It was his 14-year-old daughter, Taslima.

As tears welled in his eyes, Duza asked about the rest of his family. "Are they with you? Are they alive?"

"Yes papa! Yes!" Taslima replied. "We're here! Everybody is fine."

Duza's family had been elsewhere in the compound when he fled. It would take them six more weeks to make the journey to Bangladesh.

When the family reunited in a refugee camp, Duza broke down as he hugged his wife and squeezed the children he never thought he'd see again. They had lost so much -- their friends and relatives, their home, their savings, their future -- but they had somehow found each other.

"It felt like living in another world," Duza said. "It felt like a new life."

This story's summary has been corrected to remove erroneous reference to thousands killed.

## Trump threat to cut aid raises stakes in UN Jerusalem vote

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — President Donald Trump's threat to cut off U.S. funding to countries that oppose his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital has raised the stakes in Thursday's U.N. vote and sparked criticism at his tactics, which one Muslim group called bullying or blackmail.

Trump went a step further than U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley who hinted in a tweet and a letter to most of the 193 U.N. member states on Tuesday that the U.S. would retaliate against countries that vote in favor of a General Assembly resolution calling on the president to rescind his decision.

Haley said the president asked her to report back on countries "who voted against us" — and she stressed that the United States "will be taking names."

At the start of a Cabinet meeting in Washington on Wednesday, with Haley sitting nearby, Trump told reporters that Americans are tired of being taken advantage of and praised the U.S. ambassador for sending the "right message" before the vote.

"For all these nations, they take our money and then vote against us. They take hundreds of millions of dollars, even billions of dollars and then they vote against us," Trump told reporters at the Cabinet meeting. "We're watching those votes. Let them vote against us."

"We'll save a lot. We don't care," he said, alluding to U.S. aid.

Nihad Awad, national executive director of the Council on American-Islamic Relations, tweeted after Trump's comments: "Our government should not use its leadership at the UN to bully/blackmail other nations that stand for religious liberty and justice in Jerusalem. Justice is a core value of Christianity, Judaism and Islam."

The Palestinians and their Arab and Islamic supporters sought the General Assembly vote after the



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United States on Monday vetoed a resolution supported by the 14 other U.N. Security Council members that would have required Trump to rescind his declaration on Jerusalem as Israel's capital and not move the U.S. Embassy there.

Before Haley's letter and tweet, Palestinian U.N. Ambassador Riyad Mansour told The Associated Press he expected "massive support" for the resolution in the General Assembly.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riyad al-Maliki and Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu accused the U.S. of intimidation.

They told reporters at Istanbul's Ataturk Airport on Wednesday before flying to New York to attend the General Assembly meeting that they believe U.N. member countries will ignore "pressure" from Haley.

Al-Maliki said he believes that countries will vote their conscience, and "they will vote for justice, and they will vote in favor of that resolution."

"No honorable state would bow to such pressure," Cavusoglu said. "The world has changed. The belief that 'I am strong therefore I am right' has changed. The world today is revolting against injustices."

Ambassador Rhonda King of the tiny Caribbean nation of Saint Vincent and the Grenadines sent Haley a letter saying that her country treasures the United States "as an enduring ally" but will vote against Trump's action.

"Sometimes, friends differ; on Jerusalem, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines respectfully differs from the USA; and so, too, do many of the staunchest friends and allies of the USA," King wrote. "We gently urge yet again that the government of the USA rethink its position and approach on this entire matter."

What impact the threats from Trump and Haley will have remains to be seen.

Some diplomats predict the resolution will be supported by at least 150 countries, and possibly 180 nations.

Israel has also been conducting a global lobbying campaign against the resolution, government officials said Wednesday. The vote will show whether Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has succeeded in his efforts to drum up new pockets of support in the developing world.

Netanyahu acknowledged Thursday the vote would likely pass by a wide margin but said Israel "completely rejects this vote before it is made."

Haley said in her letter, reportedly sent to over 180 countries that the Trump administration is "simply asking that you acknowledge the historical friendship, partnership, and support we have extended and respect our decision about our own embassy."

She said the U.S. Congress decided 22 years ago that Jerusalem should be recognized as the capital of Israel and Trump followed through on that decision.

Her tweet was sharper: "At the UN we're always asked to do more & give more. So, when we make a decision, at the will of the American ppl, abt where to locate OUR embassy, we don't expect those we've helped to target us. On Thurs there'll be a vote criticizing our choice. The US will be taking names."

This was not the first time that Haley threatened to keep track of U.S. opponents.

On Jan. 27, the day she arrived at the United Nations as ambassador, Haley announced a new way the United States would be doing business. The Trump administration's goal is to show U.S. strength, speak out and defend its allies — and as for countries opposing America, "We're taking names," she said.

The letter on the Jerusalem vote was the first time since then that Haley vowed to compile a list.

Her action recalled to some veteran U.N. diplomats the run-up to the Iraq war in 2002 when then U.S. President George W. Bush launched a campaign against France and other opponents of military action who refused to support a Security Council resolution to authorize war. The resolution, which former British Prime Minister Tony Blair was pressing for and the U.S. backed, was withdrawn by Britain because it was certain to be defeated as a result of strong council opposition.

The resolution being voted on Thursday is co-sponsored by Turkey, chair of the summit of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and Yemen, chair of the Arab Group at the U.N.

It is very similar to the defeated Security Council resolution.

The draft resolution says Jerusalem "is a final status issue" and reaffirms 10 Security Council resolutions on Jerusalem, dating back to 1967, including requirements that the city's final status must be decided in



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direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

It "affirms that any decisions and actions which purport to have altered, the character, status or demographic composition of the holy city of Jerusalem have no legal effect, are null and void and must be rescinded."

The draft resolution "demands that all states comply with Security Council resolutions regarding the holy city of Jerusalem, and not to recognize any actions or measures contrary to those resolutions."

Associated Press writers Suzan Fraser in Ankara, Turkey, and Joe Federman in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

## 10 Things to Know Today

### The Associated Press

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about Tuesday:

#### 1. WHAT CONGRESS NEEDS TO PASS NEXT

Lawmakers hope to approve a must-pass spending bill as the clock ticks toward potential government shutdown this weekend.

#### 2. CAR RAMS CROWD IN AUSTRALIA

Two men are arrested after the car in which they were travelling crashed into pedestrians on a busy central Melbourne street, leaving up to 19 people injured.

#### 3. SOUTH KOREA FIRES WARNING SHOTS AFTER NORTH SOLDIER DEFECTS

South Korean soldiers fire 20 warning machine gun rounds, turning back North Korean soldiers apparently pursuing a comrade who had earlier dashed across the rivals' shared border, officials said.

#### 4. WHERE MUSLIMS HAVE BEEN MASSACRED

Rohingya refugees who fled the crackdown describe tell The AP about a ruthless army massacre that offers evidence Myanmar forces have systematically killed civilians.

#### 5. WHY TRUMP IS THREATENING TO CUT OFF FUNDING TO OTHER COUNTRIES

President Donald Trump's threat to cut off U.S. funding to countries that oppose his decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital has raised the stakes in Thursday's U.N. vote.

#### 6. WHO GOT A SURPRISE CALL FROM TRUMP

Freshman Republican Sen. John Kennedy, who became an Internet sensation with his rapid-fire takedown of President Trump's judicial nominee.

#### 7. DIVIDED CATALANS VOTE IN POLARIZED ELECTION

Spain's restive Catalans are electing a new regional government in a hotly contested election aimed at breaking a political deadlock over the issue of independence

#### 8. WHERE KILLINGS HIT A RECORD LOW

Even after two terror attacks and a motorist's deadly rampage through Times Square, New York City is on track to smash its modern-era low for homicides in a year.

#### 9. WHO MIGHT MAKE A POLITICAL COMEBACK

Former Minnesota governor Tim Pawlenty, once a fresh-faced Republican star with blue-collar appeal and presidential prospects, is eyeing a climb back onto the national stage in a possible Senate race.

#### 10. GOING FOR GOLD IN THE COLD

After two straight balmy Olympics where some might have wondered if it was even winter, athletes and visitors alike will finally experience a no-joke chill in their bones during the Winter Games in mountainous Pyeongchang.

## South Korea fires warning shots after North soldier defects

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — South Korean soldiers fired 20 warning machine gun rounds Thursday, turning back North Korean soldiers apparently pursuing a comrade who had earlier dashed across the rivals' shared border, officials said. It is the fourth time this year a North Korean soldier has defected across the world's most heavily armed border.

South Korean military officials said they heard gunfire from the North after South Korea fired its warning shots, but it wasn't clear if the firing was retaliatory. Neither side immediately reported casualties.

North Korean soldiers occasionally flee over the land border, but there have been few defections as dramatic as one that happened nearly 40 days ago, when a northern soldier crossed at a different, very public place — a jointly controlled area that is the only place where troops from the rivals face off only feet away from each other. That soldier was shot five times by his former comrades in an escape caught on video. He has been recovering in a hospital. The site of that defection is familiar to many foreign tourists, who can visit the blue huts that straddle the line between the rivals.

