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Question:

How do you know when the moon has had enough to eat?

Answer at end of AP News



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Today's Events

Thursday, Jan. 25

NEC Wrestling at Clark, 4 p.m.

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

The cardboard/paper
recycling trailer at the school is

Closed



The Life of Loren Kambestad

Loren Milton Kambestad, 65, Rapid City, SD passed away Thursday, January 18th, 2018 at Rapid City Regional Hospital.

Born June 17th, 1952, Loren was the 5th son of Milton and Ruby Kambestad (Christenson) with two sisters following him. He married Bobbie Kambestad (Rossow) on August 9th, 1980, and lived in Lead and Rapid City, SD.

Loren grew up in Bristol, SD and graduated from Bristol High School in 1970. He went on to earn his education degree from Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD.

Running was an important part of Loren's life in high school and college. Coached by Dave Griffith, he set South Dakota high school state records in the 1600 meter run (4:13.7), 3200 meter run (9:11.5), and 3 mile (14:13.6). His 1600 meter time still ranks him in South Dakota's top 10 times run by a high school runner. He still holds the state record in the 3 mile run and was ranked 3rd in the nation that year for high school boys.

After being heavily recruited by schools all over the nation, Loren chose to stay near to home and attend Northern State University in Aberdeen, SD. He would set many school records in races between

the mile and the 6 mile runs. Loren was inducted into the Northern State University athletic Hall of Fame.

He started his teaching career in Britton, SD where he also coached cross country. Following that time, he went to Gettysburg, SD to teach. While he was working on his graduate degree, he met Bobbie at Northern State University. They were united in marriage on August 9th, 1980 in Herreid, SD. They lived in Lead, SD where he was hired by River Park to be the first high school drug/alcohol counselor hired by a school district in South Dakota. He also served as the girls' varsity basketball and track coach for the Lead Goldiggers. While in Lead, Loren welcomed his two children, Lora and Marshall, into the world.

Soon the family would move to Rapid City, SD where Loren would serve as the executive director of River Park working with recovering drug and alcohol clients. Later he returned to teaching elementary physical education. Throughout his teaching career in Rapid City he taught at Valley View, Canyon Lake, Garfield, South Canyon, and Meadowbrook. He began elementary running clubs at his schools and the Rapid City Elementary Cross Country Meet program that introduced the sport he loved to the youth of Rapid City. He continued his passion for coaching cross country at Rapid City Central (2006-2011). In 2017 Loren retired from 30 years of teaching and coaching.

Loren loved to be active. He could frequently be seen throughout town riding his bike on the bike path with Bobbie. He was very proud of his children as they grew up. Frequently, he would boast about Lora's career successes to nearly everyone he knew. He loved to attend events that Marshall coached and many of his athletes would get to know Loren through his encouragement. Loren and Bobbie loved to babysit for a neighborhood family. Libby, Malachi, and Noah brought joy to them and were a steady presence in their lives.

Loren is survived by his wife, Bobbie Kambestad of Rapid City, SD; his children Lora (Trinity Bernard, fiance) Kambestad and Marshall Kambestad of Rapid City, SD; his older brother Ron Kambestad of Hudsonville, Michigan; his younger sister Julie (Gene) Brownell of Aberdeen, SD., as well as numerous nieces and nephews.

Loren was preceded in death by his parents, Milton and Ruby; three brothers Dennis, Dallas, and Daryl; sister, Joy (Loren) Heim; brother-in-law Larry Metz; sister-in-law Sandy Rossow; and in-laws Jerome and Arlouene Rossow.

His funeral was held Tuesday January 23, 2018 at South Canyon Baptist Church.

Community rallies in support of Ava Tunheim



Pictured above, in back, left to right, are Christopher, Allison and Nathan; in front are Ava and Tobey. (Courtesy photo)

It's a journey that an individual should not face, especially for a Groton Area seventh grader. It's a journey of challenges where hope and prayer are the weapons.

Ava Tunheim was having some bad headaches. Her parents, Nathan and Allison Tunheim, took her to the doctor's office where they said she had migraines. Nathan said no tests were done that day and said to wait a couple of weeks to see if they get better. That was around the first of the year.

While they were out ice fishing in Mobridge on January 13, she was starting to have some stomach pains and a bad headache in the morning and that evening, they took her to the emergency room at the Mobridge Regional Hospital. They gave her some Protonix to help her sleep better. Nathan said, "I was under the impression it was because of her age. A seventh grade girl with just hormones." But yet, they knew something else was wrong. They took her to Sanford Emergency Room in Aberdeen on January 15 where they did some blood work. She had tested positive for mono. But there was

suspicion of leukemia later in the day. She was taken to Sioux Falls where it was confirmed. On January 18 they did a spinal tap to make sure what it was, how much was cancerous and Ava had her first chemo treatment that day.

On January 23, it was confirmed that Ava had Philadelphia chromosome-positive (Ph+) acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). It is a relatively uncommon disease. Nathan said it has to be treated with a more aggressive type of treatment and instead of one month and checking for remission this will be a two month process. "This news is not good, but we will still beat it." Ava will be at the Sanford Children's Hospital in Sioux Falls until Friday, Jan. 26, when she will return home. Ava will have to go to Sioux Falls every Thursday for treatment. Nathan said that Ava will not be able to return to school until late fall at the earliest.

The news about Ava has taken Groton by storm.

The seventh graders and student council are planning t-shirt sales.

The seventh graders will be selling bracelets.

At the Feb 10 basketball double header with Mobridge-Pollock, the seventh grade is having a fundraiser meal and tshirts will be sold that night.

The JH Band will also be doing a split pot for Ava at the Feb 6th Roncalli GBB game that they play pep band for.

GDILIVE.COM will take all on-line donations from the boys and girls games being played in Madison and donate them to Ava's efforts.

While financial help is greatly appreciated, prayers for God's peace, comfort and healing are in the forefront of everyone right now.

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Gun Show

GUN SHOW: Dakota Territory Gun Collectors Association 16th Annual ABERDEEN Gun Show. New location. Saturday, February 3, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday, February 4, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Dakota Event Center on LaMont East. Roger Krumm 701-851-0129. (...0203)



I was shocked to see an obituary of a dear friend of mine, Loren Kambestad.

I got to know Loren and his wife, Bobby, when I was working at the Lead Daily Call and Loren was the track coach. I would ride the bus to track meets. He would come down to the office and help me identify the pictures I had taken. There were times when I would have a full page of photos from the track meet. Loren just loved

it. Never before had the track team gotten that much publicity in the paper.

I remember one time on the bus and apparently the students were goofing around and Loren came in. I had never seen him so angry. Even the top of his head turned red. It was an interesting situation.

Then yesterday I was messaging back and forth with Nathan Tunheim while developing a story about their daughter, Ava. The thing about life is how fast things can change. This came us so quickly for Ava. We pray that all works well for her.

Groton Prairie Mixed

Team Standings: Foxes 16, Chipmunks 15, Cheetahs 15, Shih Tzus 11, Coyotes 8, Jackelopes 7

Men's High Games: Brad Waage 244, Brad Larson 211, Mike Siegler 202

Women's High Games: Sue Stanley 160, Nicole Kassube 155, Lori Wiley 148

Men's High Series: Brad Waage 602, Mike Siegler 555, Roger Colestock 540

Women's High Series: Sue Stanley 418, Nicole Kassube 416, Lori Wiley 414



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*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")**

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80th Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

Sunday, January 28th—2:00 and
6:30

Recognizing *past skaters*, showcasing several *specialty acts*, and a *walk down memory lane*. Join us for a great show, performed by our *local youth*, that helps *honor* those who have helped establish this *great community tradition* over

Admission: 13 & older—\$3.00
6-12—\$2.00

Parking: Provided around the rink and on the ice or cozy up on the bleachers (ice parking begins at 10 am, then again at 4:30 pm)

**Check us out on Facebook at "Silver Skates"

WE HOPE TO
SEE YOU THERE!



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Today in Weather History

January 25, 2010: A large upper level low pressure area combined with a cold surface high pressure area building in from the north brought light snow and very strong winds creating widespread blizzard conditions across north central and northeast South Dakota. Snowfall amounts of 1 to 4 inches combined with north winds of 25 to 40 mph gusting up to 55 mph created frequent whiteout conditions across the area. Travel was significantly affected or halted and several schools were closed. Interstate-29 was closed from the North Dakota border and south on the 25th until the morning of the 26th. The blizzard hampered efforts to restore power to the thousands of customers from the previous winter storm. The snowfall began in the morning hours from 6 to 10 am and ended around the time the blizzard conditions subsided.

1821: The Hudson River was frozen solid during the midst of the coldest winter in forty-one years. Thousands of persons crossed the ice from New York City to New Jersey, and refreshment taverns were set up in the middle of the river to warm pedestrians.

1937: Las Vegas, Nevada dropped to 8 degrees above zero, setting an all-time record low for the city.

1949: Las Vegas, Nevada recorded 4.7 inches of snow. This brought the monthly snowfall total to 16.7 inches which still ranks as their snowiest month on record.

1837 - At 7 PM a display of the Northern Lights danced above Burlington, VT. Its light was equal to the full moon. Snow and other objects reflecting the light were deeply tinged with a blood red hue. Blue, yellow and white streamers were also noted. (The Weather Channel)

1965 - Alta, UT, was in the midst of a storm that left the town buried under 105 inches of snow establishing a record for the state. (David Ludlum)

1987 - The second major storm in three days hit the Eastern Seaboard producing up to 15 inches of snow in Virginia, Maryland and Delaware. Up to 30 inches of snow covered the ground in Virginia following the two storms. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - High winds created blizzard conditions in the mountains of Colorado. Winds gusted to 109 mph at Echo Lake, and a wind gust to 193 mph was reported atop Mount Evans. A "nor'easter" moving up the Atlantic Coast spread heavy snow from the Carolinas to New England, with as much as 16 inches reported in the Poconos of eastern Pennsylvania. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)








1989 - Bitter cold air, coming down from Alaska, settled over the Northern Rockies. Wilson WY reported a morning low of 48 degrees below zero. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the south central U.S. One thunderstorm in north central Texas spawned a tornado which injured three persons at Troy. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Low pressure developed explosively over east central Missouri and moved into Lower Michigan producing high winds and heavy snow across parts of Iowa, Illinois and Wisconsin. Wind gusts to 60 mph and up to a foot of snow created near blizzard conditions in southeastern Wisconsin and northern Illinois. Wind gusts in Indiana reached 76 mph at Wabash. Thunderstorms associated with the storm produced wind gusts to 54 mph at Fort Madison IA. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2000 - Heavy snow fell from the Carolinas to New England, with up to 20 inches of snow and five deaths reported. (NCDC)

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Thu Jan 25	Fri Jan 26	Sat Jan 27	Sun Jan 28	Mon Jan 29	Tue Jan 30	Wed Jan 31
						
45° F 25° F	44° F 22° F	29° F 7° F	20° F 2° F	24° F 14° F	42° F 19° F	27° F 1° F
SE 13 MPH	SW 16 MPH	WNW 16 MPH	NNE 7 MPH	SE 7 MPH	S 11 MPH	NW 11 MPH

Localized Morning Fog Then Mild Today/Friday

Highs Today: 40s to Near 50

Friday: Mid to Low 40



National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

www.weather.gov/abr

GRAPHIC CREATED:
1/25/2018 4:52 AM

Published on: 01/25/2018 at 5:08AM

Areas of fog may persist for parts of the day, but most locations will see sunshine and only high clouds, and temperatures warming well above average. These conditions will continue into Friday before a more seasonal airmass moves in for Saturday.

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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 40.7 at 4:50 PM

Low Outside Temp: 14.5 at 8:10 AM

Wind Chill: -

High Gust: 12 at 1:20 AM

Precip: 0.00

Today's Info

Record High: 54° in 1942

Record Low: -33° in 1904

Average High: 23°F

Average Low: 2°F

Average Precip in Jan: 0.39

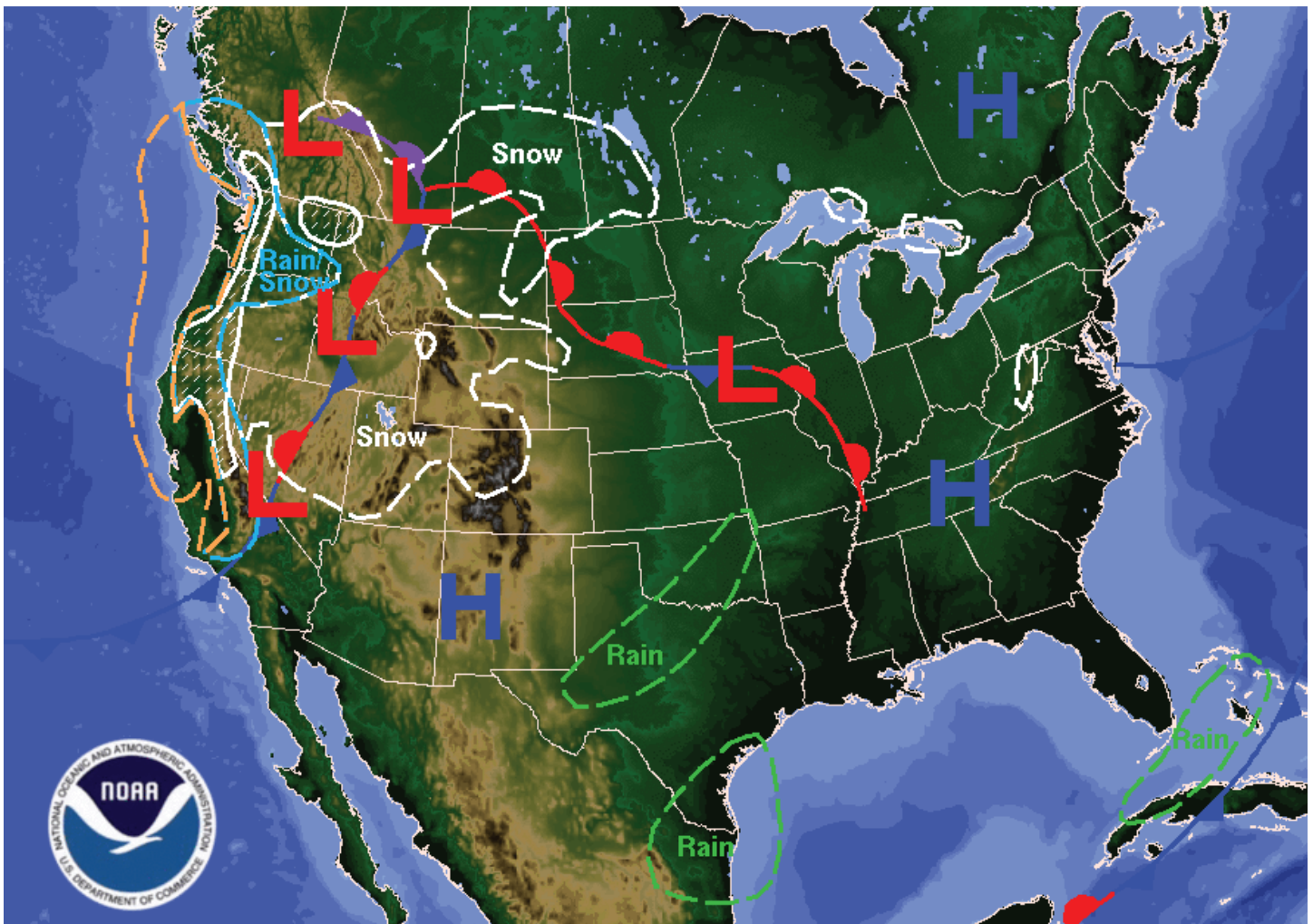
Precip to date in Jan: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.39

