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McKIVER COLLISION
Lifetime Warranty on all Collision Work!
13556 400th Ave., Groton SD 57445
Allen McKiver, Owner ~ 605/397-4404

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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Ipswich pulls away from Groton in fourth quarter

Ipswich outpaced Groton Area in the fourth quarter to pull away for a 52-44 non-conference win.

Ipswich jumped out to a 15-7 first quarter lead and after leading by 11 points at 20-8, Groton Area came back to tie the game at halftime at 25. Ipswich held a 40-37 lead at the end of the third quarter.

Jennie Doeden led Groton Area with 16 points followed by Jessica Bjerke with 11, Harleigh Stange had eight, Eliza Wanner five and Miranda Hanson added two points.

Kamryn Heinz led Ipswich with 19 points followed by Halle Heinz with 11, Abby Grabwoska and Alean Steger each had eight, Tessa Kilber had four and Allison Severson added two points.

Groton Area made 17 off 33 field goals, three of 12 three-pointers, was one of one from the line, Doeden had a double-double on the night as she snagged down 10 rebounds and Bjerke had nine of the team's 27 rebounds, Doeden had seven of the team's 15 assists and Harleigh Stange had five of the team's 10 steals. Groton Area had 10 team fouls and Ipswich had six.

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 29-19. Kenzie McInerney led Groton Area with nine points followed by Nicole Marzahn with six, Eliza Wanner and Tady Glover each had four and Payton Colestock, Kaycie Hawkins and Caitlyn Barse each added two points. Ashton Loken led Ipswich with six points.

Groton Area is now 3-2 on the season while Ipswich goes to 5-0. The next action for Groton Area will be next year as Groton Area will be hosting Hamlin in a double header on January 5.

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

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Payton Maine brings the ball upcourt for Groton Area. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Groton Area's Jennie Doeden and Ipswich's Abby Grabowska battle it out of the opening tip off. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Jessica Bjerke grabs the rebounds on the defensive boards. (Photo by Paul Kosel)



Groton Area's Harleigh Stange tries to get past Ipswich's Halle Heinz. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Elementary Concert



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")**



Elizabeth Fliehs was Tammy Toffee and Kellen Antonsen was Tommy Toffee as baking contestants at "The Great Big Holiday Bake Off."



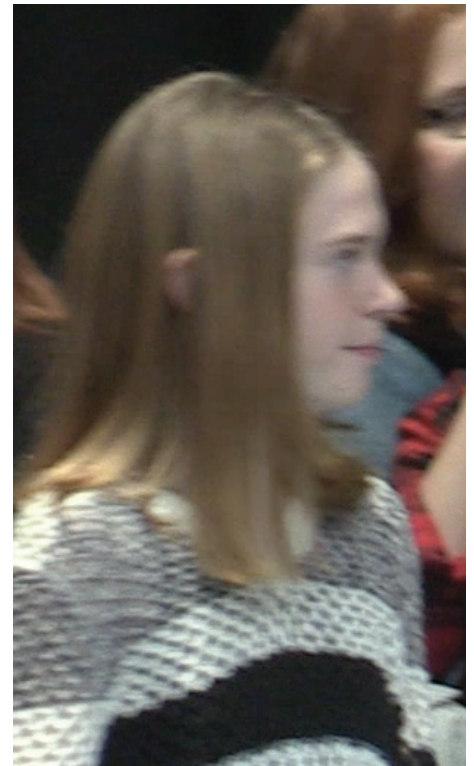
Emma Kutter was Granny Smith and Axel Warrington was Bill Bakewell as the judges.

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Nicholas Morris and Gretchen Dinger were the hosts for "The Great Big Holiday Bake Off" elementary program held Friday.



Karlie McKane was Debbie Dunbar as one of the baking contestants.



Jaeger Kampa was Duncan Doe as one of the baking contestants.



Savannah Bible was Betty Butterworth as one of the baking contestants.



Jeslyn Kosel was Penny Potts as one of the baking contestants.

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The fourth graders sang, "Sugar Cookie."



The kindergarten and junior kindergarten students sang, "Gingerbread Cookies."

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The first graders sang, "My Ooey-Gooey Cinnamon Bun."



The fifth graders sang, "Hot Chocolate."



The second graders sang, "The Candy Cane Twist."

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The third graders sang, "Candy-Covered Gingerbread House."



The Groton Area Elementary Concert was held Friday afternoon. The program was, "The Great Big Holiday Bake Off" by Andy Beck and Brian Fisher. It was directed by Cody Swanson and Austin Fordham.

CHRISTMAS TRUCE CALLED IN WORLD WAR I A CENTURY AGO Germans, British Exchanged Goods, Well-Wishes in No-Man's Land

By Tom Emery

The First World War shocked the world with its brutality and casualties. But for a brief time at Christmas 1914, enemies became warm friends.

Over a century ago this month, men of opposing armies in Flanders called a truce during the first Christmas of the war that has become the stuff of legend. While many of the stories of the cease-fire have been embellished with time, the truce stands in contrast to the horrific warfare that ravaged Europe.

"In some cases, the men posed for photographs wearing each other's hats," said Doran Cart, senior curator of the National World War I Museum in Kansas City. "They exchanged cigars and cigarettes, and drank German schnapps and British rum to celebrate the occasion."

Accounts of the truce vary widely, and it is apparent that the truce was celebrated with different intensity, and with different length, at various spots along the lines. Much of the truce occurred between Ypres, Belgium and Neuve-Chappelle, France, and originated when a truce was called to bury the dead between the lines in "no-man's land."

"That's how it started," said Cart. "It's certainly not unusual for both sides to request a cease-fire to take care of the dead. It kind of grew from there."

Some report that German soldiers cheerily called "come over here" to their British counterparts, while others recall Germans placing small Christmas trees on top of their entrenchments on a frosty Christmas Eve. One British soldier compared the lit trees to "the footlights of a theater."

Multiple accounts note that German troops began singing carols, including *Stille Nacht*, commonly known as "Silent Night." While some Allied troops suspected a trap, many others applauded the music and responded with songs of their own. An awestruck British fighter wrote that "I shall never forget it. It was one of the highlights of my life."

As more trees and candles appeared on the parapets, British soldiers cheered mightily, including one who recalled that "I stayed awake the entire night. And it was a wonderful night."

A young Bavarian officer was one of many who shouted that a Christmas truce should be made, and that both sides should leave their trenches to approach the other. He recalled that the British eventually agreed, and that "a man came out of their trenches and I on my side did the same...we shook hands a bit cautiously."

They were joined by others, and the next day was filled with intermittent visits in no-man's land, where men found their enemies to be quite engaging. "Many of the Germans who participated in this were Saxons and Bavarians, and a lot of them had lived or worked in England before the war," remarked Cart. "There are examples of soldiers asking about others they knew in both countries."

Amid good-natured ribbing about the other side's war efforts, men stood in small groups, chatting and joking while exchanging goods. Cart says that, unlike popular legend, there were no actual Christmas gifts to each other.

"They didn't give any real presents to each other," he said. "They traded goods they had, but nothing of any military value. Each side was happy to get what the other had."

Several myths have grown from what many British soldiers called "the wonderful day." An example is that one or more soccer games were played along the lines, a recollection that has been challenged in recent years.

"There may have been some kicking around of a ball, but I just can't see any way that a full-fledged soccer game could have been played in no-man's land," commented Cart. "There would have been so much debris in that area, which had been a furrowed farm field. I don't know that there would have been enough space of suitable ground to actually play a real game."

While the British and Germans are commonly associated with the Christmas truce, some French and Belgian soldiers also took part. However, many scholars believe those armies were in little mood to celebrate with the Germans, who had overrun their countries earlier that year and were accused of various atrocities.

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In some areas, the truce did not end on Christmas Day. Pockets of opposing soldiers extended it into December 26, and in isolated cases, for a week or more. Commanding officers on both sides threatened reprisal for the men involved in the agreement, though there is no evidence of any actual punishments. Half-hearted attempts were made to repeat the truce at Christmas in subsequent years, but nothing like what happened that first year.

The 1914 truce became a sensation in the English press, and countless British soldiers recounted the events of the truce in letters to home and the papers.

The holiday cease-fire has since grown into a global legend, its story captured in books and TV depictions. "A mythology has arisen from the truce," said Cart. "There's no doubt that a truce actually happened, because many, many men on both sides wrote and spoke of it later. But it's become much larger than it probably was."

Ceremonial recreations of the Christmas truce have been held periodically over the years at the site, including in 1999. In 2014, diplomats of various nations joined to commemorate the centennial of the truce, a remarkable event that one British soldier wrote "made the bitterest of foes friends," if only for a little while.

Tom Emery is a freelance writer and historical researcher from Carlinville, Ill. He may be reached at 217-710-8392.

2018 DOG LICENSES AVAILABLE NOW!!



Licenses due by Dec. 29, 2017
Fines start Jan. 2, 2018



Please bring proof of rabies shot information for each dog to City Hall or
email to library@grotonsd.net or fax to 397-4498

Please contact City Hall as soon as possible if you no longer have any dogs

Spayed or neutered dogs are \$5 per dog,
otherwise \$10 per dog

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Today in Weather History

December 22, 1990: Strong northwest winds, combined with air temperatures below zero, created wind chills from -40 to -65 degrees over west central Minnesota early in the day on the 22nd. Air temperatures were generally in the -20 to -25 degree range, with afternoon highs around 15 below zero.

December 22, 1990: Strong northwest winds gusted to 35 miles per hour and caused near-whiteout conditions over a wide area of southwest and west central Minnesota during the late afternoon on the 21st into the early morning of the 22nd. Several car accidents ensued. A 30-year old man was killed when he lost control of his truck and slid into a ditch in the near-blizzard conditions.

1839 - The second of triple December storms hit the northeastern U.S. The storm produced 25 inches of snow at Gettysburg, PA, and gales in New England, but only produced light snow along the coast. (David Ludlum)

1961 - Holiday travel was paralyzed over extreme northeastern Kansas, and adjacent parts of Missouri, Iowa and Nebraska. The storm produced 5 to 15 inches of snow, with drifts up to ten feet high. (22nd-23rd) (The Weather Channel)

1983 - On the first day of winter 75 cities reported record low temperatures for the date, with twelve of those cities reporting record low temperatures for the month as a whole. The mercury plunged to 51 degrees below zero at Wisdom MT, and Waco TX set an all-time record low a reading of 12 above zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - The first day of winter was a relatively tranquil one for much of the nation, but heralded a winter storm in the Central Rockies. The storm produced 40 inches of snow at the top of the Pomerelle Ski Resort, south of Burley ID, the heaviest snow of record for that location. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1988 - Strong winds prevailed in the foothills of Wyoming and Colorado. Winds gusted to 123 mph southwest of Fort Collins CO, and reached 141 mph at the summit of Mount Evans. An ice storm paralyzed parts of Upper Michigan during the day. The freezing rain left roads around Marquette MI blocked by cars and semi- trucks. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

December 22, 1989: The most significant cold spell of the century for the Deep South occurred from the 22 to the 26. New Orleans experienced 64 consecutive hours at or below 32 degrees Fahrenheit and a total of 81 out of 82 hours below freezing. A total of 15 hours were below 15 degrees with the lowest reading of 11 degrees on the morning of the 23rd. A low temperature of 8 degrees was recorded at Baton Rouge. Snow and sleet paralyzed transportation systems where as much as two to four inches of snow accumulated in Lafourche and Terrebonne Parishes. Snow and ice covered the ground in New Orleans. The greatest impact was on breakage of water pipes in homes and businesses. Over 100 fires resulted in the New Orleans area within a 24 hour period due to a loss of water pressure and improperly utilized heating sources. Ice formed over shallow lakes and waterways where commercial fishing took heavy losses. Five weather related deaths occurred in the service area during this rare Arctic outbreak.

December 22, 2002: Heavy rains prompted flooding in the mountain city of Teresopolis, located about 90 km north of Rio de Janeiro in Brazil. A mudslide was responsible for 9 deaths and 50 injuries.

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This Afternoon	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Christmas Day
						
Slight Chance Snow	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Partly Sunny	Mostly Cloudy	Cold
High: 24 °F	Low: 3 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: 7 °F	High: 22 °F	Low: -4 °F	High: 6 °F

Much Colder by Monday!

Today
Highs: 20s – 30s
Light Snow in Northern South Dakota

Next Week
Highs: Single Digits and Teens

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
Aberdeen, SD
www.weather.gov/abr

Graphic Created 12/22/2017 5:36 AM

Published on: 12/22/2017 at 5:37AM

A frontal boundary crossing the region will bring a chance of light snow for northern South Dakota and western Minnesota today. A few tenths of an inch will be possible. Otherwise today will be slightly warmer with highs in the 20s and lower 30s. Much colder temperatures are expected on Monday with highs in the single digits.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 19.8

Low Outside Temp: 0.00

High Gust: 23

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 59° in 1893

Record Low: -28° in 1990

Average High: 24°F

Average Low: 4°F

Average Precip in Dec: 0.36

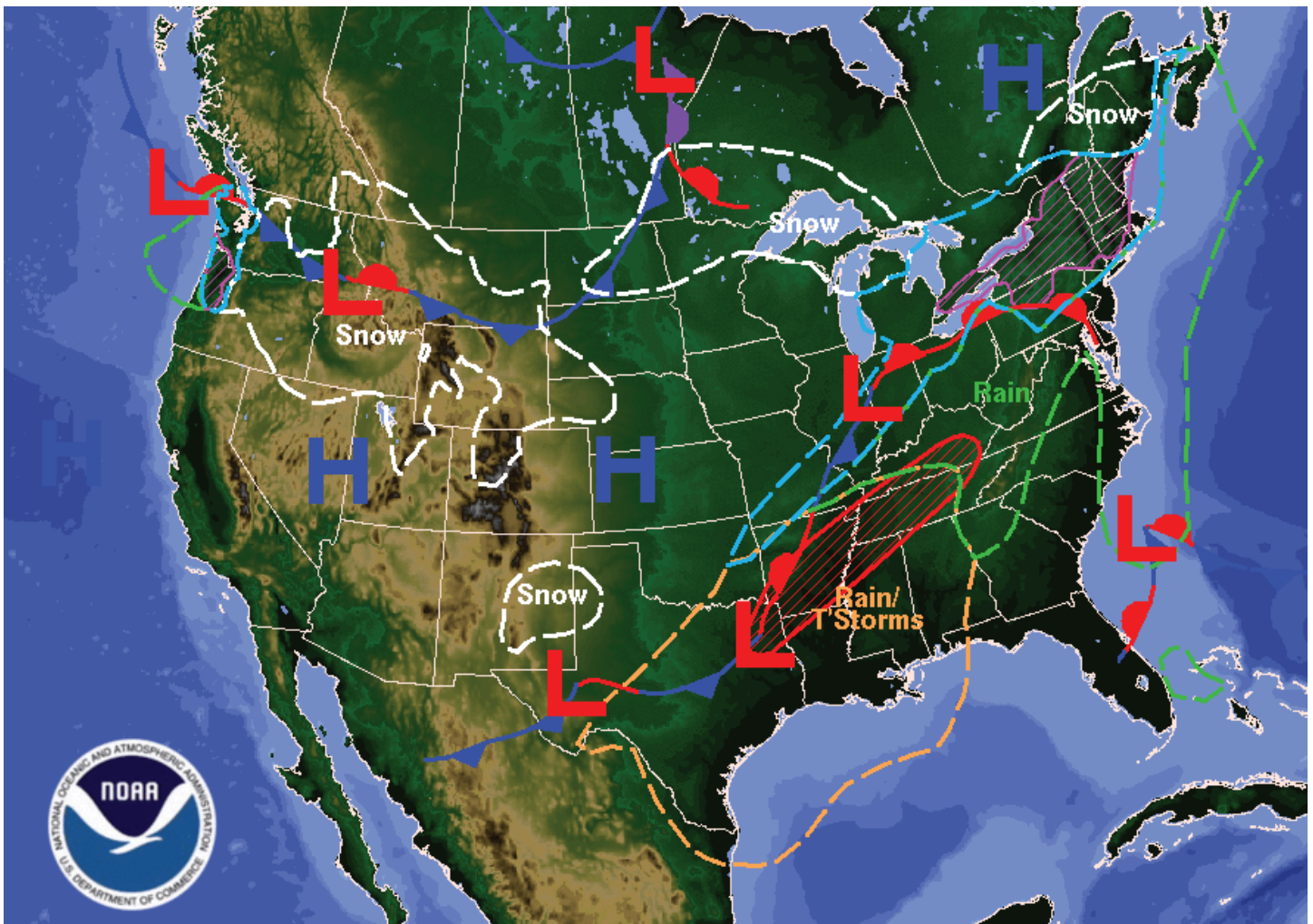
Precip to date in Dec: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.56

Precip Year to Date: 13.47

Sunset Tonight: 4:53 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:11 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Dec 22, 2017, issued 4:11 AM EST
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Hurley 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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PROPHESIES FROM ISAIAH

Therefore, the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call his name Immanuel – God with us!