Thursday's defection happened at a much more remote section of the 4 kilometer (2.5 mile)-wide, 248-kilometer (155-mile) -long Demilitarized Zone, which serves as the border between the Koreas. When the defecting soldier — reportedly a 19-year-old — arrived at a front-line South Korean guard post, there was no shooting from the North, according to South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff. Spokesman Roh Jae-cheon said the motive for the defection is under investigation.

Later Thursday, however, South Korea's military detected several North Korean soldiers approaching the line between the countries in the DMZ, prompting the South to broadcast a warning and fire 20 warning shots, said a South Korean defense official, requesting anonymity because of department rules.

The North Korean soldiers who approached the line were believed to be on a mission to hunt down their defecting comrade. They turned back to the North after the South's warning shots, the official said. About 40 minutes later, soldiers twice heard several rounds of gunshot on the North Korean side of the border. No North Korean bullets were found in the South, the official said.

The latest defection was the fourth North Korean soldier to flee through the DMZ this year, the Defense Ministry said. About 30,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea mostly via China since the end of the 1950-53 Korean War.

In a separate incident, two North Korean men found aboard a wooden boat off the east coast on Wednesday asked to resettle in the South, according to Seoul's Unification Ministry.

Animosities run high on the Korean Peninsula as North Korea has been accelerating its weapons tests as part of its stated goal of achieving a nuclear missile capable of striking anywhere in the United States. Last month, North Korea test-fired its biggest and most powerful intercontinental ballistic missile to date.

## EPA says Superfund Task Force left behind little paper trail

By MICHAEL BIESECKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Environmental Protection Agency says an internal task force appointed to revamp how the nation's most polluted sites are cleaned up generated no record of its deliberations.

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt in May announced the creation of a Superfund Task Force that he said would reprioritize and streamline procedures for remediating more than 1,300 sites. Pruitt, the former attorney general of Oklahoma, appointed a political supporter from his home state with no experience in pollution cleanups to lead the group.

The task force in June issued a nearly three dozen-page report containing 42 detailed recommendations, all of which Pruitt immediately adopted. The advocacy group Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility, known as PEER, quickly filed a Freedom of Information Act request seeking a long list of documents related to the development of Pruitt's plan.

After EPA didn't immediately release any records, PEER sued in federal court in Washington.

Now, nearly six months after the task force released its report, a lawyer for EPA has written PEER to

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say that the task force had no agenda for its meetings, kept no minutes and used no reference materials other than Pruitt's memo appointing them.

Further, there were no written standards for choosing the 107 EPA employees the agency says served on the task force.

"Task force members were all volunteers from EPA staff with no selection criteria," Johnny Walker, a Justice Department lawyer representing EPA, wrote to PEER last month. "Meeting minutes were not kept and materials (other than the May 22, 2017 memorandum) were not presented to the Superfund Task Force."

According to EPA's lawyer, the task force also retained no work product other than its final report.

Jeff Ruch, the executive director of PEER, said that seems unlikely.

"Pruitt's plan for cleaning up toxic sites was apparently immaculately conceived, without the usual trappings of human parentage," Ruch said. "It stretches credulity that 107 EPA staff members with no agenda or reference materials somehow wrote an intricate plan in 30 days."

In a statement issued Wednesday after The Associated Press first reported on Walker's response in the FOIA lawsuit, EPA's press office sought to distinguish between the environmental agency and its legal representation.

"The communication at issue was sent by the Department of Justice, U.S. Attorney's Office of D.C., as part of an ongoing effort to resolve litigation," said Jahan Wilcox, an EPA spokesman.

The Justice Department routinely represents executive agencies in legal disputes over FOIA requests. In his notice of appearance before the court in the PEER lawsuit, Walker described himself as "counsel for Defendant the United States Environmental Protection Agency."

Wilcox did not respond to follow-up questions about whether the lawyer's representations were inaccurate or if EPA possessed additional records it has yet to disclose.

The recommendations adopted by Pruitt include prioritizing cleanup sites that can be redeveloped for new construction or where nearby residents are under threat from spreading pollution. EPA held no public hearings about the plan.

Pruitt has pledged to make mitigating decades-old pollution EPA's core mission, even as he has moved to block or delay Obama-era regulations aimed at curbing ongoing contamination from coal-fired power plants and fossil-fuel production.

President Donald Trump's proposed 2018 budget seeks to cut the program by 30 percent. Congress has not yet approved a budget for the current fiscal year, which began in October.

The task force was led by Albert "Kell" Kelly, whom Pruitt hired at EPA as a senior adviser at an annual salary of \$172,100. Kelly was previously the chairman of Tulsa-based SpiritBank, where he worked as an executive for 34 years.

The Associated Press reported in August that Kelly was barred by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation from working for any U.S. financial institution after officials determined he violated laws or regulations, leading to a financial loss for his bank. The FDIC's order didn't detail what Kelly is alleged to have done. Without admitting wrongdoing, he agreed to pay a \$125,000 penalty.

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Follow Associated Press environmental reporter Michael Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

## With shutdown clock ticking, GOP struggles for spending deal

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With a shutdown clock ticking toward a midnight Friday deadline, House Republican leaders struggled on Wednesday to unite the GOP rank and file behind a must-pass temporary spending bill.

Although a major obstacle evaporated after key GOP senators dropped a demand to add health insurance subsidies for the poor, a number of defense hawks offered resistance to a plan by GOP leaders to punt a guns-versus-butter battle with Democrats into the new year.

GOP leaders appear likely to go ahead nonetheless with a vote on Thursday — in time to avert a politically debilitating government shutdown, which would detract from the party's success this week in muscling

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through their landmark tax bill. The Senate would try to pass the measure as quickly as possible after that.

Some lawmakers from hurricane-hit states also worried that an \$81 billion disaster aid bill was at risk of getting left behind in the rush to exit Washington for the holidays. GOP leaders were mulling demands by Democrats to give Puerto Rico help in financing Medicaid as a possible means to pick up bipartisan support to advance that measure.

An earlier plan favored by pro-Pentagon members of the influential Armed Services Committee would have combined the stopgap funding bill with a \$658 billion Pentagon funding measure. But the idea is a nonstarter with the Senate, especially Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Meanwhile, an \$81 billion disaster aid bill faced a potential separate vote of its own, but it was at risk of languishing because of opposition among some conservatives over its cost. Senate action on that bill, a priority of the Texas and Florida delegations, wouldn't come until next year anyway.

Democrats oppose the GOP endgame agenda because their priorities on immigration and funding for domestic programs aren't being addressed. Their opposition means Republicans need to find unity among themselves, which once again is proving difficult. In such situations, congressional leaders often turn to lowest common denominator solutions, which in this case would mean a stopgap measure that's mostly free of other add-ons.

"The number of options is collapsing down," said Rep. Frank Lucas, R-Okla. "I have faith that at the last possible moment, to paraphrase Churchill, when we have no other choice, we'll do what we need to do."

Regardless of how the crisis of the moment will be solved, most of the items on Capitol Hill's list of unfinished business are going to be pushed into next year.

"I think it's highly unlikely that there's a government shutdown," Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told Fox News Channel's Special Report with Bret Baier on Wednesday. "I think that the right thing to do is let's get a short-term funding and we'll deal with these issues in January."

The upcoming short-term measure would fund the government through Jan. 19, giving lawmakers time to work out their leftover business.

Hopes for a bipartisan budget deal to sharply increase spending for both the Pentagon and domestic agencies appeared dead for the year, and Democrats were rebuffed in their demands for protections for immigrants brought to the U.S. illegally as children.

Sens. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., and Susan Collins, R-Maine, announced Wednesday that they would not seek to add the insurance subsidies, which are designed to stabilize the Affordable Care Act's markets. The tax bill repeals requirement that individuals purchase insurance.

Trying to combine the health measure with the spending bill was a demand of Collins when President Donald Trump and Senate GOP leaders secured her vote for the tax bill.

House Republicans weren't part of that deal, and with the tax vote over, it became plain that Senate leaders were not able to deliver for her.

Lawmakers said a short-term, \$2.1 billion fix for an expiring program that pays for veterans to seek care outside the Department of Veterans Affairs system would be added to the package. So would a short-term "patch" to make sure the states facing shortfalls from the Children's Health Insurance Program, which pays for health care for 9 million children from low-income families, won't have to purge children from the program.

The fate of the \$81 billion House disaster aid measure, now likely to see a separate vote, appears unclear. Conservatives are upset with the price tag of the plan, which also contains billions of dollars for California wildfire recovery. Democrats are pressing for more help for Puerto Rico, and California Rep. Kevin McCarthy, the No. 2 Republican in the House, signaled a willingness for at least some accommodation to win Democratic votes.