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:30 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:01 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Thu, Jan 25, 2018, issued 4:42 AM EST

DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center

Prepared by Mcreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain

Rain and T'Storms

Rain and Snow

Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)

Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)

Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)

Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)

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KINGDOM WORK

What happens when God's people do God's work? Can what we do provide evidence to His mercy and grace? Can those around us actually see Him by what we do?

The Psalmist said that "Surely His salvation is near those who fear Him, that His glory may dwell in our land."

In other words, when people become born again – accept God's salvation through faith in Christ – there will be evidence of God's Kingdom on earth. Christians will busy themselves in working with the needy, bring hope and help to those who are suffering, seek justice for those who are wronged and establish rules that are just and fair.

In Psalm 85:11 we read, "Faithfulness (to God's Word) will spring forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven." If we believe the Word of God, we are to live the Word of God and that means we are to do whatever is within our power to establish His Kingdom on earth.

Whenever people's hearts are right with God, we see God-things happen. The abolition of slavery and the end of child labor followed a resurgence of faith in God. The Salvation Army came to life when General Booth was convicted that God called him to "bring God's love to the needy". Seeing children, who were neglected, ignorant and hungry burdened Robert Raikes to start "Sunday" school. Many educational and charitable institutions came into existence because God's people saw God's children in need and were convicted by His Spirit to do something about it. Good deeds and showing compassion are evidence that righteousness on earth comes from Heaven!

Prayer: Help us, Father, to see what You see and then become Your hands and feet on earth to show Your love. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 85:11 Truth shall spring out of the earth, And righteousness shall look down from heaven.

2018 Groton SD Community Events

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

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
- Crazy Dayz/Open Houses
- School Events

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News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash
10-11-17-30-35
(ten, eleven, seventeen, thirty, thirty-five)
Estimated jackpot: \$116,000

Lotto America
07-08-17-40-42, Star Ball: 5, ASB: 4
(seven, eight, seventeen, forty, forty-two; Star Ball: five; ASB: four)
Estimated jackpot: \$18.98 million

Mega Millions
Estimated jackpot: \$76 million

Powerball
05-09-11-33-64, Powerball: 21, Power Play: 3
(five, nine, eleven, thirty-three, sixty-four; Powerball: twenty-one; Power Play: three)
Estimated jackpot: \$92 million

South Dakota knocks off South Dakota State 87-68

VERMILLION, S.D. (AP) — Matt Mooney scored 30 points and South Dakota snapped South Dakota State's eight game win streak with an 87-68 victory on Wednesday night.

Mooney made four 3-pointers and was 11-of-21 shooting, a point shy of matching his career best. Triston Simpson added four 3s and finished with a career-high 20 points for the Coyotes (18-5, 6-1 Summit League), who have won four straight and are off to their best league start since joining the conference in 2011-12. Tyler Peterson chipped in 14 points and Nick Fuller had 11.

Mike Daum had 18 points and 14 rebounds to lead South Dakota State (17-6, 5-1). Skyler Flatten and Tevin King added 14 points apiece.

Simpson scored seven points during a 20-5 run that stretched South Dakota's lead to 58-39 with 11:30 left. About three minutes later, Mooney scored seven straight points and the Coyotes had a 25-point lead with six minutes remaining.

Lawmaker proposes lower drinking age for members of military

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Republican lawmaker wants to lower the drinking age for members of the military to 18 in South Dakota.

Rep. Tim Goodwin's bill says bars and retailers could serve 18-year-old active duty, reserve and National Guard service members who show valid military identification cards.

The bill has a legislative hearing scheduled Jan. 31.

Goodwin says if someone is willing to fight and die for their country, they should be treated as an adult.

Current federal law, passed in 1984, says any state with a drinking age lower than 21 can lose 8 percent of federal highway funding.

Gas pipeline told to halt drilling under river after spill

CANTON, Ohio (AP) — Federal regulators have again told a company building twin natural gas pipelines across northern Ohio to stop drilling under a river because of concerns over a spill.

The Federal Energy Regulatory Commission says in the stoppage ordered Wednesday that it wants the builders of the Rover Pipeline to answer questions about the spill and look at whether there are other options to cross the river.

Ohio officials say 200,000 gallons of drilling fluid down have been lost in a drilling hole.

Dallas-based Energy Transfer Partners is developing the \$4.2 billion pipeline across Ohio and into West Virginia and Michigan. It's also was behind the Dakota Access oil pipeline.

The company says it has stopped work near the river crossing in northeast Ohio, but construction is continuing along the remaining route.

Senate passes plan to make constitution tougher to change

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Senate has approved a measure that would ask voters to make it harder to change the state constitution.

The chamber voted 26-9 Wednesday to advance the proposal to the state House of Representatives.

It would put a constitutional amendment before voters this year that would increase the majority vote threshold required for a constitutional change to 55 percent of the votes cast on the amendment.

Republican Sen. Jim Bolin, the resolution's sponsor, says the constitution must be diligently protected. Democratic Sen. Reynold Nesiba, an opponent, says raising the threshold would crowd out grassroots movements.

Republicans have discussed changes to the ballot question system after the 2016 election season brought 10 questions and millions of dollars from out-of-state groups.

Should South Dakota lawmakers get a raise? Voters may decide

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers are debating asking voters to give them a major pay raise, which would spare them from taking politically awkward votes to hike their own salaries in the future.

A state House committee voted Wednesday to advance the proposed constitutional amendment to the chamber's floor. With voter approval, South Dakota would join at least two other states that tie legislators' base pay to state median household income.

South Dakota lawmakers currently set their own salaries, and they haven't gotten a raise since 1998, although their per diem payments have risen.

At least two states — Alabama and Massachusetts — link lawmakers' salaries to household earnings. Most states leave salaries up to the Legislature, while some use outside compensation commissions to directly set pay or give recommendations, said John Mahoney, a policy associate at the National Conference of State Legislatures.

If it's up to a legislature, salaries don't tend to change much because it's a "very politically sensitive issue," Mahoney said.

The South Dakota resolution's backers say low pay limits the pool of people who can serve as legislators. "There isn't enough of us in the Legislature that have a backbone to be able to vote for an increase, and I don't see that changing," Republican Rep. Leslie Heinemann said. "We need to have other people here to add to the pool, so I'm going to support this resolution because I don't see any alternative."

South Dakota legislators are paid \$6,000 per session plus the per diem allowance. The proposed change that would set legislators' salaries at one-fifth of the South Dakota median household income.

It would amount to a 70 percent raise for the state's 105 lawmakers, to nearly \$10,200 per session, according to U.S. Census numbers for 2015. Based on that figure, it would cost taxpayers about \$440,000.

House Speaker Mark Mickelson, a supporter, said the proposal would tie the wages to the economic

prospects of the people they represent.

"I think it's time that we do move forward on this," said Mickelson, a Republican. "You're not setting your pay if you choose to vote for this. You're asking the people to set your pay."

Nobody in the audience spoke out against the plan. But Republican Rep. David Lust said lawmakers should make the decision instead of leaving it to voters because lawmakers can easily justify a raise.

Lust cast doubt on the constitutional amendment's chances with the voters.

"This is going to become a referendum on politics in general," he said. "It's going to get beaten badly at the ballot, and that will have set the cause back to raise salaries immensely because no legislator in the next ten years after this fails is going to want to touch that thing because the people will have spoken."

Follow James Nord on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/Jvnord>

Senate passes plan to fill initiative campaign finance gap

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Senate lawmakers have approved a bill aimed at requiring ballot measure campaigns to disclose their donors while supporters gather support to put initiatives on the ballot.

The chamber voted 33-2 Wednesday to advance the legislation to the state House of Representatives. It would require initiative campaigns to submit new finance reports by July 1 in odd-numbered years when supporters collect names needed to send initiatives to the voters.

Current state rules don't require the campaigns to disclose their donors until long after they've submitted their signatures to the state to qualify for the ballot.

Democratic Sen. Reynold Nesiba, the bill's main sponsor, says it would increase transparency and offer more information about who is putting issues on the ballot.

60th Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo underway in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Black Hills Stock Show and Rodeo is underway for its 60th year in Rapid City. Only three breeds of cattle were shown at the city's first stock show. Now, the major event welcomes thousands of visitors and millions of dollars during the middle of winter, an off-season for tourism in western South Dakota.

Gregg Butman has been helping his family showcase champion cattle from their Cottonwood Angus Farms near the South Dakota-Minnesota border since the mid-1960s, the Rapid City Journal reported. Butman said he was recognized as Stockman of the Year in 1997, and his cattle have won several of the event's titles.

"I've enjoyed it all these years or I wouldn't be coming back," said Butman.

Butman recalled that cattle grooming required hard work in the early days.

"Back then we didn't have the blowers to dry," he said. "It took 3-4 hours to brush them out and get them dry."

There was also only one building with heat during those first stock shows, according to Butman.

Now, the event fills the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center and surrounding area.

"Now that we have the capabilities of expansion beyond the civic center, it brings a huge draw into the community and the livestock world," said Dick Bray, an organizer of the event.

Butman said the stock show brings rural and city residents together to increase awareness over how farms produce quality, safe beef.

"It brings the city folk and the agricultural people together to let them know what we're doing and how we treat animals and take care of them," he said.

Butman said the event also preserves Western lifestyle.

This year's show began Jan. 17 and will continue through Feb. 4.

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

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Toys R Us stores closing at a glance

By The Associated Press

Toys R Us, squeezed by Amazon.com and huge chains like Walmart, will close 180 stores, or about 20 percent of its U.S. locations, within months. Here's a list of the Toys R Us locations closing, by state and territory. Asterisks indicate multiple locations are shutting within a town or city.

Alabama: 2: Birmingham, Tuscaloosa
Arkansas: 2: Fort Smith, Little Rock
Arizona: 6: Mesa, (asterisk)Phoenix, Scottsdale, Tucson, Yuma
California: 27: Brea, Brentwood, Corona, Emeryville, Fairfield, Folsom, Fresno, Indio, Industry, Pinole, Pittsburg, Riverside, (asterisk)San Diego, (asterisk)San Jose, San Rafael, Santa Ana, Santa Clarita, Simi Valley, Stockton, Torrance, Union City, Vista, West Corvina, Westminster, Yuba City
Colorado: 1: Aurora
Connecticut: 4: Manchester, Newington, North Haven, Waterbury
Florida: 12: Altamonte Springs, Boca Raton, Coral Springs, Jacksonville, (asterisk)Kissimmee, Miami, Port St. Lucie, Royal Palm Beach, St. Petersburg, Tallahassee, Tampa
Georgia: 8: Albany, Alpharetta, Atlanta, Douglasville, Dunwoody, Fayetteville, Lithonia, Newnan
Hawaii: 1: Kahului
Iowa: 2: Clive, Des Moines
Illinois: 8: Burbank, Chicago, Highland Park, Matteson, Naperville, Nilus, Schaumburg, Vernon Hills
Indiana: 3: (asterisk)Indianapolis, Michigan City
Kansas: 2: Overland Park, Wichita
Kentucky: 3: Lexington, Simpsonville, St. Matthews
Louisiana: 1: Slidell
Massachusetts: 6: Bellingham, Dedham, Framingham, Holyoke, Millbury, Northborough
Maryland: 1: Clinton
Maine: 2: Bangor, South Portland
Michigan: 6: Ann Arbor, Grand Rapids, Lansing, Muskegon Heights, Traverse City, Ypsilanti
Minnesota: 4: Blaine, Minnetonka, Richfield, Woodbury
Missouri: 4: Cape Girardeau, Chesterfield, Columbia, Hazelwood
Mississippi: 2: Meridian, Pearl
North Carolina: 3: Asheville, (asterisk)Durham
Nebraska: 1: Omaha
New Hampshire: 1: Nashua
New Jersey: 12: Bridgewater, Burlington, Cherry Hill, East Hanover, Eatontown, Elizabeth, Flanders, North Brunswick, Paramus, Philipsburg, Union, Wayne
New Mexico: 1: Albuquerque
Nevada: 2: (asterisk)Las Vegas
New York: 14: Amherst, Bohemia, Commack, Greece, Kingston, Latham, Massapequa, (asterisk)New York, Queensbury, Rochester, Westbury, Yonkers
Ohio: 4: Cincinnati, Columbus, Dayton, Mentor
Oklahoma: 2: Norman, Oklahoma City
Pennsylvania: 9: Dover, Erie, Exton, Horsham, Monaca, Monroeville, Pennsdale, Pittsburgh, Washington
Puerto Rico: 2: Carolina, Hatillo
Rhode Island: 1: Warwick
South Carolina: 2: Columbia, North Charleston
South Dakota: 1: Rapid City
Tennessee: 2: Memphis, Nashville
Texas: 9: Allen, Dallas, El Paso, Fort Worth, Houston, Hurst, Irving, Lewisville, Robstown
Utah: 2: Midvale, Ogden

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Virginia: 2: Newport News, Woodbridge
Washington: 3: Everett, Silverdale, Spokane
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Man accused of trying to harm officer waives extradition

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — A man accused of trying to hit a police officer with his vehicle in North Dakota has waived extradition from South Dakota.