The people who walk in darkness
Will see a great light;
Those who live in a dark land,
The light will come to them.
For a child will be born to us, a
son given to us;
And the government will rest on
His shoulders!
And His name will be called:
Wonderful!
Counselor!
Mighty God!
Eternal Father!
Prince of Peace!
There will be no end to the increase
of His government or of His peace.

The spirit of the LORD will rest on Him,
The spirit of wisdom and understanding.
The spirit of counsel and strength,
The spirit of knowledge and
the fear of the Lord.

Prayer: Thank You God, for keeping Your word! In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Isaiah 7:14; Isaiah 9:2, 6-7; Isaiah 11:2-3

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

News from the Associated Press

South Dakota conservatives look to next governor for wins

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota conservatives stymied on high-profile bills by Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard are eyeing the end of his last term in early 2019.

They're betting their policies will fare better under either Republican front-runner in the race to replace the term-limited governor.

Daugaard vetoed legislation this year that would have let people carry concealed handguns without a permit. In 2016, he rejected a bill that would have restricted which bathrooms transgender students could use at school.

The two top Republicans to succeed Daugaard are Attorney General Marty Jackley and U.S. Rep. Kristi Noem. Both have already offered support for those ideas.

Backers have said they plan to wait until 2019 and a potentially more favorable governor before pushing them again.

Man convicted of trying to kill South Dakota state trooper

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Washington state man accused of trying to kill a South Dakota state trooper following a traffic stop has been convicted of attempted murder.

A jury in Pennington County found Donald Willingham guilty on Thursday, the Rapid City Journal reported. The 35-year-old Renton, Washington, man was convicted on all his charges, which include attempted first-degree murder, aggravated assault and drug possession.

The verdict comes two years after Trooper Zachary Bader stopped Willingham and his three friends along Interstate 90 near Box Elder for speeding. Willingham and his friends were driving from Seattle to Chicago with 40 pounds of marijuana (18 kilograms) and \$30,000 in cash in the car.

Prosecutor Mark Vargo told the jury that Bader searched the vehicle after smelling marijuana, which he later found in the cargo area. Bader attempted to handcuff Willingham, who punched Bader to the ground and continued swinging.

"If you want him down, he is down. If you want to get away, you can get away," said Vargo in his closing argument. "It is only if you want him to die that you need to continue the beating at this point."

In a recorded police interview played for the jury, Willingham said he didn't intend to hurt the trooper but was afraid of losing the cash and going to jail for transporting the drugs.

"Nothing was premeditated," said defense attorney Dennis Doherty. "This was a spontaneous act of fury, a lack of impulse control."

The three other defendants, Jonathan Melendez, Desiree Sukert and Chase Sukert, all pleaded guilty last year to possession of marijuana with intent to distribute and being an accessory to a crime. Melendez was sentenced Thursday to one and a half years in prison. Desiree Sukert was sentenced to five years in prison and her brother was given 11 years.

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

Man killed when van collides with stalled charter bus in SD

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a man was killed when the van he was driving collided with a charter bus that had stalled on Interstate 90 in western South Dakota.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says the bus carrying 56 passengers was eastbound on the freeway when it lost all power and came to a stop in the middle of both lanes 20 miles east of Rapid City Thursday night. No lights were operating on the bus.

Authorities say an eastbound van rear-ended the stalled bus. The 31-year-old man who was driving the

van died at the scene. He was wearing a seat belt.

No one on the bus was hurt. The passengers were taken back to Rapid City by buses from Ellsworth Air Force Base. The Highway Patrol is investigating.

Defense: Witness in Montana murder case was under indictment

By MATTHEW BROWN, Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A psychologist who was the sole defense witness in a Montana first-degree murder trial had been indicted on drug charges days before she testified, prompting the defendant's attorneys to consider asking for a new trial.

Federal defenders representing 20-year-old defendant Dimarzio Swade Sanchez said they were unaware of the indictment. They said their client could have been acquitted or convicted of a lesser charge if another expert had testified.

Sanchez has until January 5 to ask for a new trial under a Wednesday order from U.S. District Judge Susan Watters.

He was convicted of strangling 28-year-old Roylynn Rides Horse, pouring gasoline on her and setting her on fire on the Crow Indian Reservation in June 2016.

Rides Horse survived the attack and was found 14 hours later by a passerby, but died of her injuries more than two months later.

Psychologist Teresa Hastings of Rapid City, South Dakota testified Dec. 6 at Sanchez's trial about his mental ability to form the intent to kill Rides Horse — a key factor in determining his guilt.

She had been indicted Nov. 29 on four felony counts of illegally obtaining the sedative zolpidem, which is prescribed as a sleep aid to treat insomnia and marketed under the brand name Ambien. Hastings did not return telephone messages left with her office over the past several days seeking comment and is scheduled to make an initial court appearance on Dec. 28.

Sanchez's defense team said it became aware of the indictment a day after the trial ended from a counselor who knows Hastings. Sanchez' lawyers told a judge they wanted to review Hastings' examinations of Sanchez to determine if there were problems with her work.

"While Dr. Hastings enjoys the presumption of innocence, the fact that she faces four drug charges at least raises the question whether Dr. Hastings was under the influence when she examined Mr. Sanchez and/or when she testified at his trial," Assistant Federal Defender Gillian Gosch wrote in a Dec. 19 court filing.

Sanchez faces mandatory life in prison at his sentencing scheduled for March 29.

His brother, Frank, has pleaded guilty to being an accessory after the fact, and a third defendant, Angelica Jo Whiteman, has pleaded guilty to aiding and abetting first-degree murder.

South Dakota councilwoman indicted on day she takes office

BELLE FOURCHE, S.D. (AP) — The newest member of the Belle Fourche City Council was indicted on felony charges on the same day she was sworn in.

Court documents show that 55-year-old Toni Moncur was indicted Monday on charges of witness tampering and simple assault. She also took office Monday.

Moncur's attorney, Matthew Kinney, told the Rapid City Journal on Friday that "there appear to be political implications with this prosecution," but did not elaborate further.

The Butte County State's Attorney's Office says the charges stem from an altercation involving her son and another man last month. The police report for Toni Moncur's role in the incident has not been made public.

The newspaper reports that it's unclear whether the mayor or other council members knew of the indictment before Moncur was sworn in.

South Dakota reports first flu death of the season

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota has recorded its first flu death of the season. The Department of Health reports that the victim was a Day County resident in his or her 70s. Further information about the patient is not being released.

But State Epidemiologist Joshua Clayton says the case is a reminder that influenza can be a very serious illness.

Clayton says flu activity in South Dakota has been increasing. As of Friday, the state had reported 301 lab-confirmed cases of flu and 46 flu-related hospitalizations.

Each year, an average of 33 flu-related deaths is reported to the department.

To protect against flu complications, annual flu vaccination is recommended for everyone age 6 months and older.

Florida, Texas may attract athletes after tax law change

By RONALD BLUM, AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Teams in Texas, Florida, Nevada and Washington state may have become more attractive destinations for free agents following the enactment of tax law changes.

Deductions for state and local taxes are capped at \$10,000 in the year starting Jan. 1 for married couples filing jointly. That has a huge impact for athletes with seven- and eight-figure salaries.

“Obviously, the zero income-tax states have now more of an advantage than before,” said baseball agent Scott Boras, who is negotiating big-money deals this offseason for free agents J.D. Martinez, Eric Hosmer, Mike Moustakas, Jake Arrieta and Greg Holland.

Geography, family comforts, playing time and winning remain the most important factors for many.

“I understand the tax differential issue but have rarely thought it was outcome determinative in where a player signs,” baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said.

But the teams in states with a higher percentage of take-home pay make their advantage known.

“All teams in tax-free states do,” Dallas Mavericks owner Mark Cuban said.

The \$10,000 limit also includes deductions for property and sales taxes — large numbers for the most prominent athletes.

At the same time, the top tax rate has been lowered to 37 percent for single filers earning more than \$500,000 and married couples filing jointly earning more than \$600,000. That is down from 39.6 percent for single filers earning more than \$418,400 and married couples filing jointly earning more than \$470,700.

For baseball, the AL West becomes the most attractive for tax status. The World Series champion Houston Astros, along with the Texas Rangers and Seattle Mariners, all have no state income tax. That means a player on one of those teams would play 99 or 100 of 162 games in states with no tax.

Rangers President of Baseball Operations Jon Daniels calls the tax advantage “more of kind of a side benefit than a feature.”

“Some players and some agents care more than others. Some have been more focused on the sticker prices, especially agents that are paid on the gross,” he said. “We try not to make it too much of a focal point of our recruiting efforts. I think when it’s pushed too heavily it can be a turnoff.”

Deals in all four major North American leagues are evaluated for their tax implications.

“The state with no income tax would always win the ties,” said agent Joseph Linta, who negotiated Baltimore quarterback Joe Flacco’s contract.

Money doesn’t always dictate the decision, according to Boras and others.

“Kyle Juszczyk chose the 49ers over no state tax offers because he felt it was the right fit — despite the state tax,” Linta said.

Already complex, negotiations could become even more nuanced.

“Teams based in Florida, Washington and Texas will clearly have an additional advantage over other clubs in contract negotiations with free agent players given the new tax code,” baseball agent Jay Reisinger said. “They already had an advantage by virtue of no state income tax, but this will be magnified under

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the new tax code. Agents will also seek tax-equalization language in the event of a trade.”

Knowing the Marlins have frequently sold off stars, Dee Gordon, Wei-Yin Chen and Christian Yelich had tax equalization provisions as part of their multiyear contracts with Miami.

California has the highest state tax in 2017, a 13.3 percent rate that includes a 1 percent mental health services tax for income over \$1 million.

New York has a top tax rate of 8.82 percent, and New York City has a maximum rate of 3.876 percent for a 12.696 percent total.

An athlete making \$10 million a season will get a federal tax savings of about \$250,000 with the cut in the top rate. But one who plays half his games in California will lose roughly \$650,000 in deductions: half the approximately \$1.3 million state tax. That wipes out the entire savings of the federal rate cut.

“The new U.S. tax law, in particular the loss of miscellaneous itemized deductions, will have a significant impact on NHL hockey players,” said hockey agent Allan Walsh.

A player who maintains an offseason residence in Florida or one of the other states with no tax — Alaska, South Dakota and Wyoming are in that group — would benefit by having more of his money paid in a signing bonus rather than salary that is attributable to a specific game. Nationals pitcher Max Scherzer’s \$210 million, seven-year contract with Washington includes a \$50 million signing bonus that he intended to shield from the District of Columbia’s top tax rate — 8.85 percent this year — by establishing Florida residency.

Under the new law, union dues and agent commissions are no longer deductible. An agency employee said players had called at the behest of their financial advisers asking if they could pre-pay commissions before Dec. 31 on deals to be negotiated later this offseason. The employee spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to make public statements.

The Major League Baseball Players Association received nearly \$17.6 million in 2016 from daily dues, currently \$80 during the season. The NFL Players Association raised just over \$33.5 million in dues in the year ending Feb. 28.

The MLBPA may consider moves to lessen the impact of the change in tax treatment for dues.

“It’s unfortunate when looking at ways to cut taxes that things went the other way with respect to those who work under the umbrella of a union or as a union member,” said baseball union head Tony Clark, a former All-Star first baseman.

Owners and management feared a provision in the original version approved by the House of Representatives, which would have prohibited the use of tax-free municipal bonds for stadium financing. That was dropped from the final legislation.

“We were pleased that the bill did not adversely affect the tax issues related to stadium financing,” Manfred said.

___ AP Pro Football Writer Barry Wilner, AP Basketball Writer Brian Mahoney and AP Hockey Writer Stephen Whyno contributed to this report.

2 people die in crash on Interstate 29 in SE South Dakota

BERESFORD, S.D. (AP) — Two people have died in a crash on Interstate 29 north of Beresford in southeastern South Dakota.

The Department of Public Safety says a pickup truck was northbound just before 12:30 p.m. Thursday on I-29 when the driver lost control. The truck left the roadway, rolled through the median and across the southbound lanes, landing on top of an SUV.

The 79-year-old man driving the SUV died at the scene. The 78-year-old female passenger was pronounced dead at a Sioux Falls hospital.

The department says charges are pending against the 38-year-old man who drove the pickup. He was taken to a Sioux Falls hospital with serious but non-life threatening injuries.

Names of the dead have not been released pending notification of family members.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating.

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Mooney, Fuller lead South Dakota past D-III Northland, 88-42

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Matt Mooney and Nick Fuller combined to score 27 points and South Dakota used a crisp shooting night to down Division III Northland College, 88-42 on Thursday night.

The Coyotes had their four-game win streak snapped in a three-point loss to UCLA and the victory sends them into Summit League play with a 12-4 record and keeps them undefeated at home.

South Dakota rolled to a big first-half lead, posting a 46-19 advantage at the half.

The Coyotes hit 30 of 50 shots from the field (60 percent), including 8 of 19 from beyond the arc, and converted 20 of 24 from the line. Mooney hit 5 of 10 from the field and finished with 14 points. Fuller was 6 of 8 and finished with 13.

Harrison Lucas finished with 11 points to lead the Lumberjacks from Ashland, Wisconsin.

Thursday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 70, Deuel 48
Clark/Willow Lake 56, Hamlin 48
Elk Point-Jefferson 54, Kingsley-Pierson, Iowa 51
Harding County 54, Edgemont 45
Harrisburg 69, Brandon Valley 61
Herreid/Selby Area 67, South Border, N.D. 37
Huron 47, Pierre 46
Lennox 53, Pipestone, Minn. 44
Lower Brule 70, Philip 52
Milbank Area 78, Webster 49
Northwestern 67, Iroquois 44
Sioux Falls Lincoln 67, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 60
Sioux Falls Washington 49, Marshall, Minn. 43
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
Bennett County vs. Lead-Deadwood, ppd. to Dec 30.

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 65, Deuel 42
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 48, Mobridge-Pollock 31
Dupree 42, Newell 35
Harrisburg 75, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 55
Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. 65, Harding County 28
Highmore-Harold 79, Stanley County 31
Hitchcock-Tulare 55, Redfield/Doland 41
Irene-Wakonda 54, Freeman 40
Lennox 86, Sioux City, North, Iowa 44
Lower Brule 65, Philip 51
Pierre 59, Huron 56
Rapid City Stevens 59, Spearfish 37
Sioux Falls Lincoln 43, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 38
Sioux Falls Washington 53, Marshall, Minn. 26
Sioux Valley 66, Beresford 50
Sisseton 44, Tiospa Zina Tribal 42
Sturgis Brown 53, Douglas 36
Waverly-South Shore 68, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 7
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS
Lead-Deadwood vs. Bennett County, ppd. to Dec 30.

Vikings LT Reiff's ankle improves; questionable vs Packers

EDEN PRAIRIE, Minn. (AP) — Minnesota Vikings left tackle Riley Reiff's sprained ankle has improved, and the team has listed him as questionable to play at Green Bay.

Reiff practiced on a limited basis Thursday, after missing the previous game. Cornerback Mackensie Alexander was also listed as questionable to play the Packers on Saturday, after sitting out the previous game because of a rib injury. The only player the Vikings declared out was defensive back Tramaine Brock, who plays primarily on special teams. He has a foot injury.

The Packers, meanwhile, won't be close to full strength. Wide receiver Davante Adams is out with a concussion. Outside linebacker Nick Perry is doubtful because of ankle and shoulder injuries. Outside linebacker Clay Matthews (hamstring), right guard Jahri Evans (knee) and cornerback Davon House (shoulder, back) are questionable.

___ For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Company illegally disposed asbestos in Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A construction company renovating a former Sioux Falls lounge exposed workers and the public to asbestos before the building collapsed last year, a state investigation found.

Hultgren Construction violated federal and state laws for removing and disposing of hazardous material in October 2016, the Argus Leader reported .

The company didn't file legally-required paperwork before removing asbestos from the downtown Copper Lounge construction site. State officials said the asbestos was placed into plastic garbage bags, trucked through town and illegally dumped at the city's landfill.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources investigation found that company transported 46 loads of material to the landfill between Oct. 5 and Dec. 2.

Chad Babcock, an environmental specialist with the department, said he believes the asbestos-containing material was contained in two loads. He said officials at the landfill "unknowingly accepted" the bags of asbestos-containing materials.

The investigation found that the employees who removed asbestos-containing wrap that insulates basement pipe were not certified for asbestos removal, which is illegal.

"Asbestos fibers if airborne can be inhaled and are shown to be the cause of several diseases such as lung cancer, asbestosis and others," said David Ganje, an environmental lawyer.

The newspaper obtained documents Wednesday showing the state levied a \$20,000 fine against the company. Sioux Falls didn't penalize the company for the asbestos disposal.

The state investigation into the asbestos removal concluded in May but wasn't publicly addressed.

Hultgren Construction is also under federal investigation for its role in the building collapse that killed one employee.

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

SDSU: No charges against officer accused of excessive force

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota State University spokesman says criminal charges won't be filed against a campus police officer accused of using excessive force against a juvenile.

The Argus Leader reports that SDSU spokesman Mike Lockrem says the university doesn't comment on personnel matters and couldn't disclose if officer Jason Baker had been reprimanded.

Melissa Mentele, the teenage girl's mother, said previously that her daughter's wrist was dislocated. Mentele declined to comment to the newspaper this week, citing approaching court hearings.