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi of California told fellow Democrats in an emailed update that GOP leaders aren't yielding on a Democratic demand that nondefense spending increases match the budget boost for the Pentagon.

"Unless we see a respect for our values and priorities, we continue to urge a strong NO" on the temporary funding bill, Pelosi said.



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Democrats such as Schumer pressed for a two- or three-week temporary spending bill that would send a number of unresolved issues — including disaster aid — into the new year. Schumer appears to believe that shifting as many issues as possible into next year will increase his leverage on immigration and the budget.

Also in the mix is an expiring overseas wiretapping program aimed at tracking terrorists. It has bipartisan backing, but stout conservatives and some liberals oppose it. McCarthy said the program might just be extended for a few weeks, but libertarian-minded lawmakers opposed a plan by Republican House Speaker Paul Ryan to add it to the stopgap measure.

## Triumphant Trump celebrates tax win \_ but some fear backlash

By **STEVE PEOPLES, CATHERINE LUCEY and MARCY GORDON, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A triumphant President Donald Trump and jubilant fellow Republicans celebrated the passage of their \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul Wednesday as a “historic victory for the American people.” The American people, however, will need some convincing.

As Trump and GOP lawmakers gathered at the White House to cheer their first major legislative achievement — and the biggest tax changes in a generation — some Republicans warned that the party could face a painful political backlash against an overhaul that offers corporations and wealthy taxpayers the biggest benefits and was projected to trigger the loss of health care coverage for millions of Americans.

There was no hint of anxiety at the White House, though, as the president and congressional Republicans pushed any qualms aside and reveled in a much-needed win at the end of a year marked by GOP infighting and political stumbles.

“We are making America great again,” Trump declared, personally thanking his “little team” of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan, before lawmakers lavished praise upon a president they have often openly criticized.

“I don’t know if we’ll have bigger moments, but we hope to,” said Trump.

The president was expected to sign the bill at a later date for technical reasons. In fact, the signing may be postponed until the start of the new calendar year in order to delay \$120 billion in automatic cuts to popular programs such as Medicare and spare Republicans from having to explain them in an election year.

The tax package provides a deep cut in the corporate rate, from 35 percent to 21 percent. On the individual side, about 80 percent of American households will get tax cuts next year, while about 5 percent will pay more, according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center.

People who make less than \$25,000 will see an average tax cut of \$60; those who earn between \$49,000 and \$86,000 will get about \$900, and those in the top 1 percent of income — earning more than \$733,000 — will receive around \$51,000 in tax savings, the policy center said.

The cuts will come at a price: The Congressional Budget Office predicts the legislation will add \$1.4 trillion to the national debt over the next decade.

Some of the president’s strongest allies conceded that voters may not immediately warm to the new law.

Andy Surabian, a senior aide for a pro-Trump super PAC, likened the president’s position to that of Ronald Reagan, who struggled through low approval ratings early in his presidential term after Congress passed a tax cut that led to huge Republican losses in the 1982 midterm elections. Reagan went on to a sweeping re-election in 1984 after the economy improved.

Said Surabian: “Even if we don’t start seeing positive effects in 2018, the important thing here is President Trump sets himself up to win re-election in 2020.”

GOP strategists and candidates alike called on Trump to launch an immediate public relations tour to sell the plan to help avert an anti-Republican tsunami in 2018.

“People don’t understand it,” said Virginia Republican Senate candidate Corey Stewart, though he still called passage “a massive win” for Trump and the GOP.

Only about 1 in 3 voters have supported the legislation in recent days, according to several polls. About half of Americans believe the plan will hurt their personal finances. And 2 in 3 voters say the wealthy will get the most benefits, according to a USA Today/Suffolk University poll released last week.



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The White House said Wednesday that Trump will actively promote the bill. Aides argued that media coverage has not accurately portrayed the benefits and that people will come around as they feel the payoff.

Trump himself complained in a tweet that "defeated Dems" and the media were out to "demean" the tax package but "the results will speak for themselves, starting very soon."

Democrats, who unanimously opposed the tax plan in Congress, were furious about the new policy yet upbeat about the potential political fallout in next year's elections. They need to flip 24 House seats and just two Senate seats to take control of each chamber.

Asked if the tax bill will help Republicans hold the House, Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi leaned into a microphone and said, "Let. Them. Think. That."

The bill goes far beyond taxes.

While it does not repeal the law known as "Obamacare," the legislation finalized by the House on Wednesday attacks a central tenet of the health care system by eliminating the requirement that all Americans have health insurance. The Congressional Budget Office says elimination of the "individual mandate" will boost health care costs by about 10 percent for those with coverage and leave 13 million additional Americans without health insurance in 10 years.

Millions of people will still remain covered under the law's Medicaid expansion and health care exchanges, but Trump cast the package as a shadow repeal.

"We have essentially repealed Obamacare," the president declared.

On taxes, the first modest effects will be felt in February paychecks.

People living in high-tax states like New York and California may ultimately pay more. Among those who benefit, the wealthy will make out far better than the working-class voters who fueled Trump's victory last year.

Trump said Wednesday the bill will spur economic growth as corporations, flush with cash, increase wages and hire more workers. Democrats questioned, even mocked that prediction.

Reflecting the political risks, some of the nation's most vulnerable House Republicans voted against the bill.

Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., one of 12 GOP House members to vote no, said the tax plan would hurt many people in high-tax states. The bill imposes a \$10,000 cap on taxpayers who deduct their state, local and property taxes. Currently, there is no limit on how much in state and local taxes you can deduct.

All but one of the GOP no votes came from like-minded Republicans facing re-election in 11 months in moderate districts across New Jersey, New York and California.

The road to a Democratic House majority, if there is one, runs through these districts.

All the salesmanship in the world won't change the reality that the tax overhaul overwhelmingly favors the rich, Democratic critics said.

"People think it's unfair. They want tax reform, they don't want tax cuts for the wealthy," said Gov. Terry McAuliffe of Virginia. "And I think people will realize they've been sold a pig in a poke."

Peoples reported from New York. Associated Press writers Ken Thomas, Stephen Ohlemacher and Andrew Taylor contributed from Washington.

This story has been corrected to show the bill will cap, not eliminate, the deduction for state and local taxes at \$10,000.

## Expert: New route may have distracted engineer before crash

By PHUONG LE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Experts say it's possible the engineer on an Amtrak train that derailed as it hurtled into a curve at more than twice the speed limit was distracted for an extended period of time before the train plunged off an overpass and onto a busy interstate, a key factor in the investigation.

Authorities on Wednesday reopened two southbound lanes of Interstate 5 - the Pacific Northwest's main north-south arterial - that had been closed since Monday's accident as federal investigators focused

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on whether the engineer's attention was diverted by a second person in the cab, or by something else. Three men were killed Monday south of Seattle when the train barreled into a 30 mph zone at 80 mph. Southbound lanes of Interstate 5 near DuPont had been closed at the accident ever since.

A conductor in training who was familiarizing himself with the new route was in the locomotive with the engineer at the time. A federal official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity said authorities want to know whether the engineer lost "situational awareness" — didn't realize where he was.

Rail-safety experts say that while it is fairly common to have two people in a cab, investigators will look into whether that may have distracted the engineer.

"What interactions were the conductor and the engineer having and did that distract the engineer from his focus on where they were on the route?" said Keith Millhouse, a rail-safety consultant who was former board chairman of Metrolink, Southern California's commuter rail system.

Millhouse said the two could have been having discussions that caused the engineer to not realize where he was on the route.

"My guess is there were probably distractions not only immediately prior to the accident but in the minutes leading up to the accident," he said.

Investigators had not yet interviewed the train engineer and other crew members — all of whom were hospitalized — as of Wednesday morning, a National Transportation Safety Board spokesman said. Experts say investigators will want to talk to them as soon as possible while the event is still fresh in their memory.

NTSB board member Bella Dinh-Zarr said Tuesday they were in the early stage of the investigation, and authorities won't determine a probable cause while on scene. She said distraction is one of the most looked at priorities, and investigators will be looking at cellphone records of all employees.

Dinh-Zarr also said the engineer did not manually activate the emergency brake, which went off automatically when the train derailed.

"This is a situation where the engineer should have been starting the braking application probably a minute before they reached that curve," said Allan Zarembski, a civil engineering professor who directs the rail engineering and safety program at the University of Delaware.

"It suggests strongly that the engineer was distracted for a fairly extended point of view," he said. The information so far "seems to suggest that there was an operator issue here," he said.

In some previous wrecks, train operators were found to have been seriously fatigued or distracted by a cellphone or something else.

Railroad unions have repeatedly urged adding a second crew member in the cab. Former NTSB chief railroad crash investigator Ed Dobranetski disagrees.

He has said putting multiple crew members in a locomotive was "more of a distraction" than a safeguard.