Prosecutors say 22-year-old Ulises Villalobos-Alvarado is expected to appear in Burleigh County court early next week.

Villalobos-Alvarado is charged with attempted murder and fleeing a peace officer during a probation search. The officer shot Villalobos-Alvarado in the arm. The officer wasn't injured.

Villalobos-Alvarado has been held at the Minnehaha County Jail in Sioux Falls. He was arrested Thursday night at a gas station in Brookings.

Woman tries avoiding hospital bill by using false name

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Rapid City woman has pleaded no contest to defrauding a Pierre hospital in 2014 by using a false name.

Authorities say 44-year-old Debra Sigler used the name Debra Moreland while getting medical care including surgery at Avera St. Mary's Hospital to try to avoid a \$65,000 bill.

The Capital Journal reports she pleaded no contest to a grand theft charge on Tuesday. The court treats it the same as a guilty plea.

Sigler could face up to five years in prison, along with restitution. She wasn't immediately sentenced.

Information from: Pierre Capital Journal, <http://www.capjournal.com>

Sanford Health extends global reach by entering 7 countries

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Sanford Health is extending its global reach with clinics, research centers and new partnerships in seven countries.

The Sioux Falls-based health care system will open a clinic in Auckland, New Zealand in February in partnership with Omni Health Limited. A research office to study oncology services will open in Ireland in partnership with Hermitage Medical Clinic. Sanford will also help expand government clinics in Ghana.

Sanford will also add programs in Costa Rica, Vietnam, South Africa and China. The health system now has a presence in nine countries.

Minnesota woman killed in South Dakota crash identified

SISSETON, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified a Minnesota woman who died in a weekend crash in northeastern South Dakota.

The Highway Patrol says 23-year-old Marrisa Mountain of Granite Falls, Minnesota, was a passenger in a pickup truck that went off Interstate 29 and rolled north of Sisseton on Saturday morning.

She died at the scene. The 28-year-old South Dakota man who was driving suffered serious but non-life-threatening injuries and was taken to a hospital in Fargo, North Dakota.

Authorities say charges are pending against him.

1st major, top ranking at stake in Halep-Wozniacki final

By JOHN PYE, AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — For the second time in the tournament, Simona Halep faced match points and knew one mistake would mean an exit from the Australian Open and the likely loss of her No. 1 ranking.

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For the second time in just over a week, she attacked rather than take the safe approach. The 26-year-old Romanian saved two match points and needed four of her own against 2016 champion Angelique Kerber before winning 6-3, 4-6, 9-7 in the semifinals.

Halep will face No. 2 Caroline Wozniacki in the final on Saturday, with one of them guaranteed to win a first Grand Slam title. The winner will also be No. 1 when the next rankings are released. Wozniacki, who beat Elise Mertens 6-3, 7-6 (2) in 1½ hours in the first semifinal, hasn't held the top ranking in six years.

For Halep, playing in her first Grand Slam as the top seeded player, it's a first major final beyond the clay courts of Roland Garros. She lost French Open finals to Jelena Ostapenko last year — having led by a set and a break — and to Maria Sharapova in 2014.

For Wozniacki, it's her first Grand Slam final outside of America. The two-time U.S. Open runner-up also had to save match points to reach her first Australian Open final. She rallied from 5-1 down in the third set of her second-round win and said she's been "playing with the house money" ever since.

Previous Australian Open winners have saved match points en route to the final, but no woman has done it in two matches.

Halep is hoping to change that, saying that saving triple match point in her third-round win against Lauren Davis that finished 15-13 in the third set had set her up mentally for the pressure of the semifinals.

"Definitely was very tough. I'm shaking now, I'm really emotional because I could win this match," Halep said immediately after beating Kerber in another marathon. "I'm glad I could resist. Not easy in the tournament to have these matches, but I have just to enjoy."

Marin Cilic is also enjoying his run, following up his quarterfinal upset against top-ranked Rafael Nadal with a 6-2, 7-6 (4), 6-2 win over No. 49 Kyle Edmund. After reaching the Australian final in his 10th attempt, the 2014 U.S. Open champion will face the winner of Friday's semifinal match between defending champion Roger Federer and Hyeon Chung.

Halep twisted her left ankle in the first round, and said she'd made the decision then to risk it all at Melbourne Park and take a rest later.

"This match I had two match balls and I lost them so I said that if she came back, I can do it. I had just confidence in myself," she said.

Halep has a new resolve after back-to-back first-round exits previously at Melbourne Park. She won a lot of the long, intense rallies against Kerber and hit 50 winners, which surprised even her. She raced to a 5-0 lead in the first set, and led 3-1 in the second, but didn't wilt as Kerber came back.

"I try to be very calm, but today I was like a roller coaster, up and down," she said. "But I didn't give up, not even a ball. I'm really proud of myself, actually."

It wasn't too different for Kerber, who was the only Grand Slam champion still in the women's draw after she beat Sharapova in the third round.

"I had the two match points, but even I did two chances, she played good, so I couldn't do anything," Kerber said. "It was just a battle at the end. It's just one or two points which decides the match. I gave everything."

Wozniacki appeared to be coasting, getting breaks in the middle of each set of her semifinal match, but got tight when she was serving for the match at 5-4. From 30-15, she double-faulted twice and Mertens passed her with a forehand winner to level the set at 5-5.

The 37th-ranked Mertens, who reached the semifinals in her Australian Open debut, had two set points before Wozniacki held a service game lasting 8½ minutes to force a tiebreaker.

"I got really tight," Wozniacki said. "Once she had set points. I thought, 'OK, now you just have to go for it ... she's nervous now, too.'"

"I managed to just gather myself, and thankfully closed it out in the end."

Wozniacki squandered a match point in an Australian Open semifinal match against Li Na seven years ago, but held her composure this time around and converted her first match point in the tiebreaker.

It was that semifinal loss to Li that has haunted her most among her near-misses.

"That's one of the ones that hurt extra because it was going into the finals of a Grand Slam," she said.

"I felt like I was playing better on the day. I felt like it was my time to get there.

"That's why it hurt extra that I lost that day, especially with being one point away."

Halep said she's had the top ranking before, so winning a major has become more important.

"It's also my dream, to win a Grand Slam title," Halep said. "But, you know, it's always tough when you are close. I had this opportunity two times. The last one was very close."

More AP coverage: www.apnews.com/tag/AustralianOpen

UN official says not safe yet for Rohingya return to Myanmar

By JULHAS ALAM, Associated Press

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — It is not yet safe for the hundreds of thousands of Rohingya Muslims living in refugee camps in Bangladesh to begin returning to Myanmar, a senior United Nations official said Thursday.

While many Rohingya want to eventually return to their villages, UNICEF deputy executive director Justin Forsyth said that no one he met during visits to Bangladesh's refugee camps said they would go back now.

"This moment is not safe to go back," he said. "We have to improve the security situation inside Myanmar to send them back."

More than 680,000 Rohingya fled Myanmar's Rakhine state beginning in August, after Myanmar security forces began "clearance operations" in their villages in the wake of attacks by Rohingya insurgents on police posts. While most of the refugees left Myanmar in the first weeks of the crisis, Rohingya are continuing to trickle across the border into Bangladesh, complaining of mistreatment at home.

Forsyth spoke one day after former New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson resigned suddenly from an advisory panel on the crisis, calling it a "whitewash and a cheerleading operation" for Myanmar leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

"She blames all the problems that Myanmar is having on the international media, on the U.N., on human rights groups, on other governments, and I think this is caused by the bubble that is around her, by individuals that are not giving her frank advice," Richardson, once a close friend of Suu Kyi, said Wednesday in an interview with The Associated Press in Yangon, Myanmar's largest city.

Richardson said Suu Kyi appeared to want the 10-member international advisory group, one in a string of Rohingya commissions set up by the Myanmar government, to endorse her policies.

"I'm not going to be part of it because I think there are serious issues of human rights violations, safety, citizenship, peace and stability that need to be addressed," said Richardson, who often works as an international troubleshooter. "I just felt that my advice and counsel would not be heeded."

Forsyth said he didn't know the details of the resignation but that "I understand his frustration."

Gradual repatriations of Rohingya were to begin Tuesday under agreements signed by Myanmar and Bangladesh, but Bangladeshi officials delayed the returns at the last minute, saying more time was needed amid questions about safety and whether the refugees were returning voluntarily.

Forsyth urged Myanmar authorities to allow international organizations access to all the areas affected by the crisis.

Rohingya have long faced repression in Myanmar. They are widely dismissed as having migrated illegally from Bangladesh and are denied some of the most basic rights, including the freedom of movement. In 1982, nearly all Rohingya were stripped of their citizenship rights.

Associated Press writer Foster Klug in Yangon, Myanmar, contributed to this report.

Jones, Thome, Guerrero, Hoffman elected to baseball Hall

By BEN WALKER, AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Over 600 home runs. More than 600 saves. A .300 career average.

In the age of baseball analytics, there's still room in the Hall of Fame for big, round numbers you can

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count on.

Chipper Jones, Jim Thome, Vladimir Guerrero and Trevor Hoffman were rewarded Wednesday, easily elected in the newest class headed for Cooperstown.

"I don't know how you tabulate or calculate WAR," Jones said, referring to a sabermetric stat that didn't exist for much of his career.

"Yes, you can dig deeper," he said. But he added: "What I want to see is batting average, on-base percentage, runs produced."

Designated hitter Edgar Martinez came close after a grass-roots campaign to promote him. Boosted by advanced metrics, he'll get his last chance on the ballot next year.

Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens, both tainted by the steroids scandal, edged up but again fell far short. A switch-hitter who batted .303 with 468 home runs, Jones was an eight-time All-Star third baseman for the Atlanta Braves.

He was a force for most of the Atlanta teams that won 14 straight division titles — his election put another member of those Braves clubs in the Hall, along with pitchers John Smoltz, Tom Glavine and Greg Maddux, manager Bobby Cox and general manager John Schuerholz.

Of the four new members, Jones was the only one to win a World Series. He joined Ken Griffey Jr. as the lone overall No. 1 draft picks to reach the Hall.

Jones and Thome made it 54 players elected in their first year of eligibility by members of the Baseball Writers' Association of America. Jones drew 97.2 percent (410 of 422) of the vote and Thome was at 89.8 percent — 75 percent is needed for election.

"It was waterworks," Jones said after receiving the call.

Thome hit 612 home runs, ranking him eighth on the career list, and launched a record 13 walk-off homers. The five-time All-Star played mostly for the Cleveland Indians.

Thome was known for his pre-swing routine, standing absolutely still in the box while pointing his bat at the pitcher. He said the posture helped him relax, slow down and "not be so tense."

The slugger praised his longtime hitting coach, Charlie Manuel, for all the work they did together.

"It's about sweat equity, and getting after it," Thome said on MLB Network.

Guerrero was elected in his second try, getting 92.9 percent. The nine-time All-Star played half his career with the Montreal Expos.

The outfielder batted .318 with 449 homers and 1,496 RBIs, and was a notorious bad-ball hitter. He said he developed that talent as a kid in the Dominican Republic, playing a game similar to cricket in which hitters swung broomsticks while pitchers tried to bounce balls past them and knock over folded license plates.

"That opened up my hitting zone," Guerrero said through a translator.

Dominican Republic President Danilo Medina, who was in Switzerland, congratulated Guerrero, saying on his Twitter account that "it fills all Dominicans with pride that he has carried our flag to the top."

CDN television in the Dominican showed images of fireworks and people celebrating in the streets in Nizao, Guerrero's hometown located 30 miles west of the capital in Santo Domingo.

Hoffman was chosen in his third year, getting 79.9 percent after missing by just five votes last time. The former Padres closer used an outstanding changeup to post 601 saves, second to Mariano Rivera's 652, and revved up fans in San Diego with rocking entrances to "Hells Bells" by AC/DC.

Hoffman became the sixth pitcher who was mostly a reliever to make the Hall, along with Goose Gosage, Bruce Sutter, Dennis Eckersley, Rollie Fingers and Hoyt Wilhelm.

As for his wait, Hoffman said: "You can't do anything to enhance your career after not getting that call. I'm not worried about whatever year it is. I'm ecstatic to get in."

It took 317 votes to be elected. There were 422 ballots submitted, including one blank entry.

Martinez made a big move up to 70.4 percent and fell 20 votes short in his next-to-last year on the ballot. Mike Mussina climbed to 63.5 percent.