The case was reviewed by the state Division of Criminal Investigation. DCI spokeswoman Sara Rabern says the agency has investigated eight use-of-force incidents in 2017.

Unlike in officer-involved shootings, use of force reports don't determine whether officers acted appropriately. Instead, they're forwarded to local state's attorneys for charging decisions.

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

Vikings look to get past Packers in final push to playoffs

By GENARO C. ARMAS, AP Sports Writer

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — If the Minnesota Vikings have their way, they won't have to take another road trip after this weekend, even in the playoffs.

For an opportunity for that to happen, the NFC North champions need to finish out the last two weeks of the regular season with victories over division rivals already out of the playoff picture .

The payoff could be sweet for the Vikings if they can safely navigate the postseason all the way to February — a Super Bowl played in front of hometown fans at U.S. Bank Stadium.

There is something to play for after all when Minnesota visits the Green Bay Packers on Saturday night.

"The only thing I've really told them is we'd like this to be the last plane trip that we have to take, but that's about the only thing I've said," Vikings coach Mike Zimmer said.

The Vikings (11-3) head into the second-to-final week of the season having already assured themselves of a home playoff game.

Minnesota wraps up the regular season with a winnable home game against the Chicago Bears on New Year's Eve, while the Eagles finish with home games against the Raiders and Cowboys.

But Philadelphia is also adjusting to backup quarterback Nick Foles, who will start the rest of the year with starter Carson Wentz out with a knee injury.

Green Bay (7-7) is handing the offense back to backup Brett Hundley after quarterback Aaron Rodgers went on season-ending injured reserve this week.

It was a decision that coach Mike McCarthy said was made in the best interest of Rodgers, who wasn't completely healed from a collarbone injury.

With the Packers out of the playoffs , it didn't make sense to further risk the health of their franchise quarterback, who was hurt the previous time these teams met in Week 6 in Minneapolis.

There have been gradual signs of improvement from Hundley since he was thrust into the starting job after Rodgers went down.

"I know for as many things that went wrong that day, he felt like he got better," McCarthy said. "But he'll be much better prepared for this opportunity."

The Vikings, of all teams, know full well how much a backup quarterback can succeed.

Subbing for the injured Sam Bradford, quarterback Case Keenum has kept the Vikings rolling with a 9-3 record in his starts. Keenum has completed 68 percent of his passes, with 20 touchdowns, seven interceptions and a career-best 98.9 passer rating.

Not bad for a player once considered a journeyman who first entered the league in 2012 as an undrafted free agent with the Houston Texans.

"Case has done an unbelievable job," Zimmer said. "I think the more he's played, the more confident he's been with making the correct decisions."

SPOILING IT: Out of the playoffs for the first time in eight years, the Packers were a little subdued in the locker room this week. They're not used to playing games in late December that don't have postseason implications for themselves.

But don't call them "spoilers."

"I'm not really interested in being a spoiler or an underdog. We're the Green Bay Packers. That doesn't change," McCarthy said. "I fully expect and demand that our team goes out to win the game."

EYES ON BARR: Don't expect a warm welcome from Packers fans for Vikings linebacker Anthony Barr on Saturday night. Rodgers' season nearly ended after landing on his right shoulder following a hard hit outside the pocket from Barr in Week 6.

"It's inevitable. Aaron Rodgers is to Green Bay what LeBron is to Cleveland," Barr said . "You're responsible in a way for their guy going down, you're going to take some heat. It just comes with the territory."

ADAMS OUT: Receiver Davante Adams seems to be OK after being spotted walking in the Packers locker room and chatting with teammates this week following a blindside hit from Carolina Panthers linebacker Thomas Davis last week that put Adams in the concussion protocol.

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But Adams, who is still in the concussion protocol, won't play this week to deprive the offense of its top receiving threat this season. Adams, who has 10 touchdown catches, has developed the kind of rapport with Hundley that fellow receiver Jordy Nelson has with Rodgers.

THIELEN IT: Packers cornerback Davon House (shoulder/back) returned to practice and was listed as questionable for Minnesota after missing the loss to Carolina. Getting the veteran back could help an already shaky and injury-depleted cornerback group that has to contend with speedy receiver Stefon Diggs and first-time Pro Bowler Adam Thielen (83 catches, 1,191 yards).

HEAT ON DEFENSE: The Packers are hurting at outside linebacker, where Clay Matthews (hamstring) is questionable and Nick Perry (ankle/shoulder) is doubtful after both players missed practice at midweek. Not having either starter on Saturday would further deplete a defense that already had issues generating a consistent pass rush off the edge. The run defense has trailed off too of late.

"Broad question, short answer," McCarthy said. "We need to play better on defense."

For more NFL coverage: <http://www.pro32.ap.org> and http://www.twitter.com/AP_NFL

Official: No civil rights violations in police force case

WAGNER, S.D. (AP) — Federal officials have determined that there weren't civil rights violations after an excessive police force claim from the family of a Yankton Sioux elder who had rushed to a Wagner nursing home to see his dying mother.

The Argus Leader reports FBI agents reviewed state law enforcement's report on the incident, and U.S. Attorney Randolph Seiler examined their reports.

A state trooper tried to pull over 64-year-old Ray Cournoyer Sr. for speeding in September, and the trooper and Wagner police officer Eli Kuhlman attempted to grab Cournoyer after he parked.

Trooper Weston Fischer's report says Kuhlman used his stun gun on Cournoyer and pulled him to the ground, making Fischer to fall on top.

Kuhlman, whose was the focus of the excessive force allegations, was sent to training. Cournoyer was charged with eluding.

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

Survey suggests economy remains slow in rural areas

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A new monthly survey of bankers suggests the economy remains weak in rural parts of 10 Plains and Western states, but it improved slightly.

The overall economic index for the region grew to 47.8 in December from 44.7 in November, but any score below 50 suggests a shrinking economy in the months ahead.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss says low commodity prices and concerns about trade continue to weigh on the economy in rural areas.

Bankers from Colorado, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming were surveyed.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, Dec. 21

West River needs a mental health facility

Al Scovel is on a mission to address a clear need in western South Dakota that has lingered for decades — the lack of a mental health center.

The Rapid City attorney and former state lawmaker wants the Legislature or Gov. Daugaard to dedicate funds to build one "out there," which is how state government officials sometimes characterize this part

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of the state, according to Scovel.

Now, as he emphasized in a recent meeting with the Journal editorial board, those who have serious mental health problems must travel to the state mental health hospital in Yankton, which is 365 miles from Rapid City. It is a facility, he said, that is woefully understaffed and lacks resources.

The state has a history of giving "lip service" to mental health needs, said Scovel, whose record of public service includes working for Bill Janklow when he was a governor known for getting things done.

"What kind of people are we?" he asked. "How long are we going to allow this?"

Scovel is not a lone voice on this issue. Rapid City Police Chief Karl Jegeris and Pennington County Sheriff Kevin Thom raised similar concerns in February when Regional Health announced it was curtailing its services for the mentally ill.

At the time, the region's primary health-care provider said it would "no longer admit behavioral health patients who do not have acute medical needs to the main hospital when the Behavioral Health facility is at capacity."

Instead, the hospital said, it would turn them over to law enforcement officials who would then have to decide whether to put them in jail or turn them loose while in crisis, which led to the creation of the West River Behavioral Health Alliance.

"This is fundamentally flawed because we're using a criminal justice response for what should be a medical situation," Jegeris said at the time.

Thom added: "We need a West River solution. . No singular entity can solve this. It's bigger than any one of us."

It is a proposition that Scovel endorses, but he is not waiting for a local official to lead the charge. He has taken it upon himself to find needed support to convince lawmakers and state officials that western South Dakota needs a state-supported mental health center for what he calls "a crisis — it is very, very real."

He has made presentations and sought the support of the Rapid City Council and Pennington County Commission, which unanimously approved a resolution supporting additional mental health services in this area. He now recruits West River lawmakers on the eve of the legislative session.

Scovel is correct. It is a shame the West River lacks a mental health facility. The public and elected officials should heed his message and demand that one be built "out here."

The Public Opinion, Watertown, Dec. 19

Fliers deserve a million thanks

former Watertown woman drew the lucky boarding pass Sunday at Watertown Regional Airport and was honored as the 10,000th passenger to fly out of the city during 2017. It's a major achievement for Watertown Regional Airport because it means a \$1 million grant from the Federal Aviation Administration for airport improvements.

The passenger, Christine Stone of Colorado Springs, was the center of attention Sunday before her flight left. She found herself surrounded by city officials, airline personnel and media members. There was cake and champagne for everyone.

And there were plenty of congratulatory remarks tossed around: to the city council for pushing the year-end promotion to boost passenger numbers, to Glacial Lakes Energy and the Chamber of Commerce for jumping on board, to airport officials and ADI for providing such improved service.

But you know who deserves most of the credit for Watertown's commercial airline resurrection?

It's the passengers. All 10,000 of them (and counting.)

There was a lot of talk Sunday about how vital reliable air service is to the local business community. We don't disagree. But without the local travelers choosing to fly out of Watertown, there would have been no celebration on Sunday.

Mickey Bowman, chief operating officer of ADI, Inc., told the Public Opinion he didn't expect Watertown's numbers to reach these levels so quickly. A long stretch of unreliable service, followed by a long stretch of

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no service, had conditioned people to fly out of Sioux Falls, Fargo, Minneapolis or some other larger airport. Once people get used to doing something a certain way, it is difficult to get them to change, Bowman said.

He thought it would take another year before the city reached the coveted 10,000 passenger mark.

But Watertown residents didn't wait. ADI's numbers were good from the very beginning and kept getting better. Of course, the company's reliable service was a big factor, but so was the willingness of the people of Watertown to give the new airline a chance.

That willingness has the future of Watertown Regional Airport looking pretty good. High on the city's "wish list" for the airport is a new terminal building, one which would create a strong, positive impression of the city for travelers landing here and make flying out of Watertown even more enjoyable.

We see no reason why commercial air service can't continue to improve and become even more popular here in Watertown. The city's Essential Air Service contract is up for bids again in the near future, and given the success ADI has had, it's a good bet more airlines will be lining up to serve Watertown Regional Airport. And the more companies bidding, the better the deal for Watertown and for the traveling public.

We all know Watertown is a great place to live, work and play. It's good to know it has also become a good place to fly into and out of.

Congratulations to everybody involved.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, Dec. 18

Hisses and cheers

CHEERS to Dick and Darlene Muth and Muth Electric for its significantly generous donation of \$1.1 million to Mitchell Technical Institute last week.

When Dick Muth stood at the podium during Thursday night's announcement, it was evident MTI has played an enormous role in his life.

Mitchell Tech is getting some outstanding upgrades and endowment opportunities due to what's now the largest single donation to in the school's history.

This is quite the gift and a great, great way to give back.

CHEERS to the local chapter of Pheasants Forever, Pheasant Country, for its plan to put forth \$150,000 to go toward more public hunting areas near Mitchell.

Last week, Pheasant Country made its announcement in hopes landowners would voluntarily enroll their acres into conservation and become state Walk-In Area. The initiative hopes to be a kickstart for local businesses to add to the fund. That way, with more public hunting available, more non-resident hunters will have more opportunity and bring their business to the region.

We love this work considering there is not any acreage enrolled in the Walk-In Area program in Davison County. But, we also recognize it needs to be the right fit.

We hope renters are not pulling acreage from farmers who crop the land to now put them in a tough spot. While it's great to have additional public hunting in the area, it's important to remember landowner relationships as well.

Speaking of pheasants, HISSES to the shocking figures that show thousands of non-resident pheasant hunters did not trek to South Dakota this year.

During the state Game, Fish & Parks Department meeting last week, officials said sales for small game licenses are down 18 percent compared to last year. As of Dec. 11, there were 67,651 licenses sold. That will impact the division's budget substantially, down about \$1.7 million compared to a year ago. We recognize pheasant numbers and the annual brood count report play a significant role in how many people visit our state, but we never thought it would be this brutal.

Here's to hoping bird numbers rebound ASAP.

Former DCI agent speaks out about harassment, retaliation

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A former South Dakota Division of Criminal Investigation agent said she hopes a jury's \$1.2 million verdict in her favor sends a strong message about the need to believe sexual harassment victims.

Laura Zylstra Kaiser said her case wasn't so much about sexual harassment but retaliation for reporting it. She said it's also about the actions of Attorney General Marty Jackley, who oversees the DCI and is running for governor.

Kaiser got a stellar review just before a new colleague joined her on the Aberdeen Area Drug Task Force in 2011. She said Brown County Deputy Ross Erickson, who no longer works at the sheriff's office, soon began making inappropriate comments.

Kaiser said she discussed it with another agent, Mark Black, who broke her confidence and told others what happened. In her lawsuit, Kaiser said the strife caused her to be demoted and transferred to Pierre against her wishes. She resigned in 2012.

"I'm here to speak for my sisters in law enforcement and to the other women and any other victim of sexual harassment to let them know you don't have to put up with sexual harassment, but most importantly do not be in fear or the retaliation," Kaiser told KELO-TV.

After her demotion and transfer, Kaiser appealed to agency Director Bryan Gortmaker and Jackley for reinstatement, but Jackley denied the grievance. She filed a complaint with the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and then the lawsuit in 2015. Last week, a jury awarded her at least \$1.2 million, but there are elements of the case yet to be settled and the state could appeal.

Jackley said he relied on Black's version of events and the advice of others in the office where he worked. Black was fired from the agency in 2014 over allegations of domestic abuse and that he exercised poor judgment, court records show.

"I personally called the State's Attorney, Sheriff, as well as her lawyers, and reviewed Agent Black's information," Jackley said in a statement to the Argus Leader. "Any female agent in the DCI should report any harassment to their supervisors, and I have an open-door policy for them to also raise concerns directly to me."

UN Security Council imposes new sanctions on North Korea

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. Security Council unanimously approved tough new sanctions against North Korea on Friday in response to its latest launch of a ballistic missile that Pyongyang says is capable of reaching anywhere on the U.S. mainland.

The resolution adopted by the council includes sharply lower limits on North Korea's oil imports, the return home of all North Koreans working overseas within 24 months, and a crackdown on ships smuggling banned items including coal and oil to and from the country.

But the resolution doesn't include even harsher measures sought by the Trump administration that would ban all oil imports and freeze international assets of the government and its leader, Kim Jong Un.

The resolution, drafted by the United States and negotiated with China, drew criticism from Russia for the short time the 13 other council nations had to consider the draft, and last-minute changes to the text. Two of those changes were extending the deadline for North Korean workers to return home from 12 months to 24 months and reducing the number of North Koreans being put on the U.N. sanctions blacklist from 19 to 15.

U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley said after the vote that "the unity this council has shown in leveling these unprecedented sanctions is a reflection of the international outrage at the Kim regime's actions."

She recalled that the previous sanctions resolution, when combined with earlier measures, would ban over 90 percent of North Korea's exports reported in 2016.

That resolution, adopted in response to North Korea's sixth and strongest nuclear test explosion on Sept.

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3, banned North Korea from importing all natural gas liquids and condensates. It also banned all textile exports and prohibited any country from authorizing new work permits for North Korean workers — two key sources of hard currency for the northeast Asian nation.

Haley told the council Friday that the new resolution “bans all remaining categories of major North Korean exports — a loss of nearly \$250 million in revenue to the regime.”

Here are key provisions of the new sanctions:

—The import of refined oil products, including diesel and kerosene that are key to North Korea’s economy, is capped at 500,000 barrels a year. The U.S. Mission said North Korea imported 4.5 million barrels of refined petroleum in 2016. The new cap represents a nearly 90 percent ban of refined products, and a reduction from the 2 million barrels a year the council authorized in the September resolution.

—The import of crude oil is capped at 4 million barrels a year and countries supplying oil are required to provide quarterly reports to the Security Council committee monitoring sanctions on North Korea.

—North Korea is banned from exporting food and agriculture products, machinery, electrical equipment, earth and stones, wood and vessels — and all countries are banned from importing these items.

—All countries are banned from exporting industrial machinery, transportation vehicles, iron, steel and other metals to North Korea.

—All countries must expel North Korean workers and safety monitors by the end of 2019. The resolution expresses concern that earnings from these workers are being used to support the country’s nuclear and ballistic missile programs. According to the U.S. Mission, there are nearly 100,000 overseas North Korean workers, with about 50,000 in China and 30,000 in Russia.

—U.N. member states are authorized to seize, inspect and impound any ship in their ports or territorial waters suspected of being involved in illegal smuggling and evasion of U.N. sanctions. The resolution expresses “great concern” that North Korea is illegally exporting coal and other prohibited items “through deceptive maritime practices and obtaining petroleum illegally through ship-to-ship transfers.”

—All countries are banned from providing insurance or re-insurance to North Korean-affiliated ships believed to be involved in illegal smuggling and sanctions evasion and are required to de-register these vessels.

—Fifteen North Koreans, including 13 representing banks overseas, and the Ministry of the People’s Armed Forces were added to the U.N. sanctions blacklist. The two others facing a travel ban and asset freeze are Kim Jong Sik, identified as a leading official guiding North Korea’s development of weapons of mass destruction, and Ri Pyong Chul, an alternate member of the Political Bureau of the ruling Workers’ Party of Korea and first vice director of the Munitions Industry Department.