The former investigator pointed to a deadly 1996 collision near Washington, D.C. between an Amtrak train and a Maryland commuter train that had three crew members in the cab. The engineer of the commuter train was thought to have been distracted by a conversation with the other crew members. The train ran through a speed restriction, reaching 66 mph in a 30 mph zone, and blew through a stop signal before slamming head on into the Amtrak train.

Eleven people were killed.

"Conversation creates a potential for distraction and interference with the engineer's retention of information, in this case the signal information," the NTSB wrote in its report on the 1996 crash.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Wednesday that Amtrak President Richard Anderson told him the rail company would pay the costs of the derailment as well as the medical and other expenses of the victims. He also said Anderson would try to ensure a technology can automatically slow or stop a speeding train — known as positive train control — was in place statewide before a Dec. 31, 2018 federal deadline.

That technology was not in use on the stretch of track involved in Monday's crash.

Regulators have been pressing railroads for years to install such technology, and some have done so, but the deadline has been extended repeatedly at the industry's request.

On Wednesday, crews in Washington state removed a train locomotive from the crash site and cleaned

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up debris before reopening the freeway that typically sees about 60,000 cars a day. The train, with 85 passengers and crew members, was making the inaugural run along a fast, new 15-mile bypass route.

Associated Press writer Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles, Sally Ho in Seattle, Michael Sisak in Philadelphia, Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Washington, and Manuel Valdes in DuPont, Washington contributed to this report.

For complete coverage of the deadly derailment, click here: <https://www.apnews.com/tag/TrainDerailment>

## Ryan savors tax bill win, but coming fights could roil GOP

By ALAN FRAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was a victory lap so irresistible that Speaker Paul Ryan did it twice.

When the House approved the \$1.5 trillion Republican tax bill Tuesday and again Wednesday with minor changes, it was a beaming Ryan who emphatically pounded the gavel, announced the vote and applauded his bellowing GOP colleagues.

The moment put lawmakers on the cusp of shipping the measure to President Donald Trump and achieving one of Ryan's — and his party's — long-cherished goals. Since entering the House in 1999 as a 28-year-old whose resume ranged from fitness trainer to congressional aide, Ryan has evolved into a dominant GOP voice on tax and budget issues.

Few dispute that the Wisconsin Republican can claim the tax bill's passage as a personal triumph. But in a business that often cares more about the next battle than the last one, the coming few days and the 2018 election year loom as a complicated and risky time for Ryan.

To ward off a Christmas-season or January government shutdown and win defense spending boosts, GOP leaders will eventually need a compromise with Democrats demanding domestic program increases and an immigration deal. That could anger his party's most conservative members, who helped push previous Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, into early retirement in 2015 when they decided he was too prone to cut bipartisan agreements.

"I can't imagine that a historic tax reform package would be enough credit to stop backlash from a bad spending and immigration bill that gets put on the House floor," Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., leader of the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, said in an interview Tuesday. "It's just not the way that politics happen. They're viewed as two separate things."

Up next will be the 2018 agenda, which Ryan envisions focusing on squeezing savings from benefit programs that moderates from competitive districts are leery of touching. Then comes November's midterm elections in which Trump's unpopularity means the GOP faces a real chance of losing House and Senate control.

"He's got to hold the House," said former Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., who once led the House GOP's campaign efforts. "At the end of the day, part of the report card of leaders is they've got to re-elect their members."

For now, Ryan is relishing congressional approval of the tax bill, which Trump is certain to sign. His desire to revamp the code was evident in 1998, when as congressman-elect he complained during a C-SPAN interview that existing laws were inhibiting practices "that make America great," two decades before Trump made similar words famous.

"I am very pleased with how far we pushed the art of the possible," Ryan said Tuesday in an interview with The Associated Press.

With a tricky 2018 approaching, speculation has arisen that flush from victory, Ryan would leave Congress after the tax legislation becomes law or after next year's elections. He's tried squelching that talk, though in a less-than-airtight way.

"I'm not going anywhere anytime soon, and just let's leave that thing at that," he told reporters.

Davis, the former Virginia GOP congressman, says it would be a "huge mistake" for Ryan to depart before

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the 2018 elections because "it would signal to Republicans across the country that he's abandoning ship."

After this year's crash of the GOP effort to repeal President Barack Obama's health care law, most Republicans viewed the tax bill as a crucial achievement to show voters.

"A lot of people are thinking, 'This is one of the reasons I came here,'" said Rep. Jeb Hensarling, R-Texas. "There are just so many post offices you can rename."

Even so, conservatives are already pressuring Ryan in their direction. While denying rumors they may try forcing a vote on removing Ryan from the speakership, they're not shy about saying they'll be watching closely.

"Once the euphoria of passing the tax bill wears off, we'll have to turn to other issues like spending," said conservative Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., who's clashed often with GOP leaders. "It depends how the speaker picks his way forward."

A bipartisan compromise on spending and protecting immigrants from deportation who arrived illegally as children — the "Dreamers" — would likely garner enough Democratic and GOP votes to pass Congress despite conservatives' objections. But no party leader wants lingering resentment among their rank and file that could result in defections on future bills or even attempts to topple them.

"Any leader, if they're going to lead, has to make sure they've got followers behind them," said former Rep. Tom Reynolds, R-N.Y., who entered Congress with Ryan.

Besides alienating conservatives, Ryan — his party's 2012 vice presidential candidate — must balance an assertive 2018 agenda with shielding moderates from damaging votes.

Though final decisions remain, Ryan has discussed trying to revamp benefit programs that could include Medicaid, welfare and food stamps. Most Republicans expect that drive to avoid reshaping Medicare and Social Security, which help older people and would be politically perilous.

It's unclear whether curbing benefit programs would have enough GOP support to get off the ground. While conservatives say they're eager to tackle those costly programs, moderates from swing districts show little enthusiasm.

"We should focus next on infrastructure," said Rep. Ryan Costello, R-Pa.

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Associated Press writer Andrew Taylor contributed to this report.

## Giants acquire Evan Longoria from Rays for 4 players

By JANIE McCAULEY, AP Baseball Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Evan Longoria expects to win immediately with the San Francisco Giants, whose run of success in even years is well documented — and the club's new third baseman knows all about that.

The Giants' brass realizes adding Longoria to the lineup and an already-talented infield gives San Francisco a far better chance of bouncing back from a surprising last-place season in the NL West.

An offense-producing third baseman the Giants sought this winter, Longoria was traded from Tampa Bay on Wednesday for outfielder Denard Span, star infield prospect Christian Arroyo and two minor league pitchers.

"I'm looking forward to bringing everything I can and more to the clubhouse and the organization and being back in the postseason and winning like I expect to do," Longoria said. "It's an even year coming up and I know the Giants win in even years. That I am looking forward to."

The position had been a priority for San Francisco, and Longoria's durability means so much, too. He has played at least 156 games in each of the past five years, all 162 in 2014, and also hit 20 or more homers in each of those five seasons.

"He's sorely needed and will be a great addition for us," Giants general manager Bobby Evans said.

It marked the first big offseason move by each organization.

Tampa Bay in effect is responsible for \$14.5 million of the \$88 million Longoria is owed, and the Rays took on \$13 million in guaranteed money due Span.

Longoria had \$86 million in remaining guaranteed salary and buyout as part of a contract that runs



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through 2022 and contains a 2023 club option. The \$9.5 million in deferred money included in that total was converted to an assignment bonus payable by the Rays from 2025-29. Tampa Bay will give the Giants \$2 million by this Dec. 31 to cover Longoria's assignment bonus and an additional \$3 million by Oct. 31, 2022.

The 32-year-old leaves Tampa Bay as the longest-tenured player in franchise history, after spending 10 of his big league seasons in a Rays uniform. He is the club's leader with 1,435 games, 261 home runs and 892 RBIs. Longoria started all 30 of the Rays' postseason games at third.

Longoria batted .261 with 20 homers and 86 RBIs last season. The 2008 AL Rookie of the Year and three-time Gold Glover has played at least 156 games in each of the past five seasons and hit 20 or more home runs in all of those years.

Longoria grew up in Southern California as an Angels fan but has plenty of friends who cheer for the rival Dodgers. "I'm going to be saying a lot of sorries."

Also, he's getting off turf, noting, "I'm excited to be playing on grass."

In November 2012, Longoria received a \$136.6 million, 10-year contract with Tampa Bay that added six guaranteed seasons and \$100 million to his previous deal. If exercised, the option would make the agreement worth \$144.6 million over 11 years. He will complete his 10th season of major league service on the second day of next season, which would have given him the right to approve any trade from the Rays as a 10-year veteran who spent five or more years with his current team.

Rays general manager Erik Neander said trading Longoria "was in the best long-term interest of our franchise."

Still, he was the face of a small-market franchise and meant so much to the city.

"The decision itself was one that was incredibly difficult for us to make," Neander said.

The 33-year-old Span has hit .283 with 60 homers and 432 RBIs over 10 years in the majors, but San Francisco was looking for more athleticism and steady defense in the outfield. In fact, manager Bruce Bochy had approached Span about the possibility of playing left field going forward. Span led the Giants last season with 73 runs scored despite a stint on the 10-day disabled list. He previously played for the Nationals and the Twins.