"It would have been great to get in this year, but it looks great for next year," Martinez said on a conference call.

Clemens, winner of 354 games and seven Cy Young Awards, got 57.3 percent after drawing 54.1 percent

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last time. Bonds, the career home run leader and a seven-time MVP, reached 56.4 percent, up from 53.8 percent.

Clemens and Bonds each get four more tries. They seem to be "gaining steam with newer voters," Jones said.

Omar Vizquel (37 percent), Scott Rolen (10.2) and Andruw Jones (7.3) were first-time candidates. Among the players who drew under 5 percent and fell off the ballot were Johnny Damon, Hideki Matsui and Johan Santana.

Pete Rose, permanently banned from Major League Baseball after an investigation into his betting on the game, didn't receive any write-in votes, as he often has in the past.

There are now 323 people in the Hall, including a rush of 23 elected by the BBWAA and veterans panels in the last five years.

The four new members will be inducted on July 29. They will be enshrined with pitcher Jack Morris and shortstop Alan Trammell, picked last month by a committee that considered older players and executives.

This matches the biggest lineup of living players to be inducted since 1955, when Joe DiMaggio, Gabby Hartnett, Ted Lyons, Dazzy Vance, Home Run Baker and Ray Schalk were honored.

"We have a large class," Hoffman said.

Rivera highlights the newcomers on next year's ballot, once again raising debate over whether any player will be unanimously elected to the Hall. Todd Helton, Andy Pettitte and the late Roy Halladay also will be first-time candidates.

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

Trump in Switzerland to play salesman at economic summit

By CATHERINE LUCEY, Associated Press

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) — President Donald Trump arrived in Switzerland on Thursday, ready to play salesman during his debut appearance at an annual economic summit in the Swiss Alps and argue that his "America First" agenda can go hand-in-hand with global cooperation.

Trump arrived in Zurich ahead of schedule and immediately boarded a U.S. helicopter for the flight to Davos, where the World Economic Forum is being held. The approximately 40-minute trip took Trump over a snowy countryside dotted with houses, frosted mountains and a glistening lake. As Trump got off the helicopter, he gestured to aides who held him by the arms as he walked across the snowy landing zone to his waiting car.

While the president is expected to declare that the United States is open for business, the protectionist-leaning president's attendance at the annual gathering for free-trade-loving political and business elites has raised eyebrows. His decision to sign new tariffs boosting American manufacturers this week has prompted fresh concerns about his nationalist tendencies.

"I'm going to Davos right now to get people to invest in the United States," Trump said Wednesday before the overnight flight to Europe. "I'm going to say: 'Come into the United States. You have plenty of money.' But I don't think I have to go, because they're coming, they're coming at a very fast clip."

In a tweet sent before departing the White House Trump said, "Our economy is now booming and with all I am doing, will only get better...Our country is finally WINNING again!"

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin got to Davos ahead of Trump and insisted Wednesday that the United States supports free trade.

"America First" does mean working with the rest of the world," said Mnuchin, who is leading the largest U.S. delegation ever to attend the exclusive gathering. "It just means that President Trump is looking out for American workers and American interests, no different than he expects other leaders would look out for their own."

U.S. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross argued that new U.S. tariffs on imported solar-energy components

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and large washing machines are meant to deal with "inappropriate behavior" by other countries and are not protectionist. Still, Ross conceded that China could respond by imposing its own tariffs on U.S. products.

As he signed the tariffs, Trump said he was heading to Davos to talk "about investing in the United States again."

The president is set to address the forum Friday. He is expected to showcase the booming U.S. economy and measures like his recent tax overhaul, claiming that a thriving America benefits the world. A vocal critic of trade deals he sees as unfair to the United States, Trump will also stress the need for what he sees as fair competition.

The invitation-only event focused on global cooperation and free trade seems like an unnatural fit for Trump, who rode a wave of nationalistic angst to the White House. But Mnuchin dismissed any concerns that the president may get a cool reception.

"We don't have to worry about this crowd," he said.

During his two-day stop, the president will attend a reception in his honor, host European executives for dinner and meet with world leaders. He plans to sit down with British Prime Minister Theresa May, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Swiss President Alain Berset and Rwandan President Paul Kagame.

The meeting with Kagame comes not long after participants in a White House meeting said Trump had referred to African nations as "shitholes." Trump also was criticized in Britain for retweeting videos from a far-right British group. He also criticized London Mayor Sadiq Khan following a terror attack last year.

Trump canceled plans for a recent trip to London to open the new \$1 billion U.S. embassy there, a move that avoided protests promised by political opponents. The president said he skipped the trip because he was unhappy with the new embassy's cost and location.

National Security Adviser H.R. McMaster said the United States continues to have a "special relationship" with Britain. He said Trump will discuss security and economic issues with the Rwandan leader, who chairs the African Union.

Trump concluded 2017 with the passage of a major tax overhaul, a key policy achievement. But the first few weeks of 2018 have been defined by political battles over government spending, Trump's incendiary Twitter feed and explosive revelations in a new book that portrays Trump as an unstable leader. A brief government shutdown threatened to derail the Davos trip altogether.

The president has criticized global pacts, withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership on trade, demanding changes to the North American Free Trade Agreement and announcing his intent to exit the Paris climate accord.

In the lead-up to Trump's arrival, other leaders at the meeting have argued against any drift toward protectionism in the global economy. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said new barriers to trade could pose a danger on a par with climate change and extremist attacks. And Canada's Justin Trudeau revealed that his country and the 10 remaining members of the Trans-Pacific Partnership have revised their trade deal following the U.S. withdrawal.

Trump's top economic adviser Gary Cohn rejected the suggestion that the United States had pulled back from international cooperation.

"We are very open to free, fair, reciprocal trade," he said, later adding: "Look, the U.S. is pulling back from nothing. The U.S. is involved."

This year's forum theme is "Creating a Shared Future in a Fractured World." Panel topics include "The Global Impact of America First," "A Society Divided," "Post-Establishment Politics?" and "The Weaponization of Culture."

Stephen Moore, a fellow at the conservative-oriented Heritage Foundation who advised the Trump campaign, said he initially had reservations about Trump going, saying, "those are people who have been completely wrong on the economy for 20 years."

But he added, "The more I thought about it, I thought maybe there is some benefit to going because he can lecture these people."

Elton John says upcoming tour will be his last

By MESFIN FEKADU, AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Elton John is retiring from the road after his upcoming three-year global tour, capping nearly 50 years on stages around the world. He calls it a “way to go out with a bang.”

“I’ve had a good run, I think you’d admit that,” John said Wednesday, adding that he wanted to “leave people thinking, ‘I saw the last tour and it was fantastic.’”

The 70-year-old singer, pianist and composer said he wanted to spend time with his family. His children will be 10 and 8 when the tour ends in 2021, and John said he hoped he might be able to take them to soccer practice. “My priorities now are my children and my husband and my family,” he said. “This is the end.”

John made the announcement at an event in New York in which he sat at a piano and performed “Tiny Dancer” and “I’m Still Standing.” He wore his signature glasses and a colorful suit jacket that read “Gucci Loves Elton.”

His final tour — dubbed “Farewell Yellow Brick Road” — starts on Sept. 8 in Allentown, Pennsylvania. It will consist of 300 shows in North America, Europe, Asia and South America. Tickets go on sale beginning Feb. 2.

Interest in the announcement was so high his website crashed. He wrote on Instagram that “EltonJohn.com will be fully back online as soon as possible.”

John said he decided on his retirement plans in 2015 in France: “I can’t physically do the traveling and I don’t want to,” he said.

He said he may do a residency after the tour wraps, but ruled out the idea of using a hologram of himself. He called it “spooky” and “a bit freaky,” and said he told his kids to “promise me that there won’t be a hologram of me.”

“Who knows? They may go broke and put me back on the (expletive) stage,” he added.

John has suffered several medical setbacks of late, including a bacterial infection last year that he contracted during a South American tour and an E. coli bacterial infection in 2009. He’s also suffered an appendicitis and has been fitted with a pacemaker. But on Wednesday he said he’s “in great health.”

In an interview after the announcement, John told The Associated Press, “10 years ago, I wanted to die onstage.”

“I just never thought fatherhood could bring me so much joy, and I came to fatherhood late in the day, but it’s been one of the miracles of my life,” said John, who said he plans to take his kids on the road for some of the shows.

He said two children keep him and husband David Furnish busy: “We thought about (more kids) but we said, ‘No.’ We have enough on our plate with these two. If we were 10, 15 years younger, we probably would have, definitely. I would love to have a little girl.”

At the Grammy Awards, to be presented in New York on Sunday, John is to perform alongside Miley Cyrus and will collect the President’s Merit Award. His Vegas residency ends in May after six years. His hits include “Your Song” and “Candle in the Wind.” He has won five Grammys, an Oscar, a Golden Globe for “The Lion King” and a Tony Award for “Aida.” He is the recipient of a Kennedy Center Honor and has sold 300 million records.

“I had a period in my life when I was selling records, I couldn’t stop being No. 1, and I gradually evened out. If you’re good live, it’s about being able to play live. The great artists that are out now — McCartney, Springsteen, Sting, Bob Dylan, they’ve all been great live performers, The Who — that’s the longevity,” he said. “There aren’t many of us left and I don’t think when we go there will be anybody else to replace us.”

John launched his first tour in 1970 and has performed over 4,000 times in more than 80 countries. He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 1994.

He said the upcoming tour could include special guests onstage: “Maybe. Yeah, of course. ...That keeps the momentum of the tour going. ...That will happen.”

From 1970-76, John released 10 original studio albums and seven consecutive chart toppers. He remained

a hit maker over the following four decades, from "The Lion King" soundtrack song "Can You Feel the Love Tonight" to a revision of his Marilyn Monroe ode "Candle in the Wind," released in 1997 after the death of John's friend Princess Diana and one of the best-selling singles of all time.

"I love music. It's not a chore. It's pleasure. Music kept me alive when I was doing drugs and I was still working. It's a constant in my life every sense I've been a young boy. The reason I'm here is because of music. And now the reason has changed — it's because of my children," he said.

AP Entertainment Writer Mark Kennedy contributed to this report.

Online:

<https://www.eltonjohn.com>

Nassar deemed 'serial' sex abuser; investigations ongoing

By DAVID EGGERT and MIKE HOUSEHOLDER, Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Once-renowned gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar listened silently as a prosecutor deemed him "possibly the most prolific serial child sex abuser in history" and a judge sentenced him to decades in prison for molesting some of the sport's top athletes, capping an extraordinary hearing during which more than 150 women and girls described his abuse.

"I just signed your death warrant," Judge Rosemarie Aquilina told Nassar, who was sentenced Wednesday to 40 to 175 years for molesting young female athletes under the guise of giving medical treatment.

Many confronted Nassar face to face in the Michigan courtroom, describing abuse in his home, at his Michigan State University office and while he worked for the sport's governing body, USA Gymnastics, which also trains Olympians.

"It is my honor and privilege to sentence you. You do not deserve to walk outside a prison ever again," said Aquilina, who called his actions "precise, calculated, manipulative, devious, despicable."

Hours later, Michigan State — which has asked the state attorney general to conduct a review of how the university handled the Nassar case — announced President Lou Anna Simon's resignation amid mounting pressure. Earlier in the day, the U.S. Olympic Committee's CEO announced an independent inquiry.

When the sentencing hearing ended, the courtroom broke into applause. Victims and prosecutors embraced at the conclusion of the grueling 16-month case.

But the anguish of the past week will have little, if any, practical effect on Nassar's fate. Before serving the Michigan sentence, the 54-year-old must first serve a 60-year federal sentence for child pornography crimes. With credit for good behavior, he could complete that sentence in about 55 years. By then, he would be more than 100 years old if still alive.

He is also scheduled to be sentenced next week on more assault convictions in Eaton County, Michigan.

Prosecutor Angela Povilaitis said competitive gymnastics provided the "perfect place" for his crimes because victims saw him as a "god."

"It takes some kind of sick perversion to not only assault a child but to do so with her parent in the room, to do so while a lineup of eager young gymnasts waited," Povilaitis said.

She urged people to believe young victims of sexual abuse no matter who they accuse and praised journalists, including those at the Indianapolis Star. The newspaper's 2016 investigation of how the sport's governing body handled sexual abuse allegations against coaches prompted a former gymnast to alert the paper to Nassar.

Although Nassar's work with gymnasts received the most attention, the allegations against him spanned more than a dozen sports over 25 years.

At one point, Nassar turned to the courtroom gallery to make a brief statement, saying that the victims' accounts had "shaken me to my core." He said "no words" can describe how sorry he is.

"I will carry your words with me for the rest of my days," he said as many of his accusers wept.

The judge then read from a letter that Nassar had written to her that raised questions about whether

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he was truly remorseful. The victims who packed the courtroom gasped as they heard passages that included "Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned" and another in which Nassar said the "stories" about him were fabricated.

He also defended his actions with the athletes as "medical, not sexual."

"I was a good doctor because my treatment worked, and those patients that are now speaking out were the same ones that praised and came back over and over, and referred family and friends to see me," Nassar wrote.

One of the first athletes to publicly accuse Nassar of sexual assault was the last victim to offer a statement at the hearing.

Rachael Denhollander is a Kentucky lawyer who stepped forward in 2016 after USA Gymnastics was accused of mishandling sexual assault complaints. She said Nassar groped and fondled her when she was a 15-year-old gymnast in Michigan.

Denhollander's statements to Michigan State University police put the criminal investigation in high gear in 2016.

"You have become a man ruled by selfish and perverted desires," she told Nassar.

Nassar pleaded guilty to assaulting seven people in the Lansing area, including in the basement of his home and at his campus office. But the sentencing hearing was open to anyone who said they were a victim.