North Korea’s test on Nov. 29 of its most powerful intercontinental ballistic missile yet was its 20th launch of a ballistic missile this year, and added to fears that it will soon have a military arsenal that can viably target the U.S. mainland.

British Ambassador Matthew Rycroft said the Security Council was sending “a very strong united signal to the North Korean regime that enough is enough — that they must stop their nuclear program and they must stop their intercontinental ballistic missile program.”

France’s U.N. ambassador, Francois Delattre, said: “We believe maximum pressure today is our best lever to a political and diplomatic solution tomorrow ... (and) our best antidote to the risk of war.”

The new resolution reiterates the Security Council’s regret at North Korea’s “massive diversion of its scarce resources toward its development of nuclear weapons and a number of expensive ballistic missile programs.” It notes that 41 percent of the population is undernourished.

The resolution reaffirms the council’s support for a resumption of six-party talks on North Korea’s nuclear program aimed at the peaceful denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula.

It also reiterates the importance of maintaining peace and stability in northeast Asia and “expresses its commitment to a peace, diplomatic and political solution to the situation ... through dialogue.”

Trump signs tax overhaul, spending bill ahead of holidays

By LAURIE KELLMAN and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed the \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul into law Friday, using his last moments in the White House before flying to Florida for the holidays to celebrate a much-needed political win.

He also signed a temporary spending bill to keep the government running and provide money to upgrade the nation's missile defenses. The tax cut, which fulfilled a long-held Republican goal, was at the forefront of Trump's mind.

Starting next year, the new law will give big cuts to corporation and wealthy Americans and more modest reductions to other families. Trump continued to pitch it as a win for the middle class, insisting that even though polling indicates the tax cut is unpopular, "the numbers will speak" for themselves.

"I don't think we are going to have to do much selling," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

The tax law is the largest since 1986, but far from the biggest in American history, as the president repeatedly claims. It also is projected to add to the nation's debt, something that was anathema to Republicans for years.

Passage of the tax bill marked a significant victory for a president hungry for one after chaos and legislative failures during his first year in office — including an effort to repeal former President Barack Obama's health care law — despite Republican control of Congress. Trump also ended the year with his sights still trained on the way the media treat him, tweeting that the mainstream media "NEVER talk about our accomplishments in the end of year reviews."

"We are compiling a long @ beautiful list," he tweeted.

Trump said that he originally planned to sign the tax bill early next year but moved it up on the spur of the moment after watching media coverage Friday morning about the legislation. After finishing the bill signings, he was off to Mar-a-Lago in Florida, his plane leaving Joint Base Andrews in Maryland just before noon EST.

The first major overhaul of the nation's tax laws since 1986 could add \$1.5 trillion to the national debt over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Republican leaders have said they're willing to take that step in pursuit of a boost to the economy. But some in the GOP worry their party could face a political backlash without an aggressive public relations tour.

Trump, meanwhile, continued to send mixed messages about his desire to work across the aisle. In the Oval Office, he contended anew that Democrats "don't like tax cuts, they want to raise your taxes."

But that came just hours after he tweeted a pitch for bipartisanship: "At some point, and for the good of the country, I predict we will start working with the Democrats in a bipartisan fashion. Infrastructure would be a perfect place to start. ... It is time to start rebuilding our country!"

Some White House aides and Republican leaders are looking warily ahead at the midterm election year, when typically a president's party loses seats in Congress. That's all the more true for presidents whose approval ratings dip below 50 percent, and Trump's have never been that high.

Additionally, the new tax law that they see as the GOP's top talking point is unpopular. 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.

Starting next year, families making between \$50,000 and \$75,000 will get average tax cuts of \$890, according to an analysis by the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center. Families making between \$100,000 and \$200,000 would get average tax cuts of \$2,260, while families making more than \$1 million would get average tax cuts of nearly \$70,000, according to the analysis.

But if the cuts for individuals are allowed to expire, most Americans — those making less than \$75,000 — would see tax increases in 2027, according to congressional estimates.

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.

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

Democrats say that's not likely to happen, that the tax cuts are simply a boon to wealthy Americans like Trump and leave lower-income families in a lurch.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@APLaurieKellman> and Lemire at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

More than 4 in 5 enrolled in 'Obamacare' are in Trump states

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and KEVIN S. VINEYS, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans in states that Donald Trump carried in his march to the White House account for more than 4 in 5 of those signed up for coverage under the health care law the president still wants to take down.

An Associated Press analysis of new figures from the government found that 7.3 million of the 8.8 million consumers signed up so far for next year come from states Trump won in the 2016 presidential election. The four states with the highest number of sign-ups — Florida, Texas, North Carolina and Georgia, accounting for nearly 3.9 million customers — were all Trump states.

"There's politics, and then there's taking care of yourself and your family," said analyst Chris Sloan of the consulting firm Avalere Health. "You can have political views about a program like the Affordable Care Act, but when you get an opportunity to get subsidized health insurance for you and your family ... politics is a distant consideration."

AP's analysis found that 11 states beat 2017's enrollment figures. Of them, eight — Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Missouri, Nebraska, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wyoming — went for Trump, who posted double-digit victories in all but Iowa.

To be sure, Trump states are also home to many people who voted for Democrat Hillary Clinton. But the AP's analysis points to a pattern of benefits from the health law in states the president won. The premium dollars have economic ripple effects, reimbursing hospitals and doctors for services that might otherwise have gone unpaid and written off as bad debt. Also, people with health insurance are better able to manage chronic medical problems, remaining productive, tax-paying members of society.

Such economic and political realities will be in the background when Congress returns in January to another installment of the nation's long-running debate over health care. Republicans and Democrats seem to have battled to a draw for now.

The year 2019 — the effective date for repeal of the ACA's requirement that most people have coverage — is looking like a time of reckoning for the law's insurance markets, which offer subsidized private plans to people who don't have job-based coverage.

Unexpectedly strong enrollment numbers announced this week for the 39 states served by the federal HealthCare.gov website testify to consumer demand for the program and its guarantee that people with medical problems can't be turned away. Yet those numbers still lag behind last season's sign-up total.

It's unclear what the final count for next year will be. HealthCare.gov numbers released Thursday are incomplete, and some states running their own insurance websites will continue enrolling people throughout January.

Separately, actions by the Trump administration and the GOP-led Congress are creating incentives for healthy people to stay out of the health law's insurance markets.

Starting in 2019, people won't have to worry about incurring a fine from the IRS for being uninsured, because the tax overhaul repeals that mandate. At the same time, the administration is taking regulatory action to open a path for the sale of low-cost insurance plans that don't provide the health law's benefits or guarantees.

"The real worry for me is what the health plans do," said Sloan. "If they decide that without the mandate it's not worth staying in this market, you could end up with swaths of the country having no insurers."

Bipartisan legislation to stabilize insurance markets is still alive in Congress, but its prospects are unclear. On Friday, Trump said he thinks repealing the mandate as part of the tax overhaul "ultimately leads to the end of Obamacare." The president continued to ignore other parts of the law that remain untouched by the tax bill, including its Medicaid expansion benefiting low-income adults and the popular protections for people with pre-existing conditions.

Others say a corner has been turned in the health care debate, but where it will end up is still uncertain. Former President Barack Obama's law "is more durable and important to Americans in terms of getting affordable health insurance than even its advocates expected," said John McDonough, a professor at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, who served as an adviser to Senate Democrats during the ACA debate more than seven years ago.

With the end of the attempts to bring it down and to repeal it, perhaps there will be opportunities in the near future to try to actually build up and improve it, because it could use some work," he added.

AP broadcast journalist Shelley Adler contributed to this report.

Video: Train crew not using electronic devices before crash

By PHUONG LE, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Video from the cab of the Amtrak train that hurtled off the tracks in Washington state, killing three people and injuring dozens, shows that the engineer did not appear to be using a cellphone or any other personal electronic device just before the derailment, federal investigators said Friday.

The video and audio captured from a camera facing inside the cab also revealed that the engineer was heard commenting about the train's speed just before the train crashed while traveling more than double the posted 30 mph (48 kph) speed limit. But authorities did not provide a transcript of what he said, saying only in a summary that "about six seconds prior to the derailment, the engineer made a comment regarding an over speed condition."

The video also showed that the engineer did not place the train's brake handle in the emergency-braking mode as the locomotive was recorded traveling 78 mph (126 kph), according to the preliminary details of an investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board.

The video recording "ended as the locomotive was tilting and the crew was bracing for impact" south of Seattle on Monday, the safety board said.

The train was carrying 85 passengers and crew members as it made its inaugural run along a fast, new 15-mile (24-kilometer) bypass route. Officials have said previously that another person was inside the locomotive's cab being trained by the engineer.

Federal investigators trying to determine the cause of the wreck have gathered data from the locomotive's event data recorder as well as inward- and outward-facing train cameras. They have said their full investigation could take more than a year.

NTSB board member Bella Dinh-Zarr said earlier this week that the locomotive's emergency brake went off automatically and was not manually activated by the engineer.

Rail-safety experts have said the engineer should have activated the brake about a minute before the train reached the curve posted for 30 mph (48 kph), and that not doing so strongly suggested that the engineer may have been distracted for an extended period. The engineer, who was among the injured, has not been identified and investigators have said they planned to speak with him soon.

None of the critical train speed-control technology that could have prevented a derailment was active on the section of track where the derailment happened before the train set off on its maiden voyage Monday.

Work to install the GPS-based technology known as positive train control is not expected to be completed until next spring on the newly opened span where the train derailed, according to Sound Transit, the public agency that owns the tracks.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a Democrat, said on Wednesday that Amtrak had committed to making sure the technology will be in place statewide as soon as possible and before the Dec. 31, 2018 deadline.

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Passenger service along the rail line where the train derailed will not resume service until the advanced safety systems are in place, Washington transportation officials have said.

Experts have said it is likely the technology would have prevented Monday's derailment in Washington state.

Rail crash data obtained by The Associated Press found that nearly 300 people have died in train crashes that could have been prevented if railroads across the U.S. implemented that critical speed-control technology — something federal safety investigators have been pushing for close to five decades.

Congress for years has extended the deadlines for railroads to implement positive train control.

On Friday, 15 Democratic U.S. senators, including Sens. Maria Cantwell and Patty Murray in Washington state, sent a letter to Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao saying it's imperative that railroads put the technology in place before the December 2018 federal deadline.

Investigators have also said they are looking into whether the engineer was distracted by a second person in the cab or by something else. The other person inside the cab was an in-training conductor familiarizing himself with the route.

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

What can be done to prevent deadly car rammings?

By **TOM KRISHER** and **LISA MARIE PANE**, Associated Press

A deadly attack this week in Melbourne, Australia, in which a man plowed an SUV into a crowd of Christmas shoppers comes from the same playbook used by terrorists in recent years around the globe. Many new vehicles rolling off car lots in the United States are equipped with technology that causes them to automatically stop if someone walks in their path. As more and more terrorists use vehicles to plow into crowds, the question has arisen in the auto industry: Can advances in technology thwart future attacks? And are there other ways to prevent the ubiquitous automobile from being used as a weapon?

WHAT TECHNOLOGICAL SOLUTIONS EXIST?

Autonomous emergency braking systems automatically stop vehicles before a collision if a driver doesn't react, though it's not foolproof.

"For sure the technology is there to detect the pedestrians. The technology is there to automatically brake the vehicles," Jeremy McClain, director of technology in North America for Continental Automotive Systems, said earlier this year.

Most systems now, including Continental's, let the driver overrule the vehicle's computer, largely because the systems have only a few camera or radar sensors and may pick up false signals.

Some systems will automatically stop a vehicle if the driver doesn't, while others will slow it to mitigate crash damage. Already some are sophisticated enough to detect people who are walking. One version of Toyota's safety system has sensors that will stop a car from moving in a parking lot if they detect something in its path, even if the driver accidentally hits the gas instead of the brake.

The systems are rapidly getting more accurate with laser sensors, and more powerful computers and artificial intelligence are being added as the industry rapidly moves toward self-driving cars. McClain said the cars could, in a relatively short time, be tasked with stopping drivers who have evil intent. "You'd have to consider all the circumstances, but you could definitely do it," he said.

Continental has had early discussions with automakers about using the systems to stop terrorists, he said. But such a use is far into the future, and many automakers haven't considered it yet.

WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD?

Even when the technology is ready, it will take years for roughly 250 million older vehicles now on the road to be replaced with those equipped with the new technology. Only 19 percent of 2017 models have the technology as a standard feature, although four of 20 automakers say it's now standard on more than half their models, according to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration. Twenty companies have agreed to equip almost all of their vehicles with the feature by Sept. 1, 2022.

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Toyota, which expects to have autonomous braking on all vehicles but a few in the U.S. by the end of this year, said it hasn't discussed preventing terrorism yet. But a spokesman said the company always wants to stay ahead on safety.

The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, which represents a dozen major car manufacturers including General Motors, Ford and Toyota, said earlier this year the industry will consider anti-terrorist measures but would have to "carefully review all the ramifications to ensure that there aren't some unintended trade-offs to road safety."

WHAT SECURITY EXPERTS SAY

The short answer is there's no foolproof way to prevent these attacks. Cars are easy to obtain, easy to use and their safety systems can be overridden. Changes have been made to improve security around buildings or landmarks viewed as potential targets — embassies, for example — but those same steps aren't always practical for roadways and sidewalks. It's not only an expensive proposition but virtually impossible to make every place where a pedestrian might be safe.

"Society has to come to learn to accept the notion of total security, no matter who you are and where you live, doesn't exist," said Bruce Alexander, a terrorism and security expert based in Washington, D.C.

WHAT ELSE CAN BE DONE?

Terror attacks in the past few decades have led to a number of changes in building design and other features, including the installation of bollards made to withstand ramming from vehicles.

Bollards notably ended a rampage in Times Square earlier this year by a driver who ran down 23 people. Because permanent barriers usually need to be anchored deeply, they aren't generally installed on bridges, where two attacks in London occurred this year. Engineers are tackling that challenge with new synthetic materials that can withstand major impact without needing a deep anchor.

In New York and other large cities, police use SUVs to block roads and pedestrian walkways before events that are expected to draw large crowds, said Angela Hrdlicka, a former Secret Service agent who is now a private security consultant.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES?

Vehicle attacks are considered "low-tech" terrorism, and the solutions are elusive. According to Colin P. Clarke and Louis Klarevas, who together wrote an article on the issue of car rammings earlier this year for *The Atlantic*, the reasons range from concerns about restricting people's civil liberties to the expense of securing large numbers of public spaces. A more effective approach, they argue, is to use proactive measures designed to thwart would-be attackers, from surveillance ahead of large public events to a visible police presence.

Krisher reported from Detroit; Pane reported from Atlanta.

Poll: Most say sex misconduct victims are underprotected

By LAURIE KELLMAN and EMILY SWANSON, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most Americans say sexual misconduct is a major problem and that too little is being done to protect victims, according to a new poll by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research. But some — particularly Republican men — are concerned about the rights of the accused.

The sheer speed with which an accusation of sexual misconduct can sink a career rattles some men, and not just Republicans. Bart Cassida, a 40-year-old Democrat from Indiana, said he tends to believe the accusers. But he's concerned about employers "immediately dismissing people without proper investigation."

"People think that men don't mind being that kind of guy," someone physically assertive with women, said Dan Lee, 65, a Palm Springs, California, Democrat who retired after a four-decade career in computer science. "I think that's wrong ... men are concerned with their reputations."

The poll shows that nearly 6 in 10 Americans think there is too little protection for the rights of people who have been victims of workplace sexual misconduct. By contrast, just 37 percent think there's too little protection for people accused of sexual misconduct, 35 percent think there's the right amount and 26 percent think there's too much.

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Majorities of women of all political persuasions, as well as male Democrats and independents, think too little is done to protect victims, but only about a third of male Republicans think the same. Among Republican men, by contrast, 52 percent think there are too few protections for the accused. Just 33 percent of Democratic men and 39 percent of Republican women think that's the case.

Whether there's a balance to be struck between protections for accusers and the rights of those accused of sexual misconduct is part of America's reckoning with the problem. Women and some men have come forward in recent months with allegations credible enough to topple titans of entertainment, news, and members of Congress — often with blinding speed. Just what is an unwelcome sexual advance, and whether there should be life-altering consequences for what some might see as just a dumb remark, have ignited ferocious exchanges across U.S. society.

"On that side of it someone should have a chance to defend themselves," said Cedar Rapids, Iowa, resident Emily Hass, 40, who says she's confronted two people who harassed her. She's among the 56 percent of Americans who think harassment is a major problem in U.S. workplaces. "Absolutely. I think we don't even know the half of it."

A third of working Americans say sexual misconduct is a very serious problem in their own workplace, a feeling most common among women, minorities and lower-income Americans. Three in 10 women and 1 in 10 men say that they've personally experienced sexual misconduct at work.

The tense discussion goes to the pinnacle of American government. Americans elected President Donald Trump even after they heard a recording of him boasting of groping women and knew he stood accused of assaulting or harassing more than a dozen women. He has denied any wrongdoing and has vowed to sue his accusers. Nearly a year into his presidency, that hasn't happened.