Bochy expects Longoria to bat third or cleanup, and he can already envision Longoria as part of a top infield with Gold Glove shortstop Brandon Crawford, second baseman Joe Panik and Brandon Belt at first.

"When you talk about the elite third basemen of the game, Evan's name is going to be there. He's been one of the most consistent third basemen in the game," Bochy said. "It's going to be one of the best infield defenses in the game."

Arroyo, a first-round draft pick out of high school in 2013 about an hour north of Tampa in Brooksville, was one of the Giants' top prospects but didn't play in the majors after June 2 because of a broken left hand. He batted .192 with three homers and 14 RBIs in 34 games. The Rays have been watching him for years and believe he is making significant strides at the plate.

"That's the cost of doing business," Sabeian said of sending Arroyo in the deal.

The Giants also sent right-hander Stephen Woods and left-hander Matt Krook to the Rays, who acquired third baseman Matt Duffy from the Giants at the 2016 trade deadline for Matt Moore. The left-handed Moore was dealt last week to Texas.

As part of the assignment bonus, Tampa Bay owes Longoria \$1.5 million on Dec. 15, 2025, and \$2 million on Dec. 15 in each of the following four years. San Francisco will pay Longoria salaries of \$12 million next year, \$12.5 million in 2019, \$13 million in 2020, \$16.5 million in 2021 and \$17.5 million in 2022.

Span gets \$9 million plus possible performance bonuses next year, and the Rays inherit a \$12 million mutual option for 2019 with a \$4 million buyout.

Longoria counts as \$11,165,300 annually for the Giants' luxury tax payroll and Span \$13,333,333 for the Rays' tax payroll. In addition, the Giants receive a \$600,000 yearly credit for the cash transaction in the swap.

San Francisco, which won World Series titles in 2010, '12 and '14, made its first big offseason move after missing out on Giancarlo Stanton and Japanese star Shohei Ohtani. The Giants went 64-98 to avoid the club's first 100-loss season since 1985.



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"This is a long-awaited day in our offseason dealings. The organization just got better," said Brian Sabeau, Giants executive vice president of baseball operations. "Hopefully the fan base and our organization realizes this affirms our commitment to turn our fortunes around as soon as possible and specifically in the 2018 season. We check off a huge box with this acquisition. Evan is a known player and quite frankly, you look at his baseball card, we're getting somebody who's not only been an accomplished third baseman of note but hits in the middle of the order and improves our defense overnight."

AP Baseball Writer Ronald Blum contributed to this report.

More AP baseball: <https://apnews.com/tag/MLBbaseball>

## Israel, US team up to block UN vote on Jerusalem

By JOSEF FEDERMAN, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel is intensively lobbying countries around the world to oppose a U.N. resolution criticizing President Donald Trump's decision to recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital, Israeli officials said Wednesday.

Thursday's vote in the U.N. General Assembly will indicate whether Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has succeeded in his efforts to drum up new pockets of support in the developing world, as well as the extent to which Israel and the U.S. are — or are not — alone on the question of Jerusalem.

The Palestinians have turned to the General Assembly after the U.S. vetoed a resolution this week in the Security Council calling on Trump to rescind his decision. While General Assembly votes, unlike Security Council resolutions, are not legally binding, they serve as a barometer of international sentiment on key issues.

The U.S. and Israel are both placing great weight on Thursday's vote. U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley threatened U.N. member states with possible retaliation if they support the resolution, saying Trump takes the vote "personally" and the U.S. "will be taking names."

Trump went even further, telling reporters at a Cabinet meeting in Washington that opponents were likely to face a cutoff in U.S. funding. "For all these nations, they take our money and then vote against us," Trump said. "We're watching those votes. Let them vote against us. We'll save a lot. We don't care."

The comments brought accusations of U.S. intimidation.

Israel's deputy foreign minister, Tzipi Hotovely, said that the U.S. and Israel were making "immense efforts" to block the resolution.

"We have a very, very simple message: Jerusalem is the capital of the Jewish people for 3,000 years and the capital of Israel for almost 70 years," she told Channel 10.

An Israeli Foreign Ministry official confirmed the government was making a "very vast" lobbying campaign to minimize the resolution's impact.

He said Israel is trying to persuade allies to abstain or even vote against it. He also said that Israel has asked Jewish organizations in certain countries to lobby their governments on Israel's behalf.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity because he was discussing sensitive diplomatic contacts, refused to identify which countries Israel has approached or say how he expects them to vote. But he said he thinks the campaign will be "successful to a certain extent."

In some ways, the vote is a test of Netanyahu's foreign policy. In recent years, the Israeli leader has invested great efforts to look beyond Israel's traditional allies in Washington and Western Europe and cultivate ties with developing nations that have traditionally been supportive of the Palestinians.

He has portrayed these efforts as both a savvy strategy aimed at opening new markets for Israeli technology exports, as well as countering what Israel says is a deep-seated bias against it at the United Nations.

This year alone, Netanyahu has visited China and hosted India's prime minister, Narendra Modi. He also has attended two summits in Africa, meeting with a host of leaders from across the continent, and in September, became the first sitting Israeli prime minister to visit Latin America with stops in Argentina,

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Mexico and Colombia.

The votes cast by these countries will provide an indication about whether the diplomatic outreach is paying off.

Votes by other key allies with traditionally close ties to Israel, including Germany, Britain, Australia, Canada and smaller European countries like the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Poland and Hungary, could also provide valuable indicators about support for the U.S.-Israeli approach.

Many of these countries either abstained or opposed a landmark 2012 vote in the General Assembly that recognized Palestine with upgraded status as a nonmember state.

The Israeli official said a single vote at the U.N. on Thursday would not determine the success of Israel's diplomatic outreach. But he said "this is certainly part of it."

A draft of the U.N. resolution obtained by The Associated Press calls for affirming that any actions that "have altered the character, status or demographic composition of the Holy City of Jerusalem" have no legal effect and must be rescinded. It also calls upon all states "to refrain from the establishment of diplomatic missions" in Jerusalem.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki, who was in New York for the vote, called the U.S. threats "dangerous" and predicted that they would not have a major impact. "We believe that there is world consensus against the U.S. decision on Jerusalem. This was clearly reflected in the Security Council, despite the U.S. veto," he told the AP.

Trump shattered decades of U.S. neutrality on Jerusalem on Dec. 6 when he recognized the holy city as Israel's capital and said he will move the U.S. Embassy there.

Trump said the move was not meant to prejudge negotiations on the final borders of the city, and instead merely recognized reality since Jerusalem already serves as Israel's capital.

But the announcement was widely perceived as taking the side of Israel in the most sensitive issue of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Palestinians claim east Jerusalem, home to key Muslim, Jewish and Christian holy sites, and which Israel captured and annexed in 1967, as the capital of a future state. The international community has said the status of Jerusalem should be decided in negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Netanyahu has repeatedly praised Trump's decision and said he expects other nations to follow suit. But so far, the announcement has triggered mostly denunciations and demonstrations around the world.

Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah movement and other groups have organized mass protests while its rival, the Gaza-based Islamic militant group Hamas, has called for a third violent uprising against Israel. In all, eight Palestinians have been killed, most in clashes along the Gaza border with Israel.

The unrest continued on Wednesday as dozens of Palestinians clashed with Israeli forces in the West Bank town of Bethlehem, where protesters burned a large American flag and hurled stones at the Israelis. Demonstrators also scuffled with Israeli police in east Jerusalem and along the Gaza border.

Abbas has said that the U.S. can no longer serve as the sole Mideast mediator, and he has been trying to rally support in Europe and the Arab world.

On Wednesday, Abbas was meeting with leaders of Saudi Arabia, an influential country believed to have low-level but warming ties with Israel, before heading to France.

## Mass recall of French-made baby milk over salmonella fears

By JEFFREY SCHAEFFER and ANGELA CHARLTON, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — A tainted baby milk scandal affecting some 30 countries is growing, as French dairy giant Lactalis recalled millions more products globally because of fears of salmonella contamination.

Pharmacies and supermarkets pulled cans and bottles of baby milk off shelves Thursday as the company — one of the world's biggest names in dairy — scrambled to contain the damage.

Lactalis had already recalled several million baby milk products earlier this month. On Thursday, the company expanded the recall to all products made in its factory in Craon in western France since February "as a precautionary measure."

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In a statement, Lactalis apologized to customers and said investigations confirmed the outbreak began after renovation work earlier this year at the Craon site. Production has been halted at the site.

French health authorities have said 31 infants around France contracted salmonella in recent months within days of consuming baby milk made in Lactalis' factory at Craon. Sixteen were hospitalized but later released and are now doing fine, according to a statement from the government public health agency.

It is unclear whether children in other countries have also fallen ill.