Accusers said he would use his ungloved hands to penetrate them, often without explanation, while they were on a table seeking help for various injuries.

The accusers, many of whom were children, said they trusted Nassar and were in denial about what was happening or were afraid to speak up. He sometimes used a sheet or his body to block the view of any parent in the room.

Several elite former gymnasts talked about how Nassar won their allegiance with candy, Olympic trinkets and encouraging words while they were under constant scrutiny from demanding coaches.

The judge praised the victims who appeared in her court, calling them "sister survivors." The women included Olympians Aly Raisman, Jordyn Wieber and McKayla Maroney.

Sterling Riethman, 25, told Nassar that he might not fully grasp what he's caused.

"You've created an army of warrior women," she said. "This army doesn't have a white flag to wave. There is no white flag to wave when it comes to protecting little girls and their future."

Associated Press writer Ed White in Detroit contributed to this report.

North, South Korea hockey players team up for Olympics

By HYUNG-JIN KIM, Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Female hockey players from the rival Koreas were paired up with each other Thursday to form their first-ever Olympic squad during next month's Pyeongchang Winter Games, as their countries press ahead with rare reconciliation steps following a period of nuclear tensions.

A dozen North Korean hockey players wearing white-and-red winter parkas crossed the heavily fortified border into South Korea earlier Thursday, as about 30-40 conservative activists shouted anti-Pyongyang slogans at a nearby border area.

The North Koreans traveled on to a national athletes' village in southern South Korea, where they were welcomed by their South Korean teammates and Canadian coach Sarah Murray, who presented them flower bouquets in an outdoor welcoming ceremony.

"I sincerely welcome your arrival," Lee Jae-kun, head of the athletes' village, told the North Koreans after they got off a bus.

Pak Chol Ho, a North Korean coach who arrived with the 12 athletes and two support staff, told reporters that he's happy to team up with South Koreans. "I'm very pleased with the fact that North and South are united as one to participate in (the Olympics). I expect we'll see good results if we unite our efforts

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... though we don't have much time," he said.

The Korean players later shouted "We are one!" and took a group photo. North and South Korean players plan to practice separately for several days as Murray needs time to learn about the North Koreans.

The players were sharing the same locker room and the lockers of the North Korean players were deliberately placed between those of their South Korean teammates so that they could become close quickly, according to Yonhap news agency.

The Koreas fielded a single team to major sports events only twice, both in 1991. One event was the world table tennis championships and the other soccer's World Youth Championship. But this is the first time they've assembled a single team for the Olympics.

The Koreas explored how to cooperate in the Olympics after the North's leader Kim Jong Un abruptly said in his New Year's address that he was willing to send an Olympic delegation. As part of the rapprochement deals, the Koreas also agreed for their athletes to march together under a single flag during the Feb. 9 opening ceremony. Some experts say North Korea may want to use improved ties with the South as a way to weaken U.S.-led international sanctions.

The International Olympic Committee has allowed 22 North Korean athletes, including the 12 hockey players, to compete in Pyeongchang in exceptional entries given to the North, which initially had none for the games. The 10 others will compete in figure skating, short track speed skating, Alpine skiing and cross-country skiing. They will come to South Korea on Feb. 1.

The joint hockey team deal has triggered a backlash in South Korea, with a survey showing about 70 percent of respondents opposing the idea because it would deprive South Korean players of playing time. The IOC-brokered agreement requires at least three North Korean players to suit up for each game, meaning that three from South Korea's original roster cannot play in those games.

Murray has said that the North Koreans' hard-hitting style would make them suited to be her fourth line, a group of players who are typically asked to provide strong physical play in short bursts while giving their teammates with greater scoring responsibilities a chance to rest.

Murray, who examined the North Koreans first hand during an event in Gangneung last year, has identified five players as memorable, but among them, only forwards Jong Su Hyon and Kim Hyang Mi made the trip for the Olympics.

The unified Korean team will open their group action against Switzerland on Feb. 10. It will then face Sweden on Feb. 12 and Japan on Feb. 14. What draws attention is its Japan match, as many in both Koreas still harbor bitter resentment against Japan's 35-year colonial rule that ended in 1945, three years before two different governments were formally established on the Korean Peninsula.

Conservatives in Seoul have held a series of small-scale rallies in recent days. On Monday, activists burned Kim's photo and a North Korean flag as the head of the North's popular girl band passed by them during a visit to the capital. North Korea responded Tuesday by warning similar actions could disrupt ongoing reconciliation efforts.

South Korean officials hope an Olympic-inspired mood of detente would serve as a stepping stone to the resumption of diplomatic talks that could slow down North Korea's nuclear advancement. North Korea, however, has insisted it won't discuss its nuclear program during its ongoing talks with South Korea, and some experts warn that tensions could flare again after the Olympics.

Associated Press journalists Lee Jin-man in Paju, South Korea and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul contributed to this report.

Trump 'looking forward' to being questioned under oath

By ERIC TUCKER and CHAD DAY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump declared he's "looking forward" to being questioned — under oath — in the special counsel's probe of Russian election interference and Trump's possible obstruction in the firing of the FBI director.

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Trump said he would be willing to answer questions under oath in the interview, which special counsel Robert Mueller has been seeking but which White House officials had not previously confirmed the president would grant.

"I'm looking forward to it, actually," Trump said late Wednesday when asked by reporters at the White House. As for timing, he said, "I guess they're talking about two or three weeks, but I'd love to do it."

He said, as he has repeatedly, that "there's no collusion whatsoever" with the Russians, and he added, "there's no obstruction whatsoever."

The full scope of Mueller's investigation, which involves hundreds of thousands of documents and dozens of witness interviews, is unknown. And there have been no signs that agents aren't continuing to work on ties between Trump's campaign and a Russian effort to tip the 2016 election.

But now that Mueller's team has all but concluded its interviews with current and former Trump officials, and expressed interest in speaking with the president himself, the focus seems to be on the post-inauguration White House. That includes the firing of FBI Director James Comey and discussions preceding the ouster of White House national security adviser Michael Flynn.

The timing and circumstances of a Trump interview are still being ironed out. But soon it will probably be the president himself who will have to explain to Mueller how his actions don't add up to obstruction of justice. And that conversation will be dominated by questions tied to whether he took steps to thwart an FBI investigation.

Asked if he thinks Mueller will be fair, Trump replied: "We're going to find out." He then reiterated that there is "no collusion."

In a potential signal of his defense, Trump suggested that he didn't obstruct — he simply fought back against a false accusation.

So far, witness interviews and the special counsel's document requests make clear Mueller has a keen interest in Comey's May 9 firing and the contents of Comey's private conversations with the president, as well as the ouster months earlier of Flynn and the weeks of conversations leading up to it.

A focus on potential obstruction has been evident almost since Mueller's appointment as special counsel. And recent interviews with administration officials, including Attorney General Jeff Sessions, have shown that Trump is dealing with prosecutors who already have amassed a wealth of knowledge about the events he'll be questioned about.

Prosecutors have interviewed numerous Trump aides, including close confidants such as White House counsel Don McGahn, former chief of staff Reince Priebus and the president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

Sessions, who had urged Comey's firing, was interviewed for hours, becoming the highest-ranking Trump administration official known to have submitted to questioning. Mueller also wants to interview former adviser Steve Bannon, who has called Comey's firing perhaps the biggest mistake in "modern political history."

The White House initially said the firing was based on the Justice Department's recommendation and cited as justification a memo that faulted Comey's handling of the Hillary Clinton email investigation. But Trump himself said later he was thinking of this "Russia thing" and had intended to fire Comey anyway.

Sessions, the target of the president's ire since he stepped aside last March from the Russia investigation, would have been able to offer close-up insight into the president's thinking ahead of the termination. He also could have been able to speak to the president's relationship with Comey, which Comey documented in a series of memos about conversations with Trump that bothered him.

In one memo, Comey described a January 2017 meeting over dinner at which he said the president asked him to pledge his loyalty. Separately, a person familiar with the conversation said this week that Trump in a meeting last year with FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe brought up McCabe's wife's political background following the revelation that she had accepted campaign contributions during a state Senate run from the political action committee of then-Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, a close Clinton ally.

The Washington Post reported Tuesday night that Trump had also asked McCabe whom he voted for in the presidential race. McCabe replied that he did not vote. Trump said Wednesday he did not recall asking that question.

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Another of Comey's memos centered on a February conversation at the White House in which he said Trump told him he believed Flynn, the fired national security adviser, was a "good guy" and encouraged Comey to drop an investigation into him. The FBI had interviewed Flynn weeks earlier about whether he had discussed sanctions with the Russian ambassador during the transition period between the election and the inauguration. Flynn pleaded guilty in December to lying to the FBI during that interview.

Mueller has been investigating the events leading up to Flynn's dismissal from the White House, including how officials responded to information from former acting Attorney General Sally Yates that Flynn had misled them by saying that he had not discussed sanctions. Despite that warning, and despite an FBI interview days after Trump's inauguration, Flynn was not forced to resign until Feb. 13 — the night of media reports about Yates' conversation with McGahn.

Mueller will likely want to know what Trump understood, before asking Comey to let the Flynn investigation go, about Flynn's interview with the FBI — and whether he had made false statements — and about his conversation with the Russian ambassador.

Four people have so far been charged in the Mueller investigation, including Flynn and former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort. Flynn and former campaign foreign policy adviser George Papadopoulos have pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Probe: Chinese opioid sellers exploit US postal service flaw

By DESMOND BUTLER and ERIKA KINETZ, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — China said Thursday it is ready to work with the United States in fighting illicit opioid shipments after congressional investigators found that Chinese opioid manufacturers exploit weak screening in the U.S. Postal Service to ship large quantities of illegal drugs to American dealers.

"Anti-drug coordination is one of the highlights of China-U.S. law enforcement cooperation," foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said at a regular briefing. "We stand ready to work with the U.S. to enhance our coordination in this field."

In a yearlong probe published Wednesday, Senate investigators found that Chinese sellers, who openly market opioids such as fentanyl to U.S. buyers, are pushing delivery through the U.S. postal system. The sellers are taking advantage of a failure by the postal service to fully implement an electronic data system that would help authorities identify suspicious shipments.

At a time of massive growth in postal shipments from China due to e-commerce, the investigators found that the postal system received the electronic data on just over a third of all international packages, making more than 300 million packages in 2017 much harder to screen. Data in the Senate report shows no significant improvement during 2017 despite the urgency.

The U.S. Postal Service said it has made dramatic progress in the last year in total packages with opioids seized by U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

"The Postal Service will continue to work tirelessly to address this serious societal issue," spokesman David Partenheimer said in a statement.

He said implementing the use of electronic data is slowed by the need to negotiate with international partners, but the service is making progress.

The Senate probe matches many of the findings of a 2016 investigation by The Associated Press that detailed unchecked production in China of some of the world's most dangerous drugs.

AP reporters found multiple sellers willing to ship carfentanil — an opioid used as an elephant tranquilizer that is so potent it has been considered a chemical weapon. The sellers also offered advice on how to evade screening by U.S. authorities.

Researchers on the Permanent Subcommittee on Investigations also contacted Chinese sellers directly.

The sellers preferred payment in Bitcoin.

Investigators traced the online sellers to seven U.S. opioid deaths and 18 drug arrests. The Senate has cleared the report to be handed over to law enforcement.

In one case, the investigators traced orders from an online seller in China to a Michigan man who wired \$200 in November 2016. The next month he received a package from someone identified by the investigators as a Pennsylvania-based distributor. A day later, the Michigan man died of an overdose from drugs, including a chemical similar to fentanyl.

The huge influx of opioids has led to a wave of overdose deaths across the U.S. in recent years. Republican Sen. Rob Portman, the subcommittee's chairman, noted that fentanyl now kills more people in his home state than heroin.

"The federal government can, and must, act to shore up our defenses against this deadly drug and help save lives," he said.

Associated Press journalist Dake Kang in Beijing contributed to this report.

Push is on to raise sexual misconduct awareness at Grammys

By **NEKESA MUMBI MOODY, AP Entertainment Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — The music industry hasn't been rocked with as many public allegations of sexual misconduct as Hollywood, but insiders are still seeking to show solidarity with the #MeToo movement on its biggest night.

Key executives have called on artists and employees alike to wear a white rose on Sunday in support of Time's Up as the Grammys celebrate its 60th anniversary with a ceremony in New York City. The Time's Up organization was formed by key Hollywood celebrities and executives including Reese Witherspoon, Shonda Rhimes and America Ferrera, and most stars wore black and a Time's Up pin in support at the Golden Globes earlier this month.

Among those artists who have already confirmed they will wear the rose on Sunday include Dua Lipa and Halsey, who read an emotional poem detailing sexual abuse at a Women's March rally a few days ago. More names are expected to be released Thursday.

"We have not had the tsunami that politics and Hollywood has had, but we are still women," Meg Harkins, senior vice president of marketing at Roc Nation and one of the people behind the Time's Up push at the Recording Academy ceremony, told The Associated Press on Wednesday night.

"I would want to see men and women wearing white roses and I would like men and women to be able to have meaningful Grammy award speeches when those speeches happen."

After the Globes, Harkins was commiserating with fellow industry executive Karen Rait, head of rhythm promotions at Interscope/Geffen/A&M records, about what could be done at the Grammys.

"We all agreed it was really necessary," Harkins said. "We've all felt the political and cultural change in the last couple of months."

The women gathered others for a meeting on Monday and by Wednesday, sent out an initial email urging people to wear the white rose, and also noted that Rapsody, the only woman nominated for best rap album, would be doing so.

"We choose the white rose because historically it stands for hope, peace, sympathy and resistance," read the email. "Please let us know if we can add your name to our list of supporters. The world is listening."