Misconduct allegations have been made against several members of Congress, including Sen. Al Franken, who plans to step down due to sexual assault accusations.

Allegations of sexual misconduct, many of them denied, have forced a reconsideration of lifetimes of work by accused men, such as former President Bill Clinton, actor Kevin Spacey and Hollywood mogul Harvey Weinstein. And voters in overwhelmingly Republican Alabama on Dec. 12 elected a Democrat, Doug Jones, to the Senate for the first time in a quarter century. The Republican candidate, Roy Moore, stood accused of sexual misconduct with teenage girls while he was in his 30s. Moore denied the charges. Trump endorsed Moore.

The poll shows that majorities of Americans think broad sectors of society are not doing enough to prevent sexual misconduct, including institutions including the entertainment industry, colleges and universities, state and federal governments, the military and the news media.

The sweeping nature of the national reckoning shows no sign of being resolved soon, the poll found.

Overall, two-thirds think sexual misconduct happens in most or even all workplaces and more than 8 in 10 say false accusations happen at least some of the time.

And while a third of women worry at least somewhat about being victims, an equal percentage of men worry at least somewhat about being falsely accused.

The abrupt firing of NBC's Matt Lauer from the helm of the "Today" show this month rattled Cassida.

"By the time I had heard about it, he had already been let go. And I kind of went, whoa," said the Greencastle, Indiana, high school math teacher, a Democrat. NBC officials said they had identified a pattern of troubling behavior before giving Lauer the ax.

Lee worries that the privacy of accusers is protected more than the names of the accused. "You always heard rumors about who was being accused. But you never heard who was doing the accusing."

Still the poll finds many hope the attention given to sexual misconduct will make a positive difference. Most Americans — 55 percent — think the spate of recent high-profile cases will result in change for the better for women.

The AP-NORC poll surveyed 1,020 adults from Dec. 7-11 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.3 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC: <http://www.apnorc.org/>

Russian hackers hunted journalists in years-long campaign

By RAPHAEL SATTER, JEFF DONN and NATALIYA VASILYEVA, Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Russian television anchor Pavel Lobkov was in the studio getting ready for his show when jarring news flashed across his phone: Some of his most intimate messages had just been published to the web.

Days earlier, the veteran journalist had come out live on air as HIV-positive, a taboo-breaking revelation that drew responses from hundreds of Russians fighting their own lonely struggles with the virus. Now he'd been hacked.

"These were very personal messages," Lobkov said in a recent interview, describing a frantic call to his lawyer in an abortive effort to stop the spread of nearly 300 pages of Facebook correspondence, including sexually explicit messages. Even two years later, he said, "it's a very traumatic story."

The Associated Press found that Lobkov was targeted by the hacking group known as Fancy Bear in March 2015, nine months before his messages were leaked. He was one of at least 200 journalists, publishers and bloggers targeted by the group as early as mid-2014 and as recently as a few months ago.

The AP identified journalists as the third-largest group on a hacking hit list obtained from cybersecurity firm Secureworks, after diplomatic personnel and U.S. Democrats. About 50 of the journalists worked at The New York Times. Another 50 were either foreign correspondents based in Moscow or Russian reporters like Lobkov who worked for independent news outlets. Others were prominent media figures in Ukraine, Moldova, the Baltics or Washington.

The list of journalists provides new evidence for the U.S. intelligence community's conclusion that Fancy Bear acted on behalf of the Russian government when it intervened in the U.S. presidential election. Spy agencies say the hackers were working to help Republican Donald Trump. The Russian government has denied interfering in the American election.

Previous AP reporting has shown how Fancy Bear — which Secureworks nicknamed Iron Twilight — used phishing emails to try to compromise Russian opposition leaders, Ukrainian politicians and U.S. intelligence figures, along with Hillary Clinton campaign chairman John Podesta and more than 130 other Democrats.

Lobkov, 50, said he saw hacks like the one that turned his day upside-down in December 2015 as dress rehearsals for the email leaks that struck the Democrats in the United States the following year.

"I think the hackers in the service of the Fatherland were long getting their training on our lot before venturing outside."

"CLASSIC KGB TACTIC"

New Yorker writer Masha Gessen said it was also in 2015 — when Secureworks first detected attempts to break into her Gmail — that she began noticing people who seemed to materialize next to her in public places in New York and speak loudly in Russian into their phones, as if trying to be overheard. She said this only happened when she put appointments into the online calendar linked to her Google account.

Gessen, the author of a book about Russian President Vladimir Putin's rise to power, said she saw the incidents as threats.

"It was really obvious," she said. "It was a classic KGB intimidation tactic."

Other U.S.-based journalists targeted include Josh Rogin, a Washington Post columnist, and Shane Harris, who was covering the intelligence community for The Daily Beast in 2015. Harris said he dodged the phishing attempt, forwarding the email to a source in the security industry who told him almost immediately that Fancy Bear was involved.

In Russia, the majority of journalists targeted by the hackers worked for independent news outlets like Novaya Gazeta or Vedomosti, though a few — such as Tina Kandelaki and Ksenia Sobchak — are more

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mainstream. Sobchak has even launched an improbable bid for the Russian presidency.

Investigative reporter Roman Shleykov noted that the Gmail hackers targeted was the one he used while working on the Panama Papers, the expose of international tax avoidance that implicated members of Putin's inner circle.

Fancy Bear also pursued more than 30 media targets in Ukraine, including many journalists at the Kyiv Post and others who have reported from the front lines of the Russia-backed war in the country's east.

Nataliya Gumenyuk, co-founder of Ukrainian internet news site Hromadske, said the hackers were hunting for compromising information.

"The idea was to discredit the independent Ukrainian voices," she said.

The hackers also tried to break into the personal Gmail account of Ellen Barry, The New York Times' former Moscow bureau chief.

Her newspaper appears to have been a favorite target. Fancy Bear sent phishing emails to roughly 50 of Barry's colleagues at The Times in late 2014, according to two people familiar with the matter. They spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss confidential data.

The Times confirmed in a brief statement that its employees received the malicious messages, but the newspaper declined to comment further.

Some journalists saw their presence on the hackers' hit list as vindication. Among them were CNN security analyst Michael Weiss and Brookings Institution visiting fellow Jamie Kirchick, who took the news as a badge of honor.

"I'm very proud to hear that," Kirchick said.

The Committee to Protect Journalists said the wide net cast by Fancy Bear underscores efforts by governments worldwide to use hacking against journalists.

"It's about gaining access to sources and intimidating those journalists," said Courtney C. Radsch, the group's advocacy director.

In Russia, the stakes are particularly high. The committee has counted 38 murders of journalists there since 1992.

Many journalists told the AP they knew they were under threat, explaining that they had added a second layer of password protection to their emails and only chatted over encrypted messaging apps like Telegram, WhatsApp or Signal.

Fancy Bear target Ekaterina Vinokurova, who works for regional media outlet Znak, said she routinely deletes her emails.

"I understand that my accounts may be hacked at any time," she said in a telephone interview. "I'm ready for them."

"I'VE SEEN WHAT THEY COULD DO"

It's not just whom the hackers tried to spy on that points to the Russian government.

It's when.

Maria Titizian, an Armenian journalist, immediately found significance in the date she was targeted: June 26, 2015.

"It was Electric Yerevan," she said, referring to protests over rising energy bills that she reported on. The protests that rocked Armenia's capital that summer were initially seen by some in Moscow as a threat to Russian influence.

Titizian said her outspoken criticism of the Kremlin's "colonial attitude" toward Armenia could have made her a target.

Eliot Higgins, whose open source journalism site Bellingcat repeatedly crops up on the target list, said the phishing attempts seemed to begin "once we started really making strong statements about MH17," the Malaysian airliner shot out of the sky over eastern Ukraine in 2014, killing 298 people. Bellingcat played a key role in marshaling the evidence that the plane was destroyed by a Russian missile — Moscow's denials notwithstanding.

The clearest timing for a hacking attempt may have been that of Adrian Chen.

On June 2, 2015, Chen published a prescient expose of the Internet Research Agency, the Russian "troll factory" that won fresh infamy in October over revelations that it had manufactured make-believe Americans to pollute social media with toxic rhetoric.

Eight days after Chen published his big story, Fancy Bear tried to break into his account.

Chen, who has regularly written about the darker recesses of the internet, said having a lifetime of private messages exposed to the internet could be devastating.

"I've covered a lot of these leaks," he said. "I've seen what they could do."

Donn reported from Plymouth, Massachusetts. Vasilyeva reported from Moscow. Kate de Pury in Moscow contributed.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Raphael Satter's father, David Satter, is an author and Russia specialist who has been critical of the Kremlin. His emails were published last year by hackers and his account is on Secureworks' list of Fancy Bear targets.

Trump signs, lauds tax overhaul, off to Florida for holidays

By LAURIE KELLMAN and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed the \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul into law Friday, using his last moments in the White House before flying to Florida for the holidays to celebrate a much-needed political win.

He also signed a temporary spending bill to keep the government running and provide money to upgrade the nation's missile defenses. The tax cut, which fulfilled a long-held Republican goal, was at the forefront of Trump's mind.

Starting next year, the new law will give big cuts to corporation and wealthy Americans and more modest reductions to other families. Trump continued to pitch it as a win a for the middle class, insisting that even though polling indicates the tax cut is unpopular, "the numbers will speak" for themselves.

"I don't think we are going to have to do much selling," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office.

The tax law is the largest since 1986, but far from the biggest in American history, as the president repeatedly claims. It also is projected to add to the nation's debt, something that was anathema to Republicans for years.

Passage of the tax bill marked a significant victory for a president hungry for one after chaos and legislative failures during his first year in office — including an effort to repeal former President Barack Obama's health care law — despite Republican control of Congress. Trump also ended the year with his sights still trained on the way the media treat him, tweeting that the mainstream media "NEVER talk about our accomplishments in the end of year reviews."

"We are compiling a long @ beautiful list," he tweeted.

Trump said that he originally planned to sign the tax bill early next year but moved it up on the spur of the moment after watching media coverage Friday morning about the legislation. After finishing the bill signings, he was off to Mar-a-Lago in Florida, his plane leaving Joint Base Andrews in Maryland just before noon EST.

The first major overhaul of the nation's tax laws since 1986 could add \$1.5 trillion to the national debt over the next decade, according to the Congressional Budget Office. Republican leaders have said they're willing to take that step in pursuit of a boost to the economy. But some in the GOP worry their party could face a political backlash without an aggressive public relations tour.

Trump, meanwhile, continued to send mixed messages about his desire to work across the aisle. In the Oval Office, he contended anew that Democrats "don't like tax cuts, they want to raise your taxes."

But that came just hours after he tweeted a pitch for bipartisanship: "At some point, and for the good of the country, I predict we will start working with the Democrats in a bipartisan fashion. Infrastructure

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would be a perfect place to start. ... It is time to start rebuilding our country!"

Some White House aides and Republican leaders are looking warily ahead at the midterm election year, when typically a president's party loses seats in Congress. That's all the more true for presidents whose approval ratings dip below 50 percent, and Trump's have never been that high.

Additionally, the new tax law that they see as the GOP's top talking point is unpopular. 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.

Starting next year, families making between \$50,000 and \$75,000 will get average tax cuts of \$890, according to an analysis by the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center. Families making between \$100,000 and \$200,000 would get average tax cuts of \$2,260, while families making more than \$1 million would get average tax cuts of nearly \$70,000, according to the analysis.

But if the cuts for individuals are allowed to expire, most Americans — those making less than \$75,000 — would see tax increases in 2027, according to congressional estimates.

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 see benefits from the business tax cuts, in the form of more jobs and higher wages.

Democrats say that's not likely to happen, that the tax cuts are simply a boon to wealthy Americans like Trump and leave lower-income families in a lurch.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@APLaurieKellman> and Lemire at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

Dutoit out at 7 symphonies amid sexual assault accusations

By JOCELYN GECKER and JANIE HAR, Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — The stellar career of world-renowned conductor Charles Dutoit has come crashing down in the wake of sexual assault accusations by three singers and a musician. Symphonies from Boston to Sydney have severed ties with the maestro, and he has canceled guest appearances with other major orchestras.

The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra in London, where the 81-year-old Dutoit is artistic director and principal conductor, issued a statement early Friday saying the symphony and Dutoit "have jointly agreed to release him from his forthcoming concert obligations with the orchestra for the immediate future."

The Royal Philharmonic statement says the facts should be determined by a legal process and that Dutoit "needs to be given a fair opportunity to seek legal advice and contest these allegations."

Meanwhile, orchestras in New York, Chicago and Cleveland announced that Dutoit has withdrawn his services for upcoming concerts. In addition to Sydney and Boston, the San Francisco Symphony cut ties with Dutoit, citing the "serious nature of the allegations" detailed by The Associated Press. He had been set to appear at the New York Philharmonic next month; the other performances were scattered through 2018.

Aside from the orchestra statements attributed to Dutoit about his voluntary withdrawals, the famous conductor has remained silent.

Prior to release of the AP story, Dutoit did not respond to multiple attempts for comment through the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and his office in Montreal. The Royal Philharmonic said Dutoit was on vacation, but that it had forwarded the AP's emailed requests for comment directly to him. The AP also reached out to Dutoit's office with several phone calls and emails.

The reaction to the graphic sexual assault accusations made by the four women has been swift in the classical music world, accompanied by assertions about Dutoit's decades-long reputation for inappropriate behavior. The developments also have left the orchestras scrambling to find substitute conductors.

Joe Kluger, former president of The Philadelphia Orchestra from 1989 to 2005, told The AP that Dutoit's

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reputation as "extremely flirtatious" was one factor that caused the organization to pass him over twice for the job of music director during those years.

He said rumors of Dutoit's "inappropriate behavior with women were common knowledge in the classical music business." He added: "I do recall telling our staff to be wary around him and encouraged them to report any inappropriate behavior immediately."

Kluger said he was unaware of any formal complaints filed about Dutoit by musicians or staff members. He said he had never heard that Dutoit had assaulted women.

The AP story published Thursday included detailed accounts by the four women, who said Dutoit attacked them on the sidelines of rehearsals and performances with orchestras in five cities — Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Philadelphia and Saratoga Springs, New York. All four told the AP they never filed formal complaints because they were young and Dutoit was the maestro; they figured they would lose their jobs, not him.

They said the incidents occurred between 1985 and 2010 in a variety of places, including a moving car, Dutoit's dressing room, a hotel elevator and his suite at the Four Seasons Hotel in Chicago.

The women, two who were named, said the Swiss-born conductor physically restrained them, forced his body against theirs, sometimes put his tongue in their mouths and, in one case, stuck her hand down his pants.

One of the women who spoke to the AP said Dutoit attacked her on four occasions during performances with The Philadelphia Orchestra in 2006 and 2010.

The accusations against Dutoit made him the second high-profile figure in the classical music world to be accused of sexual misconduct recently. Earlier this month, the Metropolitan Opera suspended conductor James Levine when misconduct accusations surfaced.

In a long, distinguished career, Dutoit has traveled the world as a guest conductor and led several highly regarded orchestras, including the Orchestra National de France, the NHK Symphony in Tokyo and the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Pascale Ouimet, spokesman for the Montreal Symphony, where Dutoit served as music director for nearly 25 years until 2002, said he had no comment on the allegations.

Dutoit's long relationship with Montreal came to an acrimonious end in 2002, following a dispute with the musicians' union.

Natasha Gauthier, a writer based in Ottawa, said Dutoit's reputation as a womanizer was common knowledge in the Montreal classical music world and she even wrote about her own unwanted encounter with the conductor in 1995 for a prominent weekly magazine.

She described how she arrived in his dressing room for an interview only to have him snatch away her notebook, then lean in, putting his hand on her knee while trying to give her a massage. She said he asked about her marital status. Gauthier quoted Dutoit as saying he would not speak to her for the story when he learned she had been inquiring about his reputation.

She didn't expect him to be fired as a result of the story, but she was stunned by the silence from orchestra management.

"Nobody doubted that this had happened just as I had described," Gauthier said, "but I'm the one who got blacklisted."

Among those who spoke to AP were soprano and two-time Grammy winner Sylvia McNair, 61, who said Dutoit had cornered her in a hotel elevator after a rehearsal with the Minnesota Orchestra in 1985.

"As soon as it was just the two of us in the elevator, Charles Dutoit pushed me back against the elevator wall and pressed his knee way up between my legs and pressed himself all over me," said McNair, who was 28 at the time. "I managed to shove him off and right at that moment, the elevator door opened. I remember saying, 'Stop it!' And I made a dash for it."

Retired mezzo-soprano Paula Rasmussen said Dutoit summoned her to his dressing room at the LA Opera in September 1991, before a dress rehearsal for "Les Troyens."

"He threw me against the wall, shoved my hand down his pants and shoved his tongue down my throat,"

she said. She refused to ever be alone with the maestro again, said Rasmussen, 52, now an attorney in the San Francisco area.

Associated Press writer Kristen Gelineau in Sydney contributed reporting.

Follow Jocelyn Gecker on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jgecker>

Follow Janie Har on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/janiehar>

Trump signs stopgap spending bill into law to avert shutdown

By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed a temporary spending bill into law on Friday to avert a government shutdown after the Republican-led Congress did the bare minimum in a sprint toward the holidays and punted disputes on immigration, health care and the budget to next year.