The symptoms of salmonella infection include abdominal cramps, diarrhea and fever. Most people recover without treatment.

Lactalis spokesman Michel Nalet told The Associated Press on Thursday that the newest recall affects about 30 countries but did not have a breakdown of which ones.

A French government list earlier this month said countries affected include Britain, Greece, China, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Saudi Arabia, Morocco, Sudan, Peru and Colombia. The United States is a major market for Lactalis but is not affected by the recall. The company has production sites in 47 countries, including the U.S.

The products affected include baby milks sold under the Picot, Milumel and Pepti brand names.

At the Pharmacie de L'Ourcq in the 19th arrondissement of northern Paris, employees emptied shelves and piled cans of milk into carts as warnings about the new recall spread around the country.

"Today safety means removing everything. Even if tomorrow we come to learn that there are lots that we can leave on the shelves or that there are boxes that we can leave on the shelves, I think that today we are taking the decision to remove everything," said pharmacist Deborah Cohen. "If we have to have empty shelves for a while we'll do it."

Merveille Gamimi, a customer at the pharmacy and mother of an infant son, expressed concern. "For big companies, (consumers) are numbers .... But for us — these are our lives, our everyday lives. When my child is sick, I don't sleep. I'm up the whole night. I worry. I search for solutions," she said.

Lactalis owns leading dairy brands including President and Galbani cheeses and Parmalat milk. A privately held, family-run company headquartered in Laval in western France, it has 75,000 employees in 85 countries and annual revenues of about 17 billion euros (\$20 billion).

## High-speed internet to bring big change in remote Alaska

BY RACHEL D'ORO, Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Jeff Kowunna used his drone to record this year's celebration of another successful bowhead whaling harvest for one of the oldest Alaska Native settlements.

The video from the three-day event in remote Point Hope, at the edge of the Arctic Ocean, showed whaling captains sharing the flippers with residents, traditional drumming and dancing, and the ever-popular blanket toss, where villagers use seal skins to heave each other into the air.

But Kowunna's plan to share this unique slice of Inupiat culture online was thwarted by the area's notoriously slow satellite connection.

This month, the 34-year-old whale hunter is ready to try again. His community of 700 and several other isolated Alaska towns are getting a commodity much of the U.S. has long taken for granted: high-speed internet.

"I've been counting the days," Kowunna said of the broadband he hopes will help him connect more immediately with the world with posts from gatherings like the June whaling feast, or Qagruk, while updating folks who have moved away. "I think it's going to be a lot smoother sailing as far as streaming to the web."

The new service is part of a planned international fiber-optic system from Anchorage-based wholesaler Quintillion that eventually will connect London and Tokyo via the Arctic. It's the result of several factors, representative say, including technical advances, private investors willing to bet on the system, and a warming Arctic environment that opened up a limited construction season, allowing crews to bury hundreds of miles of subsea cable off Alaska's upper coast.

"Clearly, 20 years ago, even 10 years ago, the situation with the ice in that part of the world would have

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made the progress much more difficult to accomplish," Quintillion spokesman Tim Woolston said.

The effect on far-northern Alaska — where many rely on a subsistence lifestyle for food — could be dramatic: No more classroom computers crashing during lessons, software taking an entire day to download, movies buffering for hours, and sophisticated medical equipment sitting partially unused.

"A project like this is critical," said Mike Romano with NTCA-the Rural Broadband Association, which represents 850 small telecom and broadband service providers in the U.S. and Canada. Connecting rural communities remains a significant broadband challenge because of the higher cost of delivering service far from metropolitan hubs.

Alaska's 1,400-mile (2,250-kilometer) portion of the international project includes a land trunk line between Fairbanks and the Prudhoe Bay oil fields that went live in the spring. Quintillion has not released plans or a timetable for the larger project and will not say how much has been spent so far in the private venture. New York private equity firm Cooper Investment Partners is anchoring the financing.

Ship crews finished installing the last Alaska segment of subsea cable in October, and the network became available to telecom providers Dec. 1.

The improved service won't be cheap, said Jens Laipeniaks, CEO of Artic Slope Telephone Association Cooperative, which serves three of the affected communities. Laipeniaks expects the cost to drop when the final two phases are built and more wholesale tenants join the system.

Still, commodities always cost more in the Arctic, where a gallon of milk can carry a \$10 price tag because everything has to be flown or shipped up. Fiber-optic is no exception, but the expense has not dampened enthusiasm, according to utility officials.

"That's just the reality of being in an ultra-rural market," Laipeniaks said. "But the technology will never be the limiting factor again."

Not everyone is sold on the new link. In Utqiagvik, America's northernmost town, Inupiat whaling captain Gordon Brower balks at exposing his culture to unnecessary criticism — from anti-whaling activists, for example.

"It's unnecessary because we're only just trying to provide food," Brower said. "We don't have Walmart in the backyard over here."

In Point Hope, Inupiat artist and traditional skin-boat maker Henry Koonook worries people will be more distracted by the online world than they already are. Koonook himself has nothing to do with computers, even to connect with prospective buyers.

"That little box — what they call a laptop and iPhones — is ruining our people," he said. "It's helping them with their education and stuff like that, but they're drifting away from the culture and traditions, and it's going fast."

Others have big plans for tapping into the faster and more reliable service.

The Arctic Slope Regional Corp., an Alaska Native corporation and minority investor in the Quintillion project, is developing an online store featuring artwork by its shareholders, a tourism platform for its eight villages and a repository of stories and videos featuring Inupiat elders.

"It's just limitless what we can do now," said Cheryl Stine, its chief administrative officer.

The North Slope Borough, where Point Hope and Utqiagvik are located, is developing a cultural website through its history, language and culture office. The site will be called Puiguitkaat, Inupiaq for "things that should never be forgotten," according to Kathy Ahgeak, who heads the office.

"We have a wealth of traditional knowledge, ancient knowledge," Ahgeak said. "We want our children to know just how far back our heritage goes."

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Follow Rachel D'Oro at <https://twitter.com/rdoro>



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## AP FACT CHECK: Trump's 'middle-class miracle' favors wealthy

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and CALVIN WOODWARD, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — You wouldn't know it from President Donald Trump's rhetoric, but the tax overhaul coming into effect is heavily tilted to the rich. It also leaves "Obamacare" in place, despite his assertion that the tax plan repeals the health care law. Nothing about the plan provides the fuel to achieve economic growth at the levels he's predicted.

Trump's penchant for exaggeration and sometimes pure fiction has clouded the realities of the overhaul as it has shaped up over months. As for Democrats, you wouldn't know to hear them talk that middle-class people are getting a tax cut out of the deal, too.

A look at remarks made Wednesday and earlier about the tax plan Trump will shortly sign into law.

TRUMP: "It's the largest tax cut in the history of our country." — remarks Wednesday.

THE FACTS: It isn't. For months Trump has refused to recognize larger tax cuts in history, of which there have been many, or to grant that other presidents have enacted big tax cuts since Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

An October analysis by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget found that it would be the eighth biggest since 1918. As a percentage of the total economy, Reagan's 1981 cut is the biggest followed by the 1945 rollback of taxes that financed World War II. Trump's plan is also smaller than cuts in 1948, 1964 and 1921, and probably in other years.

Valued at \$1.5 trillion over 10 years, the plan is indeed large and expensive. But it's much smaller than originally intended. Back in the spring, it was shaping up as a \$5.5 trillion package. Even then it would have only been the third largest since 1940 as a share of gross domestic product.

VICE PRESIDENT MIKE PENCE: "You're delivering on that middle-class miracle." — to Trump at a Cabinet meeting Wednesday.

THE FACTS: Modest doesn't make for a miracle. Pence's praise to the boss reflects Trump's assertion that "it's a tax bill for the middle class," as he put it earlier and many times, but average people are not the prime beneficiaries of the tax cuts. Aside from businesses, rich people get the most.

The nonpartisan Tax Policy Center estimates the biggest benefit of the new law will go to households making \$308,000 to \$733,000. Households making over that should get a tax cut worth 3.4 percent of their after-tax income. For the richest 0.1 percent (making over \$3.4 million), the tax cut should be worth 2.7 percent of their after-tax income. For middle-income earners: 1.6 percent, the center estimates.

Moreover, only high-income people would get a meaningful tax cut after 2025, when nearly all of the plan's individual income tax provisions are due to expire.

Republicans argue that the middle class will also see benefits from the business tax cuts, in the form of more jobs and higher wages.

DEMOCRATIC SEN. CHARLES SCHUMER: "Their bill increases taxes on lots of middle-class people. ... According to the Tax Policy Center, the top 1 percent of earners in our country gets 83 percent of the benefits." — remarks Tuesday.

THE FACTS: The tax cuts are not nearly as lopsided as many Democrats are portraying them. Almost all of the middle class would initially pay less in taxes.