In a matter of hours, there were hundreds of names who had confirmed, said Harkins. The push was buoyed by the support of the co-chairs at Atlantic Records, Julie Greenwald and Craig Kallman. Greenwald sent the missive out to staff, a rep for the label confirmed.

"They have really encouraged not only their artists but also their employees to sign," Harkins said.

The white rose was also chosen in part because it could be done quickly but also because of the color has been long used as part of the women's suffragette movement; Hillary Clinton wore white when she accepted the Democratic nomination for president in 2018.

"It's not just a visual cue to feel empowered; it's about actually giving money toward women who need

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the help," said Harkins.

Time's Up is not only trying to raise awareness about sexual harassment but also money for a legal defense fund for people in all industries battling sexual misconduct. Over \$15 million has already been raised.

Music mogul Russell Simmons is perhaps the biggest industry name that has been accused of sexual misconduct; former Epic label head L.A. Reid has also faced accusations. But compared to film, TV or even politics, the scandals have been relatively few in music, wondering many to ask when the reckoning will come to that industry.

"It's a legitimate question. I don't know the answer," said Harkins. She added: "If and when it comes, we want to be super proactive. . We are being loud in our voices before a crisis, so we can avert a crisis."

Online:

<https://www.timesupnow.com/>

For full coverage of awards season, visit: <https://apnews.com/tag/AwardsSeason>

Michigan State president resigns in wake of Nassar scandal

By LARRY LAGE, AP Sports Writer

EAST LANSING, Mich. (AP) — Michigan State President Lou Anna Simon submitted her resignation Wednesday amid an outcry over the school's handling of allegations against Larry Nassar.

The announcement that Simon was stepping down came hours after the sentencing of Nassar, who worked at Michigan State as a doctor and received 40 to 175 years in prison for molesting young girls and women under the guise of medical treatment. Several of the 150-plus victims who spoke at the hearing were former athletes at the school, and many victims accused the university of mishandling past complaints about Nassar.

"As tragedies are politicized, blame is inevitable," Simon said in her resignation letter. "As president, it is only natural that I am the focus of this anger."

Simon was promoted to school president in 2005 after moving up the ranks while flourishing in various administrative roles.

"We agree with Dr. Simon that it is now time for change," Board of Trustees Chairman Brian Breslin said in a statement. "President Simon has served with distinction as MSU's President for 13 years and has been a constant presence at the university for more than 40 years. She literally has devoted her entire professional life to this institution, and more than anyone else has helped make MSU a national and international leader in higher education."

Simon's resignation was welcomed in Michigan's Legislature, where pressure had been building for her to step down or be ousted.

Sen. Curtis Hertel Jr., a Democrat from East Lansing, where the campus is located, called it "an important step in moving the university forward."

"We need to create a culture at Michigan State where survivors are listened to and believed," Hertel said. "I don't think that's happened — not just in this case. I don't think anyone could say that Lou Anna Simon hasn't had great accomplishments. But I think in this case, her actions did not meet the leadership that we need at Michigan State."

Hertel, who graduated from Michigan State, said further investigation is needed. State Attorney General Bill Schuette will review how Michigan State handled the allegations against Nassar. And the NCAA has asked the school for information regarding potential violations related to Nassar.

"We need to find out beyond the president's office who had reports and didn't act," Hertel said.

Former Michigan State gymnastics coach Kathie Klages resigned last year after she was suspended for defending Nassar over the years. Klages is accused of downplaying complaints made by two teens in 1997.

A Title IX probe conducted by the university cleared Nassar of sexual assault allegations in 2014. At least 12 reported assaults occurred after the investigation ended, according to a university police report that

was provided to the FBI for review by the U.S. attorney.

The school let Nassar see patients for 16 months while the campus police also conducted a criminal investigation into the allegations. The local prosecutor declined to charge Nassar in that case.

Simon began her career at Michigan State after earning her doctorate there four-plus decades ago. The school is being sued by dozens of women, who say officials wrote off complaints about the doctor who also worked at USA Gymnastics, which trains athletes aspiring to be Olympians.

The university's eight-member board of trustees voiced support of Simon last week only to have one trustee issue a statement the next day saying she should resign. On Wednesday, a second trustee, Dianne Byrum, joined a growing chorus of calls for Simon to step down.

The fallout included Michigan State professor Sue Carter stepping down as the faculty's athletic representative.

"I had an exchange recently with President Simon that persuaded me to know my voice and the concerns of others are not being heard," Carter said. "I could no longer be part of an administration that was not in full grasp of the damage that has been done to the girls and women and to the institution itself."

Michigan State officials have denied accusations the school covered up misconduct by school administrators. The university has said reviews by campus police, the FBI and the U.S. attorney's office have not resulted in criminal charges against anyone at the university other than Nassar, who was fired in September 2016. Schuette has urged the school to give him an internal report, but the school has said there was not one.

Simon declined a \$150,000 raise in December, and she and the board agreed to put the money in a scholarship fund and create a \$10 million fund for mental health services for sexual assault survivors. She earned about \$860,000 in 2015, according to the latest data released by The Chronicle of Higher Education, making her the 12th-highest paid public university executive in the U.S. that year.

Simon has apologized numerous times to Nassar's victims, including in the first paragraph of her resignation letter.

"To the survivors, I can never say enough that I am so sorry that a trusted, renowned physician was really such an evil, evil person who inflicted such harm under the guise of medical treatment," Simon said.

Associated Press writer David Eggert in Lansing contributed to this report.

Follow Larry Lage on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/larrylage>

How Congress used the shutdown deal to cut more taxes

By **MARCY GORDON, AP Business Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The deal that ended the government shutdown also further cut taxes, adding billions more to the national deficit.

The tax cuts were a little noticed element of the much discussed deal, which provided funding to keep government agencies operating for about three weeks and renewed a popular health insurance program for poor children. They were added to entice Republicans to line up behind the temporary spending bill, even before the Democrats dug in and forced the three-day shutdown.

The bill enacted late Monday suspended three taxes that came in under President Barack Obama's signature health care law: a tax on medical devices, one on high-cost health care plans offered by employers, and another on health insurance companies.

The Republicans were relieved when enough Democrats flipped and supported the spending bill so that the government could reopen. And, they were gleeful at the chipping away of the health care law by delaying or suspending the three taxes.

Just a few weeks after the Republicans catapulted a sweeping, \$1.5 trillion tax plan into law, here they were cutting taxes again, they told the public. Even the shutdown "couldn't keep this Congress from finding new ways to cut taxes and let the American people keep more of their hard-earned money," Senate

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Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday.

Delaying the three taxes will add \$32 billion over 10 years to the deficit, according to the nonpartisan Tax Policy Center, a joint venture of the Urban Institute and the Brookings Institution, in addition to the anticipated \$1.5 trillion in federal red ink from the new GOP tax law.

Amid the furious negotiations over the spending bill, GOP leaders used the tax cuts as “sweeteners” to attract the support of balking Republican conservatives in the House..

“It was just for the sake of buying time,” said Thomas Cooke, a professor of business law and tax expert at Georgetown University.

The taxes also are opposed by plenty of Democrats. That’s in contrast to many of the tax levies, credits and deductions in the comprehensive tax legislation, which starkly split Republicans and Democrats in a bitter battle last year.

But despite the bipartisan support for repealing the health care taxes, the delays embedded in the spending bill may have a short shelf life, Cooke said. With Feb. 8 looming as the next deadline for Congress to reach agreement on immigration and long-term government funding to avert another showdown, he said, “Everything is still on the table, subject to negotiation. ... I see (the tax delays) almost getting pushed to the side.”

Several major manufacturers of medical devices have their headquarters in solidly Democratic states — like Medtronic in Minnesota, and GE Healthcare, Baxter International and Abbott Laboratories in Illinois. Some Republican lawmakers, meanwhile, have sounded the alarm on tens of thousands of jobs in the industry flying out of the U.S. because of the tax — a claim based largely on industry-funded studies.

The 2.3 percent tax on makers of medical devices applies to equipment such as surgical instruments, X-ray equipment, MRI machines and cardiac pacemakers.

Powerful industry lobbies have agitated against the health care levies. They aimed early last year for their repeal in the Republican bill to replace the Obama health care law — a stunning failure for the GOP — and then pushed for it, unsuccessfully, in the tax legislation.

An array of big insurers, including UnitedHealth, Aetna and Blue Cross-Blue Shield, have lined up against the health insurance tax, which is based on a company’s market share. Some analysts have warned that the companies could try to soften their tax blow by raising the cost of premiums for consumers.

Congress has repeatedly delayed or suspended the taxes’ effective dates in recent years. Now with the government spending bill, the medical devices tax — on hold since 2016 and previously scheduled to land this past Jan. 1 — is delayed two years to 2020. The tax on health insurance providers, also on hold for two years but in effect Jan. 1, gets a one-year suspension for 2019. The tax on so-called Cadillac health plans, a 40 percent levy on employers that offer the generous plans, is deferred from 2020 to 2022.

Undeterred by failed appeal, Brazil’s da Silva vows to run

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and SARAH DiLORENZO, Associated Press

PORTO ALEGRE, Brazil (AP) — Former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva is charging ahead with his plans to run for Brazil’s presidency again, even after an appeals court unanimously upheld a graft conviction against him and added years to his prison sentence.

Da Silva, who was wildly popular as president in 2003-2010 and has been leading the polls for October’s presidential election, was defiant in the face of Wednesday’s court ruling. The case alleged that while president, da Silva traded favors in return for the promise of a beachfront apartment. It is just one of a series of graft allegations against him amid a mushrooming corruption scandal that has taken down top politicians and business executives in Latin America’s largest nation.

“I am not worried about whether I will be a candidate for president or not,” da Silva told a crowd of supporters in Sao Paulo on Wednesday night. “I want (the judges and prosecutors) to ask for forgiveness for the quantity of lies they told about me.”

His Workers’ Party declared its intention to register him as its candidate in August and scheduled a

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meeting for Thursday to discuss plans.

"We will fight in defense of democracy in all forums, in the judiciary and mainly on the streets," party chairwoman Gleisi Hoffmann said in a statement. "If some think the story ends with today's decision, they are very wrong because we do not surrender before injustice."

Da Silva's defense team said the decision by the three-judge panel was political and denounced the ruling as a "farce." They vowed to take the case to Brazil's Supreme Court and even the United Nations.

That raised the specter of months of uncertainty ahead of the vote and even potentially unrest.

Under Brazilian law, a criminal conviction that has been upheld on appeal makes the person ineligible to run for office, although da Silva still has several avenues to still get on the October ballot by appealing to higher courts. Ultimately, the country's Supreme Electoral Tribunal makes decisions about candidacies, and the Supreme Court could also weigh in on the case.

Oscar Vilhena Vieira, dean of the law school at Fundacao Getulio Vargas university, said it was likely da Silva would eventually be barred from running, but maybe not until weeks before the election.

"We will have a difficult year, but I think in the end the election will take place and people will accept its results," he said on a conference call with reporters organized by the Wilson Institute in Washington,

In deeply polarized Brazil, the case is part of a larger narrative, with supporters and detractors of da Silva offering their own interpretations. Da Silva and his supporters say the other corruption charges brought against him are an attempt to keep him from returning to office. They argue it is part of a conspiracy by Brazil's elite to keep out a president like da Silva who focuses on the poor and levels the playing field in one of the world's most unequal nations.

Detractors note that da Silva and his left-leaning Workers' Party were running the country while a widespread corruption scheme siphoned billions from state oil company Petrobras and helped Latin America's largest economy fall into its worst recession in decades.

Tensions were high Wednesday as the judges met in Porto Alegre, a southern city. Helicopters buzzed the skies, police patrolled on horses and sharpshooters took up positions outside while the judges spent the morning hearing arguments over da Silva's conviction on corruption and money laundering charges. Prosecutors argued da Silva was promised a beachfront apartment, owned by construction company OAS, in exchange for contracts. In plea bargain testimony, the company's CEO said the apartment was slated for da Silva.

Da Silva and his lawyers have always argued the case defied logic, saying he never owned the apartment.

In the end, all three judges voted to uphold the conviction and lengthen the jail time to 12 years and one month, an increase of more than two years from the sentence levied in July.

"Nobody can be absolved just because he's powerful," Judge Leandro Paulen said, referring to da Silva's large following.

Experts said da Silva was unlikely to be jailed while pursuing further appeals.

Over the last several years, the "Car Wash" corruption investigation has landed dozens of Brazil's elite, from businessmen to politicians, in jail. Several construction companies formed a de facto cartel that decided which would get inflated government contracts that included billions of dollars in bribes and kickbacks to politicians, company officials and political parties in the form of campaign contributions.

Associated Press writer Mauricio Savarese reported this story in Porto Alegre and AP writer Sarah DiLorenzo reported from Sao Paulo.

Refugees more than once, Rohingya fear return to Myanmar

By RISHABH R. JAIN, Associated Press

KUTUPALONG REFUGEE CAMP, Bangladesh (AP) — Mohammad Yunus is a refugee for the second time. The 30-year-old Rohingya Muslim, who has been slowly rebuilding a shadow of a normal life in a sprawling and squalid refugee camp in Bangladesh, is in no mood to return home to Myanmar.

After Myanmar expressed readiness to start receiving an estimated 680,000 Rohingya Muslims who fled

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incredible violence over the last five months, Younus said he would rather die in the camp than go back again to the land of his birth.

"They have been killing Muslims for a long time now," he said. "We run and come to Bangladesh. Then we go back. We come back to Bangladesh, and go back again. They continue the killings."

Younus first fled with his family in 1991 as a 4-year-old, when his parents joined a wave of 250,000 Rohingya escaping forced labor, religious persecution and attacks from Buddhist mobs in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state, where most Rohingya live. Three years later, the family returned home, fooled, he says, by the promises made by the U.N. refugee agency and Myanmar's government.