The measure had passed the House on Thursday on a 231-188 vote over Democratic opposition and then cleared the Senate, 66-32, with Democrats from Republican-leaning states providing many of the key votes.

The stopgap legislation will keep the government from closing down at midnight Friday. It traversed a tortured path, encountering resistance from the GOP's most ardent allies of the military, as well as opposition from Democrats who demanded but were denied a vote on giving immigrants brought to the country as children and in the country illegally an opportunity to become citizens.

The wrap-up measure allows Republicans controlling Washington to savor their win on this week's \$1.5 trillion tax package — even as they kick a full lineup of leftover work into the new year. Congress will return in January facing enormous challenges on immigration, the federal budget, health care and national security along with legislation to increase the government's authority to borrow money.

Each of those items is sure to test the unity that Republicans are enjoying for the moment.

"Now it gets down to some very difficult decisions on how we move forward in the first and second quarter of next year," said Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., a leader of a powerful faction of hard-right Republicans. "There is a lot to do next month. I'm not worried today. I'll wait until January to be worried, OK?"

Democrats had initially pressed for adding their priorities to the measure, but once rebuffed on immigration they worked to keep the bill mostly free of add-ons, figuring that they'll hold greater leverage next month.

Among the items left behind was \$81 billion worth of disaster aid, which passed the House on a bipartisan 251-169 tally but stalled in the Senate. The measure would have brought this year's tally for aid to hurricane victims in Texas, Florida, Puerto Rico and other parts of the Caribbean, as well as fire-ravaged California, to more than \$130 billion. But both Republicans and Democrats in the Senate want changes, and it was among the items Democrats sought to hold onto for leverage next year.

"Democrats want to make sure that we have equal bargaining, and we're not going to allow things like disaster relief go forward without discussing some of the other issues we care about," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y.

Immigration is among the most difficult issues confronting lawmakers in January, thrust upon them in September after Trump rescinded an order by then-President Barack Obama giving these so-called Dreamers protection against deportation, though he gave Congress a March deadline to come up with a legislative solution.

"They embody the best in our nation: patriotism, hard work, perseverance," House Democratic leader Nancy Pelosi of California told the chamber's Rules Committee on Thursday. "We should not leave them to celebrate the holidays in fear."

Trump and Republicans are pushing for additional border security and other immigration steps in exchange.

"The vast majority of Republicans want to see a DACA solution. They just want to see a DACA solution that's balanced," said House Speaker Paul Ryan, R-Wis., referring to the program's name, Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals

Also left unfinished were bipartisan efforts to smash budget limits that are imposing a freeze on the

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Pentagon and domestic agencies, a long-term extension of the popular Children's Health Insurance Program for 9 million low-income kids and Senate legislation aimed at stabilizing health insurance markets.

"At some point we've got to make the hard decisions," said Republican Sen. John Thune of South Dakota.

Instead, lawmakers struggled to achieve the must-do: a \$2.1 billion fix for an expiring program that pays for veterans to seek care outside the Department of Veterans Affairs system; a temporary fix to ensure states facing shortfalls from the Children's Health Insurance Program won't have to purge children from the program; and a short-term extension for an expiring overseas wiretapping program aimed at tracking terrorists.

Among Republicans, opposition to the temporary measure came mostly from the party's defense hawks, who had hoped to enact record increases for the military this year and force the Senate to debate a full-year, \$658 billion defense spending measure. But that idea was a nonstarter with Senate Democrats, who will only agree to Pentagon increases if domestic programs get a comparable hike.

The short-term spending bill does contain about \$5 billion to upgrade missile defenses to respond to the threat from North Korea and to repair two destroyers damaged in accidents this year in the Pacific.

The legislation also has a provision to turn off automatic cuts to many "mandatory" spending programs, including Medicare, that would otherwise be triggered by the tax cut bill. Democrats had sought to highlight the looming spending cuts in arguing against the tax measure.

Trump to sign \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul package

By LAURIE KELLMAN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says he's getting ready to sign into law a \$1.5 trillion tax overhaul package. It provides generous cuts for corporations and the wealthiest Americans and smaller ones for the middle class and low-income families.

Trump tweeted that he'll sign the law in the Oval Office before jetting off to his Florida estate for Christmas.

It is the first major overhaul of the nation's tax laws since 1986, but far from the largest tax cuts in American history as the president claims. Politically, it marks the Republicans' first major legislative accomplishment of Trump's presidency.

Some estimates say the cuts could add to the nation's soaring deficit.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. WHAT CAPITOL HILL MANAGED TO AVOID

The Republican-led Congress has passed a temporary spending bill to avert a government shutdown, putting off disputes on immigration, health care and the budget to next year.

2. WHO WERE IN HACKERS' CROSSHAIRS

Russian hackers pursued journalists with the same gusto as when they went after U.S. politicians and intelligence figures, an Associated Press investigation has found.

3. SEXUAL MISCONDUCT SNARES FAMED CONDUCTOR

Fallout has been swift in the classical music world following graphic sexual assault accusations against Charles Dutoit made by three opera singers and a classical musician to The AP, with several symphonies severing ties.

4. FLOODS POSE ADDED RISKS IN HIGHLY POLLUTED SITES

Hundreds of the nation's most polluted places are at an increasing risk of spreading contamination beyond their borders by more frequent storms and rising seas.

5. WHICH COUNTRIES ARE DEFYING AMERICA AT THE UN

Ignoring American threats, top recipients of US aid voted with Palestinians against Trump's Jerusalem recognition.

6. WHO ARE GETTING THEIR LAND BACK

A white Zimbabwean farmer evicted under the government of Robert Mugabe has returned to a hero's welcome as the first to get his land back under new President Emmerson Mnangagwa.

7. MUSIC HELPING ORPHANS COPE

South Sudan's orphans and others torn from families by civil war are finding solace through song in the largely Christian nation.

8. LEGAL GRASS UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE

Marijuana is now legal in four states — California, Nevada, Maine and Massachusetts — some residents will stuff stockings with spliffs for the first time these holidays.

9. FUNKY MUSIC RECOGNIZED

A museum dedicated to the funk music genre has opened its doors in Dayton, Ohio, home to bands like the Ohio Players, Zapp, Faze-O, Slave and Lakeside.

10. FAMED SPORTSCASTER PASSES AWAY

Dick Enberg, a Hall of Fame broadcaster known as much for his excited calls of "Oh my!" as the big events he covered during a 60-year career has died.

UN denounces US recognition of Jerusalem as Israeli capital

By EDITH M. LEDERER, Associated Press

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The U.N. General Assembly voted overwhelmingly Thursday to denounce President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital, largely ignoring Trump's threats to cut off aid to any country that went against him.

The nonbinding resolution declaring U.S. action on Jerusalem "null and void" was approved 128-9 — a victory for the Palestinians, but not as big as they predicted. Amid Washington's threats, 35 of the 193 U.N. member nations abstained and 21 were absent.

The resolution reaffirmed what has been the United Nations' stand on the divided holy city since 1967: that Jerusalem's final status must be decided in direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

The Trump administration made it clear the vote would have no effect on its plan to move the American Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem. And Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said afterward that he completely rejects the "preposterous" resolution.

Palestinian Ambassador Riyad Mansour called the vote a victory not only for the Palestinians but for the United Nations and international law, saying U.S. Ambassador Nikki Haley "failed miserably" in persuading only seven countries aside from the U.S. and Israel to vote against the resolution.

"And they used unprecedented tactics, unheard of in the diplomatic work at the U.N., including blackmail and extortion," he said.

The United States and Israel had waged an intensive lobbying campaign against the measure, with Haley sending letters to over 180 countries warning that Washington would be taking names of those who voted against the U.S. Trump went further, threatening a funding cutoff: "Let them vote against us. We'll save a lot. We don't care."

But in the end, major U.S. aid recipients including Afghanistan, Egypt, Jordan, Pakistan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Tanzania and South Africa supported the resolution. Egypt received roughly \$1.4 billion in U.S. aid this year, and Jordan about \$1.3 billion.

The nine countries voting "no" were the U.S., Israel, Guatemala, Honduras, Micronesia, Nauru, Palau, the Marshall Islands and Togo. Among the abstentions were Australia, Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Croatia, Czech Republic and Mexico.

The absent countries included Kenya, which was the fifth-largest recipient of U.S. aid last year, Georgia and Ukraine, all of which have close U.S. ties.

After the vote, Haley tweeted a photo naming the 65 nations that voted no, abstained or were absent, and said: "We appreciate these countries for not falling to the irresponsible ways of the UN."

She later sent invitations to the 65 ambassadors inviting them to a reception on Jan. 3 to thank them for their friendship with the United States.

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The U.S. is scheduled to dispense \$25.8 billion in foreign aid for 2018. Whether Trump follows through with his threat against those who voted "yes" remains to be seen.

But within hours, the Trump administration appeared to be backing away from its funding threats. In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Heather Nauert said cuts to countries that opposed the U.S. are not a foregone conclusion.

"The president's foreign policy team has been empowered to explore various options going forward with other nations," Nauert said. "However, no decisions have been made."

During the debate, Arab, Islamic and non-aligned nations urged a "yes" vote on the resolution, which was sponsored by Yemen and Turkey.

Yemeni Ambassador Khaled Hussein Mohamed Alyemany warned that Trump's recognition of Jerusalem undermines any chance for peace in the Mideast and "serves to fan the fires of violence and extremism."

He called Trump's action "a blatant violation of the rights of the Palestinian people and the Arab nations, and all Muslims and Christians of the world," and "a dangerous violation and breach of international law."

On Wednesday, Trump complained that Americans are tired of being taken advantage of by countries that take billions of dollars and then vote against the U.S. Haley echoed his words in her speech to the packed assembly chamber, threatening not only member states with funding cuts, but the United Nations itself.

Haley said the vote will make no difference in U.S. plans to move the American Embassy, but it "will make a difference on how Americans look at the U.N., and on how we look at countries who disrespect us in the U.N."

"And this vote will be remembered," she warned.

Trump's pressure tactics had raised the stakes at Thursday's emergency meeting and triggered accusations from the Muslim world of U.S. bullying and blackmail.

"It is unethical to think that the votes and dignity of member states are for sale," said Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu. "We will not be intimidated! You can be strong but this does not make you right!"

The Palestinians and their supporters sought the General Assembly vote after the U.S. 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.

The resolution adopted by the assembly has language similar to the defeated measure.

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."

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

Peru's president dodges impeachment over Odebrecht scandal

By FRANKLIN BRICENO and CHRISTINE ARMARIO, Associated Press

LIMA, Peru (AP) — Peruvian President Pedro Pablo Kuczynski defied ardent calls by opposition lawmakers demanding his impeachment over ties to the Brazilian construction giant implicated in Latin America's biggest corruption scandal in a late Thursday night vote that his proponents hailed as a triumph for the nation's democracy.

Legislators came eight votes short of impeaching the president following a half-day of impassioned debate in the wood-paneled chamber where the 79-year-old former Wall Street banker himself delivered a forceful defense.

Applause erupted inside Congress and his supporters cheered and waved Peruvian flags outside as it became clear Kuczynski would remain president.

"Tomorrow a new chapter in our history begins: the reconciliation and reconstruction of our country," Kuczynski tweeted afterward.

The impeachment effort against Peru's embattled president was the latest chapter in the Odebrecht

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bribery scandal that has ended the careers of some of Latin America's most prominent politicians. The company admitted in a 2016 U.S. Justice Department agreement to paying nearly \$800 million in kickbacks to politicians, their campaigns and political parties to secure lucrative public works contracts.

In Ecuador, Vice President Jorge Glas has been sentenced to six years in prison for orchestrating an Odebrecht bribery scheme. Former Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is appealing his conviction on charges of corruption and money laundering related to the plot. In Peru, two former presidents stand accused of accepting money from Odebrecht. One is behind bars and the other in the U.S. seeking to avoid extradition.

Kuczynski came under fire after an opposition-led investigative committee revealed documents last week showing Odebrecht made \$782,000 in payments to his private consulting firm more than a decade ago. Some of the payments overlapped with years that Kuczynski spent as a high-ranking government minister.

During his 30-minute testimony Thursday, Kuczynski showed the contracts in question on an overhead screen, pointing out that none contained his signature. He said he had no knowledge of the payments and that he never favored any company while in office. He characterized the transactions as part of a legal contract between two private companies and said his opponents were trying to force him from power without due process.

"I am here to look you in the eye, and tell you that I am not corrupt and I have not lied," he said, speaking slowly and assertively.

The vote capped a tumultuous eight days in Peru, which is one of South America's most politically volatile nations.

Analysts worried that impeachment could usher in a new period of uncertainty for Peru, an economic bright spot in Latin America that throughout its recent history has vacillated between short spans of democracy and autocratic rule.

"That they would impeach the president is not an unthinkable thing," said Steve Levitsky, a Harvard University political scientist who has spent years studying Peru. "It's that they would do it in a week without serious investigation, without a serious process of public debate."

The vote was pushed by the opposition Popular Force party led by Keiko Fujimori, who is the daughter of jailed former President Alberto Fujimori. She narrowly lost to Kuczynski in last year's presidential election.

Lawmakers debated for more than 10 hours, delivering fervent speeches that touched on everything from the merits of neoliberal economic policy to a Gabriel Garcia Marquez short story reference.

The president's detractors contended that he should have disclosed the payments before taking office and that, at the very least, as a high-ranking government minister when the money was paid he should have done a better job to shield himself from potential conflicts of interest.

Opposition lawmaker Milagros Takayama questioned why the president repeatedly insisted until recently that he had no ties to Odebrecht and agreed to go before the investigative commission only after the documents showing the payments were released.

"We deserve a Peru free of corruption and ineptitude," she said.

Polls within Peru had suggested a majority of Peruvians wanted the already deeply unpopular president out of office.

As a senior business leader and statesman with many ties to the private sector, Kuczynski was "sort of Trump-like in not clearly breaking those ties. And he's paying a price for it," Levitsky said.

While Kuczynski managed to avoid impeachment, his troubles are not yet over. He is due for questioning at the chief prosecutor's office next week, and a majority opposition rule in Congress is likely to make it difficult for him to govern.

Armario reported from Bogota, Colombia.

Police still checking terror link to Melbourne car ramming

By TREVOR MARSHALLSEA, Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Australian police were investigating Friday whether there was any terrorism-related motive behind the car ramming attack on Melbourne pedestrians that left 12 people in a hospital, three of them in critical condition.

Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull condemned the “despicable and cowardly act.” Nine of the 19 people originally injured Thursday were foreigners.

Victoria state police Acting Chief Commissioner Shane Patton said on Thursday night that early indications were the driver of the car, a 32-year-old Australian citizen of Afghan descent with a history of drug abuse and mental health issues, was not motivated by terrorism. He said the ramming was being treated as a “singular” incident.

On Friday morning, however, Patton said the man had made several utterances while under police guard in a hospital on Thursday night, including mentioning poor treatment of Muslims, and that police were still exploring terrorism as a possible motive.

“He made some utterances in respect to a number of matters,” Patton told Australia’s Channel Nine television network. “He spoke of dreams and voices but also attributed some of his activities as well due to the mistreatment of Muslims.”

Asked if there were links to terrorism, he said: “That’s certainly one area we’re exploring in respect to motivation.”

But he added: “We haven’t identified any extremist links with this man. We haven’t identified him linked to any groups. We haven’t identified anyone inciting him to do any actions, or any prior extremist activities prior to those utterances last night.”

Seven of the 19 people admitted to the hospital were discharged overnight. Melbourne media reported three patients remained in critical condition, including an 83-year-old man, and that a 4-year-old boy’s condition had improved from critical to stable.

Police said nine foreigners were among the injured, including from South Korea, China, Italy, India, Venezuela, Ireland and New Zealand.

“Our consular officials are working hard to get in touch with their families and make sure they’re aware of what’s happened to their loved ones,” Turnbull told a press conference on Friday.

Turnbull also reiterated that “no terrorism link has been identified” but that “nothing should be ruled out.”

“This was a despicable and cowardly act,” Turnbull said. “But I want to reassure Australians that this is an isolated incident. We should continue to go about our daily lives the way we always do.”

Turnbull said the man had come to Australia as a refugee, “through normal refugee programs, not people smugglers.”

“He has a history of serious mental illness and drug abuse. He has no known links to any political issues or to extremist groups, and therefore the position I’m advised of is that no terrorism link has been identified at this stage,” Turnbull said.

In horrific scenes around 4:45 p.m. Thursday, the man drove a white SUV through a red light and speeded up into pedestrians crossing central Melbourne’s busy Flinders Street before crashing into a traffic barrier.

Patton said the man would undergo psychiatric assessment, with police hoping to formally interview him on Friday afternoon. The man was on a mental health plan but didn’t show for a scheduled appointment on Thursday morning, Patton said.

The driver is known to police following a 2010 minor assault matter.

Police said a second man, aged 24, who was arrested after being seen filming the incident and found to have three knives in his possession, had been released. He’s expected to be charged with drugs and weapons possession but the alleged offences are not linked to the car ramming.