For the next eight years, the vast majority of middle-class taxpayers — those earning between \$49,000 and \$86,000 — will receive a tax cut, albeit a small one. In 2018, nine-tenths of the middle class will get a cut, according to the Tax Policy Center. In 2025, 87 percent will. The tax cut won't be very big: just \$930 next year for the middle one-fifth of taxpayers, the center's analysis concludes. For those paid twice a month, that's about \$40 a paycheck.

Schumer and other Democrats are basing their assertions on the fact that nearly all personal tax cuts expire after 2025, which would result in a slight tax increase for about two-thirds of the middle class by 2027. The top 1 percent would still get a cut that year.



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Only in 2027 do the wealthiest taxpayers get 83 percent of the benefit, as Schumer says. In 2018, roughly 21 percent of the tax cut's benefits go to the richest 1 percent, a much smaller figure, though still a disproportionate share. Just 11 percent will go to the middle one-fifth.

REP. NANCY PELOSI, House Democratic leader: "86 million middle class families get a tax hike." — tweet Wednesday.

THE FACTS: She's ignoring all the middle class tax cuts before 2027; that year, taxes will be slightly higher for the middle class unless the cuts are extended.

TRUMP on his tax legislation: "Obamacare has been repealed in this bill." — remarks Wednesday.

THE FACTS: It hasn't. The tax plan ends fines for people who don't carry health insurance. That's a major change but far from the dismantling of the law.

Other marquee components of Obama's law remain, such as the Medicaid expansion serving low-income adults, protections that shield people with pre-existing medical conditions from being denied coverage or charged higher premiums, income-based subsidies for consumers buying individual health insurance policies, the requirement that insurers cover "essential" health benefits, and the mandate that larger employers provide coverage to their workers or face fines.

Also, the tax bill doesn't repeal fines for uninsured individuals until the start of 2019, meaning the "individual mandate" is still in force for next year unless the administration acts to waive the penalties.

TRUMP: "When the individual mandate is being repealed, that means Obamacare is being repealed because they get their money from the individual mandate." — remarks Wednesday.

THE FACTS: This is also wrong. The fines on people who don't carry health insurance only provide a small fraction of the financing for the program. Most of the money comes from higher taxes on upper-income people, cuts in Medicare payments to service providers, and other tax increases.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that fines from uninsured people would total \$3 billion this year, while the government's cost for the coverage provided under the health law would total about \$117 billion.

TRUMP: "So we're at 3.3 percent GDP. I see no reason why we don't go to 4 percent, 5 percent and even 6 percent." Speaks of GDP "getting up to 4, 5, and even 6 percent, because I think that's possible." — Cabinet meeting last week.

THE FACTS: There are no signs the economy is capable of delivering a phenomenal and rarely achieved growth rate in the order of 6 percent, or 5 or even 4. Federal Reserve officials and most mainstream economists expect economic growth to hew closer to 2 percent. The economy last cleared the 6 percent hurdle in 1984 and only for that fleeting year, at 7.3 percent. This was a different time, when baby boomers were at prime working ages, instead of today when they're starting to retire. The Federal Reserve had boosted growth by steadily slashing a key interest rate from its 1981 peak of 20 percent, while the Fed today is slowly increasing the same rate. Also, the national debt was much lower.

Trump's tax cuts are forecast to max out at roughly \$280 billion in 2019, says Congress' Joint Committee on Taxation. Yet to generate growth of 6 percent, those cuts would have to spur a massive \$1.2 trillion gain to the gross domestic product. No administration analysis emerged to show how this could be possible.

HOUSE SPEAKER PAUL RYAN: "We are making things so simple that you can do your taxes on a form the size of a postcard." — remarks when the tax bill came out Nov. 2.

THE FACTS: Don't count on it. Few accountants would agree that simplification has been achieved. The combination of temporary provisions, partial elimination of deductions and other loopholes, and differing tax rates for business income and wages in the new law has, if anything, added further complications.

Some middle-class taxpayers may see simpler returns because the standard deduction has doubled in

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size, to \$24,000 for a married couple. Some families will probably stop taking deductions for things like mortgage interest as a result, making their tax returns easier to file. But people who give heavily to charity, for example, will still have to run through their receipts to see if they're better off with the standard deduction or itemization.

Many business owners and upper-income taxpayers are faced with a host of new complexities: Should high-paid employees try to reclassify their salaries as business income, which will now be subject to a lower tax rate? If so, what will they do in eight years, when the lower rate on business income is set to expire? Are they losing their deduction for state and local taxes, which can be worth tens of thousands of dollars for wealthier taxpayers? Many will, but it may not matter if they paid the alternative minimum tax in previous years, which overrode those deductions.

These types of questions will keep accountants busy for months, if not longer.

TRUMP on the tax plan: "So there's a great spirit for it, people want to see it." — Fox Business interview in October.

THE FACTS: Polling doesn't find that spirit.

In an NBC-Wall Street Journal poll this week, 41 percent said the tax plan is a bad idea, 24 percent said it was good. That's a deterioration in support over two months.

A Quinnipiac University poll this month found that registered voters, convinced that the benefits will flow mainly to corporations and the wealthy, oppose the plan 55 percent to 26 percent.

In a Gallup poll in September, just 2 percent of respondents named taxes as the country's most important problem. Dissatisfaction with government, race relations and immigration were among the issues at the forefront.

A survey this month by CBS News found that 53 percent Americans say they pay about the right amount in taxes, while 40 percent say they pay more than their fair share. That same survey found 52 percent said corporations pay less than their fair share. The president's plan will cut the corporate tax rate to from 35 percent to 21 percent.

Associated Press writers Josh Boak and Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed to this report.

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## AP FACT CHECK: Trump says 'Obamacare' is repealed. It isn't.

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has prematurely declared "Obamacare" dead and displayed a misunderstanding of where the money comes from to make the health law work.

A look at his remarks Wednesday about the tax plan he will soon sign into law and its effect on President Barack Obama's health insurance overhaul:

TRUMP: "Obamacare has been repealed in this bill."

THE FACTS: It hasn't. The tax plan ends fines for people who don't carry health insurance. That's a major change but far from the dismantling of the law.

Other marquee components of Obama's law remain, such as the Medicaid expansion serving low-income adults, protections that shield people with pre-existing medical conditions from being denied coverage or charged higher premiums, income-based subsidies for consumers buying individual health insurance policies, the requirement that insurers cover "essential" health benefits, and the mandate that larger employers provide coverage to their workers or face fines.

Also, the tax bill doesn't repeal fines for uninsured individuals until the start of 2019, meaning the individual mandate is still in force for next year unless the administration acts to waive the penalties.

TRUMP: "When you add it all up together, and then you add two things — the individual mandate is be-

ing repealed. When the individual mandate is being repealed, that means Obamacare is being repealed because they get their money from the individual mandate. "

**THE FACTS:** This is also wrong. The fines on people who don't carry health insurance only provide a small fraction of the financing for the program. Most of the money comes from higher taxes on upper-income people, cuts in Medicare payments to service providers, and other tax increases.

The Congressional Budget Office estimated that fines from uninsured people would total \$3 billion this year, while the government's cost for the coverage provided under the health law would total about \$117 billion.

Find AP Fact Checks at <https://apnews.com/tag/APFactCheck>

## School ditches online learning program after parents revolt

By **MICHAEL MELIA, Associated Press**

CHESHIRE, Conn. (AP) — The fast-growing online platform was built with help from Facebook engineers and designed to help students learn at their own speed. But it's been dropped because parents in this Connecticut suburb revolted, saying there was no need to change what's worked in a town with a prized reputation for good schools.

The Summit Learning program, developed by a California charter school network, has signed up over 300 schools to use its blend of technology with go-at-your-own-pace personalized learning.

Cheshire school administrators and some parents praised the program, but it faced criticism from others who said their children were spending too much time online, some content was inappropriate, and students were not getting enough direct guidance. Superintendent Jeffrey Solan said this week he accepted the change was too much, too soon for some.

"Some people were more comfortable with a model where a teacher stands in front of a class and lectures for 40 minutes. We haven't been comfortable with that model for a long time," he said in an interview. "That's an old factory model that doesn't fit in to contemporary learning."

The reversal was vindication for parents who started a petition drive against the program and blasted it at public meetings.

"What was broken in the Cheshire school system, a highly successful system, that they needed to experiment with our children?" parent Heidi Wildstein said in an interview.

Many schools around the country have stories of successful technology initiatives, and one lesson from other districts is the importance of getting parents as excited as teachers, according to Lindsey Tepe, a policy analyst at the nonpartisan New America think tank in Washington, D.C.

"This huge shift we're seeing in classrooms around the country increasing the use of new technologies is going to be bumpy in places that aren't laying a groundwork," Tepe said.

Cheshire's platform was created by Summit Public Schools, which runs charter schools in California and Washington state. The organization is a proponent of personalized learning, a concept centered on the interests and needs of each individual child as opposed to universal standards.