Sixteen years later, Younus found himself again fleeing for his life as Myanmar soldiers and Buddhist mobs unleashed a brutal retaliation after a Rohingya insurgent group attacked dozens of police posts on Aug. 25.

Under heavy international criticism of what U.N. and U.S. officials labeled "ethnic cleansing," Myanmar signed a repatriation deal with Bangladesh to start sending the refugees back this Tuesday.

According to the deal, those who return will first live in transit camps before eventually going back to their villages. But the plan has been delayed after a last-minute announcement by Bangladesh officials, who said they still have to draw up lists of refugees and complete the process of verification. They have not said how long the delay will last. They also reiterated that all returns would be voluntary.

On Tuesday, Myanmar again promised it was ready to begin accepting the Rohingya. But the refugees say they have been on this road before.

"I kept going back because I still have love for my country in my heart," said Abdul Gaffar, a 50-year-old who fled spasms of violence in Myanmar in 1978, 1991, and last year.

"They take us back saying they will give us everything, but don't give us anything," he said. "They say they will meet our demands, but they don't. The government cheats us after taking us back."

The Rohingya trace their history before modern borders were drawn, and have long lived and traded on both sides of what is now the Myanmar-Bangladesh frontier. They have also long been a persecuted minority in Myanmar.

While the recent exodus of Rohingya has spawned one of the largest refugee crises in the world, smaller groups of Rohingya have been fleeing earlier waves of violence since the late 1970s. They are widely derided in Myanmar as "Bengalis," illegal migrants from Bangladesh, and have long been treated as outsiders by the Buddhist majority. In 1982, nearly all Rohingya were stripped of their citizenship rights.

Even if some Rohingya are able to return home, many probably won't recognize what they left behind. Rights groups have described how hundreds of villages across Rakhine state were set on fire after troops and mobs descended to chase out the residents. Homes and crops in the fields were reduced to ashes.

"They gave us back our land but didn't rebuild our home. This is how we have been living," said Younus, recalling when he and his family returned to Myanmar in the mid-1990s. The extended family lived in a small hut that they pooled resources to build, he said, only to abandon it when the attacks started last year.

"When the massacre began this time, when they started shooting and killing everyone, they were chasing after me as well," he said. "But somehow I managed to escape and come here. So I have experienced this ordeal twice. I have been in grief all my life."

Trump open to letting Dreamers 'morph into' citizens

By JILL COLVIN and ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Wednesday he's open to an immigration plan that would provide a pathway to citizenship for hundreds of thousands of young people who were brought to the country as children and are now here illegally.

"We're going to morph into it," Trump told reporters. "It's going to happen, at some point in the future, over a period of 10 to 12 years."

Trump's pronouncements came as the White House announced it would be unveiling a legislative framework on immigration next week that it hopes can pass both the House and the Senate. The president's remarks amounted to a preview of that framework. He said he'll propose \$25 billion for building a wall on

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the U.S.-Mexico border and \$5 billion for other security measures.

But immediately after Trump spoke, a senior White House official stressed the idea of a pathway to citizenship so-called Dreamers was just a "discussion point" in the plan that the White House intended to preview to the House and Senate later Wednesday.

The official spoke on condition of anonymity to preview the administration's thinking on a contentious issue that has roiled lawmakers for months.

Despite his previously harsh rhetoric, Trump told reporters he had a message for the Dreamers: "Tell 'em not to be concerned, OK? Tell 'em not to worry. We're going to solve the problem."

Trump has said repeatedly that any deal to protect those immigrants from deportation is contingent on money for the border wall and other security measures. Trump also wants to limit the family members that immigrants are able to sponsor to join them in the U.S. and either replace or transform a visa lottery aimed at increasing diversity.

Trump has given Congress until March to come up with a plan to protect the nearly 700,000 young people who had been protected from deportation and given the right to work legally in the country under the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program, or DACA. Trump announced he was ending DACA last year.

Trump expressed confidence a deal can be reached on the issue, and said he'd like to see one hammered out by the time he returns from Davos, Switzerland, on Friday.

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders said earlier Wednesday that the framework to be unveiled Monday "represents a compromise that members of both parties can support."

The White House was trying to take control of the process amid criticism that the president had taken too much of a back seat during recent negotiations and had sent mixed signals that repeatedly upended near-deals.

"The president wants to lead on this issue, and that's exactly what we're going to do," Sanders said.

The senior official added that the White House planned to notify Congress on Wednesday night exactly what the president's position is, noting that that's what many members have been asking for.

Trump had previously ruled out the idea of citizenship for the immigrants known as Dreamers, saying last September: "We're not looking at citizenship. We're not looking at amnesty. We're looking at allowing people to stay here."

But he said Wednesday that providing an opportunity for citizenship had its positives. "I think it's a nice thing to have the incentive of after a period of years being able to become a citizen," he said.

Meanwhile, on the Hill, senators from both parties were making a fresh search for their own compromise immigration legislation, though leaders conceded that the effort wouldn't be easy and were already casting blame should it falter.

Around three dozen senators from both parties met privately Wednesday, and two top lawmakers said they'd try crafting a compromise bill based on colleagues' suggestions. The goal is to produce consensus legislation that would be the starting point for Senate debate on immigration, which is expected to begin Feb. 8, said Sens. John Cornyn, R-Texas, and Dick Durbin, D-Ill., their parties' No. 2 leaders.

"We're the Senate, we have our own responsibility under the Constitution and we decided in this room to move forward," Durbin said afterward. "If the president has some ideas he'd like to share, of course we'll take a look at them."

Sen. Lindsay Graham, R-S.C., said in a statement that he was "extremely pleased with the number of senators - from both sides of the aisle" — who had accepted his invitation. "My hope is that we can reach an agreement before February 8," he said.

The senior White House official did not know about the meeting, which was underway at the time, and said the president and Graham were not on the same page.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., has vowed not to "let those who are anti-immigrant, who call giving the Dreamers hope 'amnesty,' block us. Because then we will fail, and it will be on the other side of the aisle that made that happen."

Sanders said the White House framework is based on dozens of conversations Trump and his staff have had with members of both parties and that "it addresses all of the different things that we've heard from all of the various stakeholders" during the past several months.

Sen. David Perdue, R-Ga., said Trump called him Wednesday morning and wants to provide "dependability for these kids," but still expects a deal to include money for border security and his promised southern wall, to limit immigrants' ability to sponsor family members and to end a visa lottery aimed at diversity.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said if senators cannot produce a compromise plan by Feb. 8, he would open a debate on immigration legislation that would be "fair to all sides." That suggests both parties would be allowed to offer amendments.

Feb. 8 is the date legislation expires that reopened the government after a three-day shutdown, which began after Democrats demanded movement toward an immigration deal as the price for financing federal agencies.

Follow Taylor and Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/APAndrewTaylor> and <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

Captive kids slowly providing information to investigators

By **AMY TAXIN** and **MICHAEL BALSAMO**, Associated Press

RIVERSIDE, Calif. (AP) — The California children who authorities say were tortured by their parents and so malnourished that their growth was stunted are slowly providing valuable information to investigators, a prosecutor told The Associated Press on Wednesday.

"Victims in these kinds of cases, they tell their story, but they tell it slowly. They tell it at their own pace," Riverside County District Attorney Mike Hestrin said. "It will come out when it comes out."

David and Louise Turpin are accused of abusing their 13 children — ranging from 2 to 29 — before they were rescued on Jan. 14 from their home in Perris. They have pleaded not guilty to torture and other charges.

A judge signed a protective order Wednesday prohibiting the couple from contacting their children, except through attorneys or investigators. Before the brief hearing, Louise Turpin looked at her husband and smiled.

"It protects everyone involved, including my client," David Turpin's attorney, David Macher, said about the order. "I don't want my client exposed to accusations that he attempted to harass or threaten a witness."

Louise Turpin's attorney declined to comment after the hearing.

All of the children remained hospitalized and were relieved to be out of the home, Hestrin said.

Deputies arrested the husband and wife after their 17-year-old daughter climbed out a window and called 911. Authorities found the siblings in the family's filthy home, with three of them shackled to beds when deputies knocked on the door.

Investigators have learned that the children were isolated from each other and locked in different rooms in small groups, Hestrin said.

The children did not have access to televisions or radios but were able to read and write and expressed themselves in hundreds of journals that were seized from the home, the district attorney said.

"It appears to me that they lacked any kind of understanding about how the world worked," Hestrin said.

One of the older boys had taken a variety of classes at Mt. San Jacinto College, a community college, but his mother took him to the campus and waited outside class for him, Hestrin said. The college confirmed that one of the Turpins had been a student but refused to provide additional information, including some that is generally releasable under federal privacy laws.

Earlier this week, Louise Turpin's half-brother, Billy Lambert, told several news organizations that she had aspired to have a reality television show focusing on their large family. But Hestrin said investigators have uncovered no evidence indicating the couple was seeking media attention or a show.

Authorities asked anyone with information about the case to call 1-888-934-5437.

Balsamo reported from Los Angeles.

Idaho says no Obamacare needed for some new insurance plans

By REBECCA BOONE, Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — Concerned about soaring health care costs, Idaho on Wednesday revealed a plan that will allow insurance companies to sell cheap policies that ditch key provisions of the Affordable Care Act.

It's believed to be the first state to take formal steps without prior federal approval for creating policies that do not comply with the Obama-era health care law. Health care experts say the move is legally dubious, a concern supported by internal records obtained by The Associated Press.

Idaho Department of Insurance Director Dean Cameron said the move is necessary to make cheaper plans available to more people. Otherwise, he said he fears the state's individual health insurance marketplace will eventually collapse as healthy residents choose to go uninsured rather than pay for expensive plans that comply with the federal law.

"There are other states that have been talking about it, but we may be out in front," Cameron said. "They may look to follow us should be we successful."

Many states have seen annual double-digit increases in health insurance premium costs. That is expected to continue — and perhaps get worse — under the recently signed Republican tax plan.

The new tax law ended the Affordable Care Act provision that required people to buy health insurance or pay a tax penalty. Without the threat of a penalty, health care experts predict that younger and healthier people will go without policies. That will leave sicker patients in the marketplaces, forcing insurers to raise costs.

The Idaho plan would make it possible for insurance companies to offer cheaper plans that might be more attractive to people who have to buy their own insurance and do not benefit from the federal premium subsidies offered under the Affordable Care Act. The catch is that those plans would be skimpier.

Cameron on Wednesday offered details of the plan that was first announced by Gov. C.L. "Butch" Otter, a Republican, earlier this month.

Under Idaho's guidelines, insurers can offer plans that deny coverage for pre-existing conditions for up to 12 months unless the customer had continuous prior coverage. Insurers would no longer be required to cover pediatric dental or vision care, and though they would have to offer at least one plan with maternity and newborn coverage, other plans could exclude those benefits.

Insurance carriers can also charge people more based on where they live, their health history and their age, under the new Idaho rules. Insurers can cap their own costs at \$1 million a year per individual, and can charge customers separate out-of-pocket maximums for different services. In other words, a customer could have a \$7,000 out-of-pocket annual maximum for prescription drugs, another for doctor visits and another for hospitalization or mental health care.

Insurers offering such plans in Idaho still would have to offer policies that comply with the federal health care law for those who want them, Cameron said.

The guidelines raised concerns for some organizations. Lupe Wissel, AARP's Idaho director, said in a statement that allowing insurance carriers to charge older customers as much as five times more than others for premiums amounts to an age tax.

And Mistie Tolman, Idaho legislative director of Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest and Hawaii, called the new guidelines "a direct attack on women of all ages."

"The move has been considered 'legally dubious' and follows a pattern in the state by elected officials who introduce policies that are harmful and unconstitutional and necessitate costly legal battles," she said in a statement.

Whether the state can legally follow through on its proposal is an open question.

Robert Laszewski, a health policy consultant, doesn't think Idaho's approach can stand up in court, even if federal oversight agencies decide to let it move forward. The Affordable Care Act is the law of the land, he said, and has been upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court.

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"They might even get a federal waiver, but the problem is the state's going to get taken to court by Obamacare advocates. The Trump administration can look the other way, but courts can't look the other way," Laszewski said. "The bottom line is federal law pre-empts state law ... state standards can only apply when they are more demanding than the federal standards."

The risk for insurers also could be high, according to some of the more than 60 pages of emails, draft executive orders and other documents from the Idaho Department of Insurance that were obtained by the AP through a public records request.

In one email, Cameron said Idaho will not penalize carriers for offering plans that don't comply with federal law, but the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services can penalize insurance providers as much as \$100 per insured, per day.

"The only other penalty is the feds could declare that we (Idaho DOI) are not enforcing the individual market requirements and therefore attempt to take away our regulatory authority on the individual market," Cameron wrote. "Of course we would strongly fight that in court."

The documents show Cameron is preparing for just such a fight. He said his department is working with "a myriad of attorneys to put us in the most defensible position."

Cameron told the AP on Tuesday he is hopeful the agencies in President Donald Trump's administration will not be sticklers for rules that Trump is working to overturn, saying Idaho's approach is careful, creative and innovative.

"I'm not even afraid if it needs to be litigated, though that's not my preferred course," Cameron said. "The real question is, when does the federal agency act — if they act at all."

A girl, a stranger, and a quest for justice in China

By ERIKA KINETZ, Associated Press

XIANGYANG, China (AP) — The young woman, new to the grind of Chinese factory life, knew the man who called himself Kalen only by the photo on his chat profile. It showed him with a pressed smile holding a paper cup in a swank skyscraper somewhere late at night.

Yu Chunyan and her friends didn't know what to make of him. Some thought his eyes were shifty. Others said he looked handsome in a heroic sort of way.