Patton reassured the public hundreds more police would be on the streets over Christmas and New Year.

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.

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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.

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.

APNewsBreak: 298 die in rail crashes system could've stopped

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and MICHAEL SISKAK, Associated Press

Nearly 300 people have died in train crashes that could have been prevented if railroads across the U.S. implemented critical speed-control technology that federal safety investigators have been pushing for close to five decades, according to rail crash data obtained by The Associated Press.

But despite overwhelming evidence it could save lives, Congress extended the deadlines for railroads to implement so-called positive train control for years.

All the while, new high-speed train routes continue to spring into operation without the technology, including the new route involved in Monday's Amtrak crash south of Seattle that killed three people and one in Florida that's expected to start service in the coming weeks.

Data that the National Transportation Safety Board provided to AP on Wednesday shows the crashes that the agency says could have been prevented by positive train control have led to 298 deaths, 6,763 injuries and nearly \$385 million in property damage.

The records list crashes from 1969 through May 2015 — when an Amtrak train derailed in Philadelphia, killing eight people — and do not include Monday's wreck outside of Seattle, which experts say likely could have been prevented by the technology.

The board first recommending using "automatic train control" after two Penn Central commuter trains collided in Darien, Connecticut on Aug. 20, 1969, killing four and injuring 43.

The GPS-based technology is designed to automatically slow or stop trains that are going too fast and can take over control of a train when an engineer is distracted or incapacitated.

"We have recommended PTC for decades," Bella Dinh-Zarr, a member of the NTSB, said Tuesday. "Unfortunately the deadline was moved farther into the future, and every year that we wait to implement PTC to its fullest extent means that more people will be killed and injured."

A 2008 Metrolink crash in California that killed 25 people pushed PTC to become a hot-button issue on Capitol Hill. Lawmakers mandated railroad companies install the GPS-based PTC technology by 2015, but rail agencies said they didn't have enough time to install the expensive, complicated system.

Despite rebukes from the federal agency that regulates train travel, congress extended the deadline until the end of 2018 and now, in some circumstances, railroads can apply for an extension until 2020.

Positive train control was installed on 24 percent of the nation's passenger route miles and 45 percent of freight route miles as of September 30, the date of the Federal Railroad Administration's most recent quarterly update to its online tracker for the technology.

"Railroads need to stop the foot-dragging and implement Positive Train Control without delay - inaction puts lives at risk," U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal, a Democrat from Connecticut, said Thursday on Twitter.

Still, railroads are opening new lines without positive train control.

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When Amtrak officially launched its new, faster route near Seattle without the technology Monday, it came at a deadly cost.

Experts say it is likely the technology would have prevented the derailment that killed three people. The train — speeding 50 mph (80 kph) over the limit — went off the rails, sending several cars flying off a bridge onto the highway below.

Work to install positive train control isn't expected to be completed until next spring on the newly opened 15-mile (24-kilometer) span where the train derailed, according to Sound Transit, the public agency that owns the tracks.

"Should they have just waited to inaugurate service? In hindsight, maybe yes," said David B. Clarke, who runs the Center for Transportation Research at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. "Clearly, if PTC was active, this would not have happened."

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Amtrak had committed to trying to ensuring the technology will be in place statewide before the Dec. 31, 2018 deadline. Amtrak also offered to pay all costs associated with deadly train derailment, as well as medical and other expenses of the victims, Inslee, a Democrat, said. Late Wednesday Washington transportation officials said passenger service along the rail line where the Amtrak train derailed won't resume service until the advanced safety systems are in place.

Positive train control is activated on the tracks Amtrak owns along the Northeast Corridor, from Boston to Washington, D.C., and on Amtrak's Michigan line. Many of its locomotives are equipped for positive train control. Throughout the rest of the country, Amtrak operates on track owned by freight carriers and other entities that have made varying progress on installing the technology.

In Florida, a higher-speed passenger rail service known as Brightline is expected to launch in the next few weeks. But positive train control will not be operational when the trains roll out on those lines, drawing the ire of some local officials and community groups.

Ali Soule, a spokeswoman for Brightline, said in a statement that the trains have automatic train control, which can sound an alert in the train's cab to alert the engineer if the train is going too fast and full positive train control is expected to be implemented by the federal deadline at the end of 2018.

Follow Balsamo at <https://twitter.com/mikebalsamo1> and Sisak at <https://twitter.com/mikesisak> .

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

Homeland Security suspending bioterror testing in Oklahoma

By The Associated Press

NEWKIRK, Okla. (AP) — The Department of Homeland Security said Thursday it is suspending plans to conduct bioterrorism drills near the Kansas-Oklahoma border over concerns about their impact on grounds Native American tribes consider sacred because more than 100 children are buried there.

Homeland Security spokesman John Verrico said in an email that the tests were suspended over objections to them taking place at the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School. The Chilocco school, which operated from the late 1800s until 1980, was one of several federally-run boarding schools where the U.S. once sought to assimilate Native American children. The tribes say the federal agency is failing to protect a site with religious and cultural significance.

The agency's environmental assessment for the test said several inert chemical and non-hazardous biological materials were to be released to evaluate the ability of buildings to protect occupants from outdoor biological hazards. The proposed testing was planned for the months of February and June and July.

"While the work remains very important for the security of our nation, further evaluation will be conducted to identify the best location for future testing," Verrico said.

Sen. Jerry Moran, R-Kan., said he was pleased Homeland Security has suspended plans for testing near the Kansas border.

"While the chemicals DHS planned to use in these tests do not pose any bodily harm, Kansans deserve a thorough explanation when an event of this magnitude is occurring so close to where they live and raise their families," Moran said.

Homeland Security said the chemicals it planned to use are found in common household products such as sunscreen, cosmetics and laundry detergents.

One chemical that's caused the most worry, especially among the many farmers who live nearby, is called DiPel, a biological insecticide that's been commercially available since the 1970s and approved for use in organic farming. The Homeland Security project manager has said the chemicals won't pose harm to humans, animals or hundreds of acres of nearby cropland and pasture.

Catalan separatists regain majority in regional election

By ARITZ PARRA and CIARAN GILES, Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — Catalonia's secessionist parties won enough votes Thursday to regain a slim majority in the regional parliament and give new momentum to their political struggle for independence from Spain.

It was hardly an emphatic victory, however, as the separatists lost support compared to the previous vote in 2015, and a pro-unity party for the first time became biggest single bloc in the Catalan parliament.

The result left more questions than answers about what's next for Catalonia, where a long-standing push for independence escalated to a full-on clash with the Spanish government two months ago.

It was also a blow to Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy, who as a result of the separatists' defiance ousted the Catalan Cabinet and called the early election hoping to keep them out of power.

Instead, the election's outcome favored fugitive former Catalan leader Carles Puigdemont, who campaigned from Belgium where he is evading a Spanish judicial probe into the attempt to split from Spain. The investigation could lead to charges of rebellion and sedition that carry penalties of decades in prison.

Puigdemont, who got the most votes of any separatist candidate, greeted the results with delight and called them a rebuke to Spain's central government.

"The Spanish state has been defeated," Puigdemont said. "Mariano Rajoy has received a slap in the face from Catalonia."

In a televised appearance from Brussels, the 54 year-old former journalist didn't make clear if he would try to return home, where an arrest warrant awaits him.

The other main winner was Ines Arrimadas, the leading unionist candidate. Scoring 25 percent of the votes, her pro-business Ciutadans (Citizens) party won 37 seats, which will be the biggest single bloc in the 135-seat regional assembly.

"The pro-secession forces can never again claim they speak for all of Catalonia," Arrimadas said, promising her party will continue to oppose the separatists. "We are going to keep fighting for a peaceful co-existence, common sense and for a Catalonia for all Catalans."

But pro-independence parties — Puigdemont's Junts per Catalunya (Together for Catalonia), left-republican ERC and the anti-capitalist CUP — together won 70 seats, two above a majority but two less than in the previous parliament. The three groups fell short of winning a majority of votes, though, getting 48 percent of the total.

"The election has resolved very little," said Andrew Dowling, a specialist in Catalan history at Cardiff University in Wales. "Independence has won but in a way similar to 2015 — majority of seats but not in votes."

Dowling said that with the independence vote not reaching over half of the ballots cast, the European Union was not likely to get involved although the bloc will be keen on seeing the Spanish government actively address Catalonia's grievances.

Rajoy has said that taking over control of the region again would be something he would consider if independence is sought by a new Catalan government. Spain's constitution bars secession.

Thursday's election saw a record turnout of nearly 82 percent of the 5.5 million eligible voters in Catalonia. The election was held under highly unusual circumstances, with several pro-independence leaders ei-

ther jailed or in self-imposed exile for their roles in staging a banned independence referendum that was declared illegal by Spain's highest court.

Eight of the absent politicians were elected as lawmakers. Unless their status changes, they will have to renounce their seats and pass them on to other party members or else the pro-independence bloc could be down a crucial share of votes.

Weeks of campaigning involved little debate about regional policy on issues such as public education, widening inequality and unemployment. At the heart of the battle instead was the recent independence push that led to Spain's worst political crisis in decades.

Tensions have been high in Catalonia since an Oct. 1 referendum backed independence, when Spanish police used rubber bullets and batons against voters who tried to block them from removing ballots from polling stations. Separatist regional lawmakers made a unilateral declaration of independence Oct. 27, prompting Spain's national government to take the dramatic step of firing the regional government and dissolving the Catalan parliament. Courts later ordered the arrest of the former Catalan leaders.

No incidents were reported during voting Thursday.

A new Catalan attempt to secede would also be an unwelcome development for the European Union, which is already wrestling with legal complications from Britain's planned exit from the bloc. Senior EU officials have backed Rajoy, and no EU country has offered support for the separatists.

Catalonia's independence ambitions also have scant support in the rest of Spain.

The outcome of the political battle is crucial for the region, which accounts for 19 percent of Spain's gross domestic product. An economic slowdown has been the most immediate consequence of the Catalan independence push. Spain's central bank last week cut its national growth forecasts for next year and 2019 to 2.4 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively, cutting a percentage point off its previous predictions and citing the conflict in Catalonia as the cause.

Associated Press writer Aritz Parra reported this story in Barcelona and AP writer Ciaran Giles reported from Madrid. AP writers Joseph Wilson and Karl Ritter in Barcelona, Lorne Cook in Brussels and Barry Hatton in Lisbon, Portugal, contributed to this report.

Tax overhaul leads to end-of-year rush to pay property bills

By GEOFF MULVIHILL, Associated Press

CHERRY HILL, N.J. (AP) — In a season of sales, homeowners in affluent towns across the country are rushing to take advantage of a deal that they hope will save them big.

On taxes.

Tax collectors in many communities are seeing a surge in property tax prepayments before 2018 in an effort to cash in — for one last year — on a deduction that the coming tax overhaul will limit.

The tax office at the Cherry Hill Township building in New Jersey saw a steady stream of property owners on Friday.

One man said his buddies at an early-morning hockey game said it would be a good idea to prepay. A couple was there because their accountant called to recommend it. And Ron Brand — an accountant, though he doesn't do other people's taxes — was there with \$15,000 to pay a full year's worth of 2018 property taxes.

"I'm hoping to get a 22 percent return on my money," he said, calculating that every dollar he could deduct from his income this year would mean 22 cents less in federal taxes.

Since a national income tax began more than 100 years ago, people have been allowed to deduct from their income the amount they've paid for state and local taxes.

But under the tax legislation President Donald Trump signed into law Friday, there's a \$10,000 cap on the deductions.

That's going to hit hard in states such as California, Connecticut, New York and New Jersey — states where the average state and local deductions in 2015 all topped \$17,000. In New Jersey, the average

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property tax bill alone was nearly \$8,300 last year and there are scores of towns where the average bill is above the \$10,000 threshold.

In New York, Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo signed an executive order Friday allowing New Yorkers to pre-pay their 2018 taxes to local governments and schools by Jan. 1 and claim the deduction on their 2017 taxes.

At the Cherry Hill, New Jersey, tax office, the big question was how much to prepay.

Some people heard they'd be able to deduct the payment for only one quarter, others the whole year. Lewis Eron and Gail Trachtenberg were trying a half year's payment. "I would pay more if I could get more tax deductions," Eron said.

In nearby Moorestown, tax collector Jennifer DellaValle, said someone inquired about paying taxes for two years.

It's not clear what deductions the IRS will accept. The new law specifically bars taking deductions for income taxes paid ahead of time, but it is silent on prepaid local property taxes.

And tax offices in different places have very different positions on whether they would accept prepayments.

This week, more than 50 people called the tax office in the Atlanta suburb of Cobb County to ask about prepaying property taxes.

"We've told them, 'Absolutely not!'" said Tax Commissioner Carla Jackson.

Jackson said there is a long, prescribed process under state law and state code that requires an assessment, an opportunity for the homeowner to appeal and state approval of the county tax digest among other steps.

It's the same situation in Missouri. In California, counties are telling taxpayers they can pay only the bills due between February and April.

By contrast, Agawam, Massachusetts, is mailing property tax bills a few days early this year so people can know the amount if they want to prepay. And Cook County, Illinois, made it easier to prepay. By last week, 6,600 people had done so — more than three times as many as last year.

And that was before Congress gave final passage to the tax changes.

Associated Press writers Christina A. Cassidy in Atlanta and David A. Lieb in Jefferson City, Missouri, contributed to this article.

Follow Mulvihill at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill>

Health care and bank stocks pull US indexes slightly lower

By MARLEY JAY, AP Markets Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Stocks are slightly lower on Wall Street Friday afternoon as a subdued week of trading comes to a close. Health care companies and banks are slipping. High-dividend stocks made small gains even as bond yields remained near their recent highs. The price of bitcoin fell sharply after making gigantic gains throughout the year.

KEEPING SCORE: The Standard & Poor's 500 index fell 1 point, or 0.1 percent, to 2,682 as of 3:20 p.m. Eastern time. The Dow Jones industrial average lost 33 points, or 0.1 percent, to 24,728. The Nasdaq composite fell 5 points, or 0.1 percent, to 6,960.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks dipped 3 points, or 0.2 percent, to 1,544. Those companies, which stand to benefit more than others from lower tax rates, have outpaced the market this week. President Donald Trump signed the Republican tax overhaul into law on Friday.

Stocks are below the record highs they reached Monday but are still on track to finish higher for the fifth week in a row. They are also on pace to finish every month of the year with gains, when dividends are included.

Markets will be closed Monday in observance of Christmas.

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THE SHOE DOESN'T FIT: Nike slumped \$1.49, or 2.3 percent, to \$63.28. The company had a strong quarter overall, as its profit and sales both beat Wall Street projections. But Nike's North American business continued to struggle. Competitor Under Armour also dropped 10 cents to \$15.42 and Foot Locker fell 71 cents, or 1.5 percent, to \$47.27. Under Armour and Foot Locker have both tumbled as investors worry about the market for sneakers in North America. Nike has done about as well as the broader S&P 500 this year.

BITCOIN: A bitcoin sell-off that began at the beginning of the week is gaining momentum. The price of the digital currency fell 12 percent to \$13,629, according to the tracking site CoinDesk. It had soared close to \$20,000 as of Sunday. Bitcoin futures on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, which began trading on Monday, lost 12 percent to \$13,460.

The losses, steep as they are, only bring the price of bitcoin back to where it was early in December and it's still made huge gains this year. Bitcoin's price has been highly volatile, and finished 2016 at just under \$1,000. Many economists and market watchers say bitcoin is a speculative bubble that is ready to burst any time.

BONDS: Bond prices were little changed. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note remained at 2.48 percent. Banks took modest losses. They've done far better than the rest of the market as the tax bill has been at the forefront of investors' minds and interest rates have moved higher. The S&P 1500 banking index, which tracks small, medium and large-sized banks, has soared 9 percent over the last month. The S&P 1500 is up about 3 percent over that time.

PAPA DEPARTS: Papa John's founder John Schnatter will step down as the pizza chain's CEO next month, about two months after he criticized the NFL leadership over national anthem protests by players. The company did not say if the move was related to those comments, for which Schnatter later apologized. Chief Operating Officer Steve Ritchie will become CEO on Jan. 1 while Schnatter, who appears in the chain's commercials and on its pizza boxes, remains chairman and the company's biggest shareholder. Papa John's stock shed \$2.36, or 4 percent, to \$56.87.

WWE GETS PINNED: World Wrestling Entertainment dropped \$2.50, or 7.8 percent, to \$29.37 after the company disclosed that Chairman and CEO Vince McMahon sold 3.3 million shares to raise money for new investments in sports and entertainment, potentially including football. McMahon helped create the XFL, which lasted a single season in 2001. WWE said he plans to remain its chairman and CEO, and he remains its main shareholder.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude rose 11 cents to \$58.47 a barrel in New York. Brent crude, which is used to price international oils, rose 35 cents to \$65.25 a barrel in London.

Wholesale gasoline picked up 1 cent to \$1.76 a gallon. Heating oil rose 2 cents to \$1.97 a gallon. Natural gas jumped 7 cents to \$2.67 per 1,000 cubic feet.

METALS: Gold rose \$8.20 to \$1,278.80 an ounce. Silver climbed 21 cents to \$16.44 an ounce. Copper gained 2 cents to \$3.24 a pound.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 113.31 yen from 113.35 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1852 from \$1.1873.