With funding from the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative, the platform was made available for free to schools across the U.S. beginning in the 2015-2016 school year. Ninety-three percent of schools using it last year stuck with it this year, according to Summit Learning spokeswoman Catherine Madden.

"Summit Learning is designed to equip students with the skills, knowledge, habits and a sense of purpose that set them up for success in college and beyond," Madden said.

The program emphasizes self-directed learning with students reviewing a range of materials online, project-based learning and mentoring with teachers who help students work toward personal goals. Students can take and retake tests when they feel prepared to do so.

In Cheshire, the program appealed as a way to build on the district's goal of promoting complex thinking, Solan said. Educators saw it in use on a visit to schools in Framingham, Massachusetts, and like what they saw. Summit flew the Cheshire administrative team to Oakland, California, for training and provided

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the district with 130 Chromebook computers. In the district of some 4,000 students, the program was introduced at the start of this year for about 540 students in fifth, sixth and seventh grades.

Solan said the district made every effort to help parents understand the program, but he complained the effort was also up against misinformation shared on social media. There were rumors about a plot to eliminate teachers, he said, and some believed the program had students online all day even though 70 percent of the platform involved opportunities to apply learning through debates, projects or experiments.

Theresa Commune said her 11-year-old son just wanted more attention from teachers than he was getting. "They need teachers to get them to love learning at this stage," she said.

As the outcry grew, the district pledged a community survey on the platform. Then, over the weekend, parents began pointing out a part of the seventh-grade curriculum that the district deemed inappropriate: a web page on ancient Rome that made reference to sex with animals. (When asked about that material, a Summit spokeswoman said it is constantly working to improve the platform and content.)

Solan said officials didn't intend to suspend the program until that discovery.

"It wasn't simply that," Solan said. "It was the whole totality of the experience and what it was doing for our school community. We needed to take a step back."

## Most Asian shares lower as US tax passage fails to impress

By KELVIN CHAN, AP Business Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — Most Asian stock markets fell Thursday after the final congressional approval of a sweeping U.S. tax revamp. Chinese markets were mixed after leaders promised Wednesday to increase imports and reduce risks in the country's financial system amid slowing economic growth and pressure from trading partners to open its markets wider.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 lost 0.4 percent to 22,806.28 and South Korea's Kospi sank 1.2 percent to 2,442.90. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong gained 0.4 percent to 29,360.24 while the Shanghai Composite was flat at 3,288.57. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.2 percent to 6,063.60.

TAX PASSAGE: The U.S. Congress passed President Donald Trump's \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul, which brings generous cuts for corporations and rich Americans. Trump boasted that it would provide "rocket fuel" for growth in the world's biggest economy, though judging from the lackluster reaction of stock markets, investors had priced in the news well ahead of time.

MARKET INSIGHT: "With the positive result of the votes largely expected, U.S. equity markets found little upsides, leaving Asian markets with little inspiration," said Jingyi Pan, market strategist at IG in Singapore.

CHINA ECONOMY: The Central Economic Work Conference, led by President Xi Jinping, is a throwback to China's era of central planning and plays an important role in setting development goals for the state-dominated economy. A statement issued after the three-day annual planning meeting contained no new initiatives and was in line with the ruling Communist Party's plans to make the economy more efficient while also building up state industries.

JAPAN POLICY: The Bank of Japan kept its monetary policy unchanged at its final meeting for 2017, signaling it will rely on recovering growth to help drive inflation higher. The key policy rate remains at minus 0.1 percent and massive asset purchases by the central bank are set to continue for as long as is needed to help attain a inflation target of 2 percent. The BOJ said inflation expectations were still in a "weakening phase."

WALL STREET: Major U.S. benchmarks ended little changed. The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 0.1 percent to 2,679.25. The Dow Jones industrial average fell 0.1 percent to 24,726.65. The Nasdaq composite slid less than 0.1 percent to 6,960.96.

CURRENCIES: The dollar was unchanged at 113.40 yen. The euro edged up to \$1.1876 from \$1.1870.

ENERGY: Oil futures fell. Benchmark U.S. crude lost 5 cents to \$58.04 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract rose 53 cents to \$58.09 a barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, slipped 11 cents to \$64.45 a barrel in London.



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## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Dec. 21, the 355th day of 2017. There are 10 days left in the year. Winter arrives at 11:28 a.m. Eastern time.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Dec. 21, 1937, Walt Disney's first animated feature, "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs," had its world premiere at the Carthay Circle Theater in Los Angeles. The first Dr. Seuss book, "And to Think That I Saw It on Mulberry Street," was published by Vanguard Press.

On this date:

In 1620, Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower went ashore for the first time at present-day Plymouth, Massachusetts.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman concluded their "March to the Sea" as they captured Savannah, Georgia.

In 1891, the first basketball game, devised by James Naismith, is believed to have been played at the International YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts. (The final score of this experimental game: 1-0.)

In 1940, author F. Scott Fitzgerald died in Hollywood, California, at age 44.

In 1942, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Williams v. North Carolina*, ruled 6-2 that all states had to recognize divorces granted in Nevada.

In 1945, U.S. Army Gen. George S. Patton, 60, died in Heidelberg, Germany, 12 days after being seriously injured in a car accident.

In 1958, Charles de Gaulle was elected to a seven-year term as the first president of the Fifth Republic of France.

In 1967, Louis Washkansky, the first human heart transplant recipient, died at a hospital in Cape Town, South Africa, 18 days after receiving the donor organ. The satirical comedy-drama "The Graduate," starring Anne Bancroft and Dustin Hoffman, was released by Embassy Pictures.

In 1968, Apollo 8 was launched on a mission to orbit the moon.

In 1976, the Liberian-registered tanker *Argo Merchant* broke apart near Nantucket Island off Massachusetts almost a week after running aground, spilling 7.5 million gallons of oil into the North Atlantic.

In 1988, 270 people were killed when a terrorist bomb exploded aboard a Pam Am Boeing 747 over Lockerbie, Scotland, sending wreckage crashing to the ground.

In 1991, eleven of the 12 former Soviet republics proclaimed the birth of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the death of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

Ten years ago: A suicide attacker detonated a bomb at a mosque outside the home of Pakistan's former interior minister, killing at least 50 people (the ex-official escaped injury).

Five years ago: The National Rifle Association said guns and police officers were needed in all American schools to stop the next killer "waiting in the wings," taking a no-retreat stance in the face of growing calls for gun control after the Newtown, Connecticut, shootings that claimed the lives of 26 children and school staff. President Barack Obama nominated Sen. John Kerry as his next secretary of state. Gymnast Gabby Douglas, the first African-American to win an all-around Olympic title, won the AP's Female Athlete of the Year.

One year ago: President-elect Donald Trump declared that the deadly truck attack on a Christmas market in Germany that killed 12 people two days earlier was "an attack on humanity and it's got to be stopped"; he also suggested he might go forward with his campaign pledge to temporarily ban Muslim immigrants from coming to the United States. Jurors in Santa Ana, California, recommended a death sentence for a sex offender who abducted and killed four women over six months while wearing an electronic monitoring device (the judge imposed the death sentence the following February).

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Freddie Hart is 91. Talk show host Phil Donahue is 82. Actress Jane



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Fonda is 80. Actor Larry Bryggman is 79. Singer Carla Thomas is 75. Musician Albert Lee is 74. Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas is 73. Actor Josh Mostel is 71. Actor Samuel L. Jackson is 69. Rock singer Nick Gilder is 67. Movie producer Jeffrey Katzenberg is 67. Actor Dennis Boutsikaris is 65. Singer Betty Wright is 64. International Tennis Hall of Famer Chris Evert is 63. Actress Jane Kaczmarek is 62. Country singer Lee Roy Parnell is 61. Entertainer Jim Rose is 61. Former child actress Lisa Gerritsen is 60. Actor-comedian Ray Romano is 60. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is 55. Country singer Christy Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 55. Rock musician Murph (The Lemonheads; Dinosaur Jr.) is 53. Actor-comedian Andy Dick is 52. Rock musician Gabrielle Glaser is 52. Actress Michelle Hurd is 51. Actor Kiefer Sutherland is 51. Actress Karri Turner is 51. Actress Khristyne Haje is 49. Country singer Brad Warren (The Warren Brothers) is 49. Actress Julie Delpy is 48. Country singer-musician Rhean (rehn) Boyer (Carolina Rain) is 47. Contemporary Christian singer Natalie Grant is 46. Actor Glenn Fitzgerald is 46. Singer-musician Brett Scallions is 46. World Golf Hall of Famer Karrie Webb is 43. Rock singer Lukas Rossi (Rock Star Supernova) is 41. Actress Rutina Wesley is 39. Rock musician Anna Bulbrook (Airborne Toxic Event) is 35. Country singer Luke Stricklin is 35. Actor Steven Yeun is 34. Actress Kaitlyn Dever is 21.

Thought for Today: "The time will come when Winter will ask us: 'What were you doing all the Summer?'" — Bohemian proverb.