OVERSEAS: The DAX in Germany fell 0.3 percent and the French CAC 40 lost 0.4 percent. In Britain the FTSE 100 slid 0.1 percent. Spain's IBEX fell 1.2 percent after a group of pro-independence parties won a majority in elections to Parliament. Spanish Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy vowed to speak to new Catalan leaders as long as they don't violate the Spanish Constitution. Rajoy's government called for elections after a Catalan separatist parliament unilaterally declared independence in October after a referendum that the Spanish government called illegal.

In Japan, the Nikkei 225 slid 0.7 percent. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index added 0.7 percent and the Kospi in South Korea climbed 0.4 percent.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay can be reached at <http://twitter.com/MarleyJayAP> His work can be found at <https://apnews.com/search/marley%20jayt>

Expanded child tax credit may not be as generous as it seems

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL, AP Personal Finance Writer

The expansion of a child tax credit helped seal Congress' approval of the Republican tax overhaul. Sen. Marco Rubio had insisted that House-Senate negotiators allow low-income households to claim more of the child credit. And the final bill did so.

So do poor families stand to benefit? Maybe. It depends on their circumstances.

The child credit is designed to help working families offset some of the cost of raising children. Under current law, the credit lets households reduce their taxes by up to \$1,000 for each child under their care. The tax overhaul doubled that credit to \$2,000.

It also made more of the credit refundable. That means that if the credit lowers a family's tax liability below zero, they can still receive the balance of the credit in the form of a tax refund. And more people will now be eligible to claim the credit because the income level at which it phases out has been raised.

On the surface, this sounds like happy news for American families. Yet tax experts say the expanded child credit will actually provide little relief for some of the lowest-income families.

HOW IT WORKS NOW

A family can claim the credit for each child under 17 they claim as a dependent and whom they have housed for at least half the year. The credit begins to phase out when adjusted gross income exceeds \$75,000 for single parents or \$110,000 for married couples.

The dollar value of the credit does rise with a household's earnings. As a result, the proportion of families that receive the credit — as well as the average size of the credit — is higher among moderate- and middle-income families than among low-income households, according to the Tax Policy Center.

Still, the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities has concluded that the credit helped lift roughly 2.7 million people out of poverty in 2016.

HOW THE CHANGES WOULD WORK

The final version of the Republican bill doubles the full tax credit to \$2,000 per child. And by raising the income threshold at which the credit phases out, the bill will allow more middle and upper-income families to claim it. It now won't start to phase out until income hits \$200,000 for single filers and \$400,000 for married couples.

For families that earn too little to owe tax, the bill also made up to \$1,400 of the credit refundable. Before Rubio had demanded an increase, the refundable portion in the Senate bill had been \$1,100.

Yet like other elements of the tax bill that go to individual families, the increased child credit — and the increase in the refundable portion of it — are set to expire in 2026. In addition, to receive the child credit, parents will now have to provide their children's Social Security numbers. This requirement is intended to deny the child credit to people who are in the U.S. illegally.

WHY IT'S SO IMPORTANT. . .

Rubio, a Florida Republican, had threatened to vote against the bill without a sweetened tax credit for lower-income working families. Republicans needed his vote to help secure victory in the Senate.

So Rubio won a late-stage concession to increase the portion of the child credit that would be refundable for households that owe no income tax.

... AND WHY IT'S NOT SO IMPORTANT

The compromise tax bill does make more families eligible for the credit. And it increases its size. Yet it fails to provide much help for lower-income families, says Chye-Ching Huang of the CBPP.

Because of how rules covering the credit's refundability are written, Huang expects about 10 million children among the lowest-income working families to receive a token increase of up to \$75 per family — or no increase at all. That is because the refundable portion of the credit doesn't kick in until a family has income

of \$2,500. For each additional dollar earned, a family receives a refundable credit worth 15 cents until it reaches its maximum credit of \$1,400. But some families won't come close to that threshold, Huang said.

The new requirement for a Social Security number also would harm about 1 million children in low-income working families by denying them the credit they now receive because they lack a Social Security number, she said. This will be a particular problem for some immigrant families because undocumented immigrants with children would not have a Social Security number.

Additionally, the benefit of the child credit will be eroded for some families by the tax bill's elimination of personal exemptions. Currently, a taxpayer can deduct from their income a \$4,050 exemption for herself, her spouse and each dependent.

On top of that, the benefits of the overall tax overhaul heavily favor corporations and high-income families over low- and moderate-income Americans. And what's more, millions of American households could face tax hikes in coming years once their tax cuts expire after 2025.

AP finds climate change risk for 327 toxic Superfund sites

By JASON DEAREN, MICHAEL BIESECKER and ANGELIKI KASTANIS, Associated Press

TARPON SPRINGS, Fla. (AP) — Anthony Stansbury propped his rusty bike against a live oak tree and cast his fishing line into the rushing waters of Florida's Anclote River.

When he bought a house down the street last year, Stansbury says he wasn't told that his slice of paradise had a hidden problem. The neighborhood is adjacent to the Stauffer Chemical Co. Superfund site, a former chemical manufacturing plant that is on the list of the nation's most polluted places. That 130-acre lot on the river's edge is also located in a flood zone.

"Me and my kids fish here a couple times a week. Everyone who lives on this coast right here, they fish on this water daily," said the 39-year-old father of three.

Stansbury is among nearly 2 million people in the U.S. who live within a mile of 327 Superfund sites in areas prone to flooding or vulnerable to sea-level rise caused by climate change, according to an Associated Press analysis of flood zone maps, census data and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency records.

This year's historic hurricane season exposed a little-known public health threat: Highly polluted sites that can be inundated by floodwaters, potentially spreading toxic contamination.

In Houston, more than a dozen Superfund sites were flooded by Hurricane Harvey, with breaches reported at two. In the Southeast and Puerto Rico, Superfund sites were battered by driving rains and winds from Irma and Maria.

The vulnerable sites highlighted by AP's review are scattered across the nation, but Florida, New Jersey and California have the most, and the most people living near them. They are in largely low-income, heavily minority neighborhoods, the data show.

Many of the 327 sites have had at least some work done to help mitigate the threat to public health, including fencing them off and covering them in plastic sheeting to help keep out rain water.

The Obama administration assessed some of these at-risk places and planned to gird them from harsher weather and rising seas. EPA's 2014 Climate Adaptation Plan said prolonged flooding at low-lying Superfund sites could cause extensive erosion, carrying away contaminants as waters recede.

President Donald Trump, however, has called climate change a hoax, and his administration has worked to remove references from federal reports and websites linking carbon emissions to the warming planet.

"Site managers had started reviewing climate and environmental trends for each Superfund site, including the potential for flooding," said Phyllis Anderson, who worked for 30 years as an EPA attorney and associate director of the division that manages Superfund cleanups until her retirement in 2013. "The current administration appears to be trying to erase these efforts in their climate change denials, which is a shame."

EPA Administrator Scott Pruitt has said he intends to focus on cleaning up Superfund sites, and he appointed a task force that developed a list of sites considered the highest priority. The Stauffer site in Florida is not on it.

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Like Trump, Pruitt rejects the consensus of climate scientists that man-made carbon emissions are driving global warming. His task force's 34-page report makes no mention of the flood risk to Superfund sites from stronger storms or rising seas, but eight of the 21 sites on EPA's priority list are in areas of flood risk.

Despite EPA's announced emphasis on expediting cleanups, the Trump administration's proposed spending plan for the current 2018 fiscal year seeks to slash Superfund program funding by nearly one-third. Congress has not yet approved new spending plans for the fiscal year, which began Oct. 1.

Pruitt's office declined to comment this week on the key findings of AP's analysis or why the agency appears to no longer recognize an increasing flood risk to toxic sites posed by the changing climate.

However, Jahan Wilcox, an EPA spokesman, said, "Despite fear-mongering from the Associated Press, not a single dollar has actually been eliminated, as Congress still hasn't passed a budget."

Many flood-prone Superfund sites identified through AP's analysis are located in low-lying, densely populated urban areas. In New Jersey, several polluted sites have more than 50,000 people living within one mile.

In Hoboken, across the Hudson River from New York City, the site of a former manufacturing plant for mercury vapor lamps sits within a mile of almost 100,000 residents, including 7,000 children under 5.

The Martin Aaron Inc. Superfund site is in the heart of Camden's Waterfront South, a low-income neighborhood of crumbling row houses and industrial facilities stretching along the Delaware River.

The 2.5-acre lot, which takes up most of a city block, has been home to a succession of factories dating back to 1886 that included a leather tannery. The air around the fenced site hangs heavy with the nose-stinging odor of solvents. Testing found that soil and groundwater under the site contained a witch's brew of highly toxic chemicals, including PCBs and pesticides.

Earlier this month, workers used heavy machinery to remove contaminated soil and to pump polluted water from deep underground. Long range plans approved by EPA call for eventually covering the land and restricting its future use.

Just around the corner, Mark Skinner and his niece Cherise Skinner pushed her 1-year-old son in a stroller in front of their rented row house. Mark Skinner shrugged when asked about the work at the former industrial site.

"It's really contaminated, there's a lot of stuff in the ground, but I don't know what all it is," said Skinner, 53, who works at a nearby scrap metal yard and has lived in Waterfront South since he was a teenager.

Foul-smelling water filled the streets there during Superstorm Sandy in 2012, flooding many basements, long-time residents said. Census data show about 17,250 people live within a mile of the Martin Aaron site — 58 percent are black and 36 percent are Latino.

Across the nation, more than 800,000 homes are located near flood-prone toxic sites. Houses are at risk of contamination if intense flooding brings water into them, and many more people could be affected if the contamination seeps into the ground, finding its way into drinking water.

Mustafa Ali, who resigned in March as EPA's senior adviser and assistant associate administrator for environmental justice, said it's no accident that many of the nation's most polluted sites are also located in some of the poorest neighborhoods.

"We place the things that are most dangerous in sacrifice zones, which in many instances are communities of color where we haven't placed as much value on their lives," said Ali, who worked at EPA for 24 years.

The Stauffer site in Florida is a scrubby green field along the Anclote River, ringed on its other three sides by chain-link fences with "No Trespassing" signs. Testing showed the 130-acre lot's soils were contaminated with radium, the long-banned pesticide DDT, arsenic, lead and other pollutants that over the years have fouled the area's groundwater and the river.

Environmental regulators say the site now poses no threat to people or the environment because the current owner, the pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca, paid to treat contaminated soils, and cover the pollution with a "cap" of clean earth and grass. Still, residential development and use of groundwater on the site are prohibited because of the legacy pollution.

Covering toxic waste is often a cheaper option than completely removing the pollutants, but the instal-

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lations are not always as long-lasting as the chemicals buried beneath them, said Jeff Cunningham, a civil engineering professor at the University of South Florida.

"As a long-term strategy, capping only works if the contaminants degrade to safe levels before the capping system eventually fails. What if it takes centuries for some of these contaminants to degrade to safe levels?" Cunningham said.

Damage to a protective cap from storm-fueled flooding has already occurred at least once this year.

In October, the EPA said dioxins from the San Jacinto River Waste Pits Superfund site near Houston were released after the cap was damaged by Harvey-related flooding. Tests afterward measured the toxins at 2,300 times the level that would normally trigger a new cleanup. Pruitt has since ordered an accelerated cleanup of the site.

Seventy-six-year-old Tony Leisner has lived near Florida's Stauffer chemical site all his life. He told the AP he is seeing damage to docks and riverside properties from the ever-rising waters in the neighborhood, and is concerned about what more flooding could mean for the Superfund lot. Although monitoring wells do test local groundwater for contamination from the site, some in Leisner's neighborhood said they're fearful enough to drink only bottled water.

The Anclote River is listed as an "impaired waterway" because it fails to meet state clean water criteria, though how much of that is due to the Stauffer site's legacy is unclear. The state has issued a warning about eating bass out of the river, but there are no signs at the popular fishing spot warning anglers even though tests show heightened levels of mercury in fish.

Leisner said barrels of chemicals at the Stauffer site self-ignited while crews were working. He said he's disappointed neither the company nor EPA removed the pollutants, especially since rising waters are already threatening the neighborhood.

"Burying things rarely helps. And if you've got a chemical that is that toxic ... I think you need to find a way to reuse, recycle and remove (it), to a place where it's not going to contaminate groundwater," he said.

Associated Press environmental writer Michael Biesecker reported from Camden, New Jersey. Reporter Tamara Lush contributed from Tarpon Springs.

Follow Jason Dearen at <http://twitter.com/JHDearen> and Biesecker at <http://twitter.com/mbieseck>

Online: Previous AP Superfund-site-risk stories at: <https://apnews.com/tag/ToxicSites>

This story has been corrected to correct the black population figure for Camden, New Jersey, area near Superfund site to 58 percent, from 65.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Dec. 22, the 356th day of 2017. There are nine days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 22, 1944, during the World War II Battle of the Bulge, U.S. Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe rejected a German demand for surrender, writing "Nuts!" in his official reply.

On this date:

In 1775, Esek Hopkins was appointed commander-in-chief of the Continental Navy.

In 1894, French army officer Alfred Dreyfus was convicted of treason in a court-martial that triggered worldwide charges of anti-Semitism. (Dreyfus was eventually vindicated.)

In 1910, a fire lasting more than 26 hours broke out at the Chicago Union Stock Yards; 21 firefighters were killed in the collapse of a burning building.

In 1917, Mother Frances Xavier Cabrini, who later became the first naturalized U.S. citizen to be canon-

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ized, died in Chicago at age 67.

In 1937, the first, center tube of the Lincoln Tunnel connecting New York City and New Jersey beneath the Hudson River was opened to traffic. (The second tube opened in 1945, the third in 1957.)

In 1940, author Nathanael West, 37, and his wife, Eileen McKenney, were killed in a car crash in El Centro, California, while en route to the funeral of F. Scott Fitzgerald, who had died the day before.

In 1968, Julie Nixon married David Eisenhower in a private ceremony in New York.

In 1977, three dozen people were killed when a 250-foot-high grain elevator at the Continental Grain Company plant in Westwego, Louisiana, exploded.

In 1989, Romanian President Nicolae Ceausescu (chow-SHES'-koo), the last of Eastern Europe's hard-line Communist rulers, was toppled from power in a popular uprising. Playwright Samuel Beckett died in Paris at age 83.

In 1991, the body of Marine Lt. Col. William R. Higgins, an American hostage slain by his terrorist captors, was recovered after it had been dumped along a highway in Lebanon.

In 2001, Richard C. Reid, a passenger on an American Airlines flight from Paris to Miami, tried to ignite explosives in his shoes, but was subdued by flight attendants and fellow passengers. (Reid is serving a life sentence in federal prison.)

In 2010, President Barack Obama signed a law allowing gays for the first time in history to serve openly in America's military, repealing the "don't ask, don't tell" policy.

Ten years ago: A jury in Riverhead, New York, convicted John White, a black man, of second-degree manslaughter in the shooting death of Daniel Cicciaro (SIS'-ur-oh), a white teenager, during a confrontation outside White's house. (The 17-year-old was shot in the face after he showed up with two carloads of friends to confront White's son after a dispute at a party. White, who said the shooting was an accident, was later sentenced to two to four years in prison, but had his sentence commuted by New York Gov. David Paterson after five months.)

Five years ago: The late U.S. Sen. Daniel Inouye was praised as a humble leader who embodied honor, dignity and duty during a public visitation at Hawaii's state Capitol, five days after his death at age 88. Egypt's Islamist-backed constitution received a "yes" majority in a final round of voting on a referendum that saw a low voter turnout. A suicide bomber in Pakistan killed nine people, including a provincial government official, at a political rally held by a party that had opposed the Taliban.

One year ago: President-elect Donald Trump named close adviser Kellyanne Conway as his White House counselor and former Republican National Committee spokesman Sean Spicer as press secretary. The Syrian government took full control of the city of Aleppo for the first time in four years after the last opposition fighters and civilians were bused out of war-ravaged eastern districts, ending a brutal chapter in Syria's civil war.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Hector Elizondo is 81. Country singer Red Steagall is 79. Former World Bank Group President Paul Wolfowitz is 74. Baseball Hall of Famer Steve Carlton is 73. Former ABC News anchor Diane Sawyer is 72. Rock singer-musician Rick Nielsen (Cheap Trick) is 69. Rock singer-musician Michael Bacon is 69. Baseball All-Star Steve Garvey is 69. Golfer Jan Stephenson is 66. Actress BernNadette Stanis is 64. Rapper Luther "Luke" Campbell is 57. Country singer-musician Chuck Mead is 57. Actor Ralph Fiennes (rayf fynz) is 55. Actress Lauralee Bell is 49. Country singer Lori McKenna is 49. Actress Dina Meyer is 49. Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, is 47. Actress Heather Donahue is 44. Actor Chris Carmack is 37. Actor Harry Ford is 35. Actor Greg Finley is 33. Actor Logan Huffman is 28. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jordin Sparks is 28. Pop singer Meghan Trainor is 24.

Thought for Today: "Those wearing tolerance for a label call other views intolerable." — Phyllis McGinley, American poet and author (1905-1978).