Yu was among the doubters. The daughter of factory workers, Yu paid her way through college by working in factories herself. She and thousands of other students had toiled through the summer of 2016 assembling iPhones at a supplier for Apple Inc., but they hadn't been paid their full wages.

Kalen was offering to help — and asking nothing in return.

This struck Yu as suspicious. If there was one thing she had learned in her 23 years it was this: "There's no free lunch."

Disputes like these often don't go well for workers in China. But over the years, suicides and sweatshop scandals have pushed some companies, like Apple, to reconsider their approach to workplace fairness.

Today, a growing number of brands, including Apple, Nike Inc., Gap Inc., Levi Strauss & Co., and the H&M Group prioritize transparency and take public responsibility for conditions throughout their global supply chains. Labor rights groups like the one Kalen worked for, China Labor Watch, can play a useful watchdog role for these companies, by helping them understand what's really going on at their suppliers.

But not everyone has embraced this new approach.

When China Labor Watch confronted Ivanka Trump's brand with charges of labor abuses at its Chinese suppliers, her company refused to engage. It made no public effort to investigate the allegations: forced overtime, pay as low as \$1 an hour, and crude verbal and physical abuse — including one incident in which a man was hit in the head with the sharp end of a high-heeled shoe.

Ivanka Trump, who still owns but no longer closely manages her namesake brand, stayed silent. Neither she nor her brand would comment for this story.

Unlike Apple, her brand doesn't publish the identities of its manufacturers. In fact, its supply chains have only grown more opaque since the first daughter took on her White House role.

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But as the summer of 2016 was ending, Yu Chunyan had no idea she was about to get an education in geopolitics and corporate social responsibility. She wanted one thing only: her wages. And she saw one way to get them: The stranger with the odd English name.

Kalen and China Labor Watch would link Yu not just to Apple, but ultimately, to the daughter of the President of the United States. Their intersecting stories highlight the contrasting approaches Apple and Ivanka Trump's brand have taken to workplace fairness — and the impact those decisions have had on the ground in China.

It would take Yu more than a year to discover who Kalen really was.

NO HELP CAME

When Yu was still a baby, her parents went to work at a factory in one of the southern boomtowns of Guangdong province. As a child, entire years passed without a visit from her mother or father.

This was an ordinary enough fate in China, and Yu grew up bouncing between her grandparents' homes in central China's Henan province.

The first extraordinary thing that happened to Yu was her high school entrance exam. She aced it, despite her middling grades, scoring even higher than the known overachievers in class.

The shock of her accomplishment gave Yu a soaring sense of her own potential. She raced to tell her mother.

"Oh," was her mother's stony response.

Yu's test score opened the possibility, unsettling to her parents, that she would not marry young, produce grandchildren and start earning money for the family.

Her parents regarded aspiration warily: Excellence would only lead to inflated expectations. Just the sort of thing, her parents feared, that could crush a person. Better to remain where you are, bound by a certain, riskless horizon.

Yu did not agree. "As long as I want something, I will get it," she decided.

Her parents let her stay in school, but if Yu wanted to go to college, she would have to pay her own way.

And so she did. She enrolled in a college in Henan province. Ultimately, she wanted to do something creative, like design; in the meantime factory jobs weren't a bad way to make money.

In July 2016, Yu took her place on the assembly line at Jabil Inc.'s Green Point factory in Wuxi, a city near Shanghai. She spent her 12-hour shift snapping the back cover of the iPhone 7 into a mold and passing it down the line.

"It seems simple," Yu said. "But if you work the whole day doing this your hands will be really tired. Normally, it's a job for a man."

Her group's production quota kept going up, climbing from 2,000 to 50,000 units a day, Yu said. She got dizzy. Her hands hurt. She thought: "When will it be over?"

In August 2016, she quit, ignoring admonitions that her pay would be docked 500 yuan (\$79, at today's rates) for leaving early.

Yu made the 12-hour train trip back to school in Henan and on Sept. 10, her final paycheck hit her bank account. It was an ugly surprise. She was 1,100 yuan short of the 4,930 yuan she expected. Her salary was supposed to cover her tuition. Now it didn't.

"I was furious," she said. "I thought that no matter what I would get my money back."

She called the factory and the labor broker who had gotten her the job only to be informed of a range of surprising fees, some legitimate, others not.

Yu called the labor union at Green Point for help. "Useless," she said. She called the local labor bureau, but no one picked up.

On Chinese social media, Yu found a chorus of despair as other students — the children of farmers, factory and construction workers — vented about being stiffed on WeChat, QQ and Weibo.

"Everyone had an attitude like, 'Well, it has nothing to do with me,'" said Zhuang Huaqian, an electrical engineering student at Hunan University of Technology, who spent the summer assembling iPhones in a

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moon suit of dust-free clothing.

The head of one of the labor brokers in the dispute, Ding Yan, said his company had done nothing wrong. "Wages are our bottom line. We will never underpay them," he said. "I wouldn't risk this brand."

Frustrated, the students took their case to the press. A few articles appeared detailing their complaints, but Yu and another student said postings began to disappear. Were they being censored, they wondered?

The local government published an article on an official Weibo account that said authorities acted swiftly and more than 2,100 students had been repaid. The post included complaint hotlines workers could call.

Chen Jianbin, head of Wuxi's labor security supervision unit, said his team had to sort through verbal contracts, informal intermediaries and fake complaints apparently lodged by people paid to smear competing labor agencies.

"We were trying our best to help," said Chen. "Those students' lives were not easy."

But many students hadn't gotten their money back.

Beneath their fury was growing desperation. Every lever of redress they had tried failed them. They had appealed for help to forces they thought they could believe in — society, the government — but no help came.

'THE WORLD IS FULL OF GOOD PEOPLE'

There was, however, one guy, who did offer help. He called himself Kalen.

Kalen had worked in a phone factory himself, 13 years earlier, polishing cheap landline phones for a Chinese brand at a factory in Shenzhen. Back then, he didn't realize he was being underpaid until he wandered into the office of a local labor rights group one day and learned that he wasn't earning the legal minimum wage.

That knowledge electrified him. He devoured books about labor rights in the group's reading room as he prepared his case. Two months later, he won 3,000 yuan in back pay through a local arbitration panel.

Kalen wondered how many other workers out there were like him, ignorant of their rights. He quit his factory job and dedicated himself to teaching workers how to use China's laws to protect themselves.

Kalen brought his evidence-based approach to China Labor Watch, a group many of the students had never heard of before. He told them about the group's past work with Apple suppliers and taught them how to calculate what they were owed. He admonished them to be honest as he gathered details about working hours and pay from over 200 workers.

"Seek truth from facts," he wrote them on QQ.

In September, China Labor Watch asked Apple to intervene. The company sent a local team to investigate, reporting that 2,501 students had received back wages.

But many said they still hadn't been fully paid.

When Kalen asked for a volunteer to write a letter to Apple, Yu was torn: Could she get kicked out of school for speaking out?

"It was so hard for me to make this money," she said. "As long as there was a little bit of hope left I wanted to try." She stayed up past midnight writing down everything that had happened.

On Sept. 28, Li emailed Yu's letter to Apple.

Five days later, Apple wrote back: It had done further investigation and would ensure workers got paid for their day of training and extra work during meal breaks.

"Jabil invested hundreds of hours of staff time to contact approximately 17,000 employees," Eric Austermann, Jabil's vice-president of social and environmental responsibility wrote in an email to AP. "Although often lacking an email address, phone number, or other standard contact information, Jabil located all but about 5 percent of these employees, all of whom have been paid in full."

The workers received over 2.7 million yuan (\$426,000, at today's rates), according to Jabil Green Point and an October 2017 email from Apple to China Labor Watch.

Apple declined to the comment on the case.

The students' payments came in a few hundred or thousand yuan at a time. This was money for school,

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for food, a way to stay out of debt. By the end of October, Yu had gotten back everything she was owed. She was impressed. She amended the letter she had written for Kalen, turning it into a testimonial and a statement of personal intent. China Labor Watch posted it on its website.

"Due to this experience, I am confident that the world is full of good people, people who make selfless contributions," Yu wrote. "I wish to join a public interest organization. I wish to help others."

But China was changing. Hundreds of human rights lawyers and activists had been swept up in a crack-down against perceived threats to the ruling Communist Party. Those with foreign ties, like China Labor Watch, were viewed with particular suspicion.

Yu had yet to grasp the perils of her growing idealism.

IT COULD HAVE BEEN ME

After Chinese New Year, Yu moved to Shanghai, a city she had only seen in pictures, to take a job at an interior design company. In March 2017, five months after she'd received her back pay from the factory, Yu reconnected with Kalen on WeChat.

Kalen told her China Labor Watch might need people to work undercover.

China Labor Watch was closing in on factories that made Ivanka Trump merchandise, including Ganzhou Huajian International Shoe City Co.

But the thought of returning to the grind of factory life was more than she could stomach.

"I needed to push myself forward," she said. She wanted to learn English, dress better, lose weight.

China Labor Watch ultimately sent two men to work undercover. The group obtained a video of a manager berating a worker for apparently arranging shoes in the wrong order.

"If I see them f---ing messed up again," the manager yells, "I'll beat you right here." Another worker was left with blood dripping from his head after a manager hit him with the sharp end of a high heeled shoe, according to three eyewitnesses who spoke to the AP.

The Huajian Group, which runs the factory in Ganzhou, denied all the allegations as "completely not true to the facts, taken out of context, exaggerated." In April, China Labor Watch laid out its initial findings in a letter to Ivanka Trump at the White House.

She did not respond.

Over the years, Samsung Electronics Co. Ltd., Gap Inc., Target Corp., Wal-Mart Stores Inc. and other companies took China Labor Watch seriously enough to respond to criticisms or meet Li in person, according to emails and meeting notes reviewed by AP. Walt Disney Co. severed its relationship with at least one supplier after China Labor Watch exposed poor working conditions.

"We did an investigation on Apple because Apple is a big American company," Li said. "If Apple changes, the other companies will follow. Now Ivanka is the most famous person among all these companies. If she can change, the other companies will too."

But that plan backfired.

At the end of May, three China Labor Watch investigators were arrested, accused of illegally using secret cameras and listening devices.

One of them was investigator Hua Haifeng. Police had warned Hua to drop the Huajian investigation, but he pushed ahead anyway, Li said.

A wiry man not easily moved to alarm, Hua seemed to accept fear as the cost of his decision to live his life as an expression of his values.

In more than a decade working on labor rights in China, Hua had helped thousands of workers get back money they were owed, all the while half-wondering when he'd be forced to stop.

Now that he had, Hua, 36, was cut off from his wife and two young children.

Inside the Ganzhou City Detention Center, Hua shared a toothbrush with strangers. Locked in a cell so crowded there weren't enough wooden boards to sleep on, Hua stretched out at night on a concrete floor next to a bucket that served as the toilet for around 20 men. The men added water and soap, hoping the bubbles might somehow take the stench out of human waste. It didn't work.

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It was the first time in China Labor Watch's 17-year history that its investigators had been arrested. Police raided the group's Shenzhen office and carried away computers and documents, Li said.

From his office in New York, Li worked frantically to get the men out of jail. He was convinced the shift in fortune was due to the target of their inquiry: a brand owned by the daughter of the U.S. president. But he had no proof.

Ivanka Trump — and her brand — said nothing about the arrests.

WHERE IS KALEN?

Days after the arrest, Yu Chunyan took a new job at a design company in Shanghai, but something lingered from her experience at the Green Point factory. "I'd prefer work that can help more people," she said.

She got a friend request from China Labor Watch's Li Qiang. She messaged Kalen to check Li out.

Kalen never replied. She wondered what had happened to him.

On June 5, the U.S. State Department called for the immediate release of the three China Labor Watch investigators.

China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs responded that other nations "have no right to interfere with our judicial sovereignty." State-owned media reported that the trio had tried to steal trade secrets and sell them overseas.

Li Qiang wrote to Ivanka Trump at the White House on June 6, describing what he called "extreme working conditions" in her supply chain. "Your words and deeds can make a difference in these workers' lives," he wrote.

He got no reply.

Her brand has called its supply chain integrity "a top priority," but also maintains that its suppliers are overseen by licensees — companies it contracts with to make tons of Ivanka Trump handbags, shoes and clothes.

The brand said its shoes had not been produced at the Huajian factory since March, though China Labor Watch obtained an April production schedule for nearly 1,000 pairs of Ivanka Trump shoes due in May.

In late June, after 30 days in jail, the three China Labor Watch investigators were released on bail. Hua carried his son in his arms as he walked out of a police station in Ganzhou.

Hua declined to be interviewed for this story. His lawyer said police ordered him not to speak with the media. His bail conditions dictated that he must check in weekly with police and cannot travel without permission. That, plus the cloud of criminal suspicion that clung to him in his small hometown, made it hard to get a job.

In July, Hua asked police for permission to take a family vacation in the Wudang mountains, three hours away. After articles came out in the foreign press quoting Hua, half a dozen plainclothes policemen appeared at a restaurant where Hua was having dinner with his family and tapped him on the shoulder. The next morning they escorted him home, leaving his wife, Deng Guilian, to wander through Taoist temples alone with the kids.

With her husband out of work, Deng got a job selling drinks and snacks at a local karaoke parlor from 6 p.m. until 2 a.m. After her shift, she heads to a nearby dormitory where she and a female co-worker share a bed with a Snoopy headboard.

She gets three days off a month to see her four-year-old son, Bo Bo, and seven-year-old daughter, Chen Chen.

"They seem accustomed to not having their mom," Deng said, flashing an uneasy smile.

Each Monday morning after dropping his kids at school, Hua makes the short drive past weedy lots and a factory spewing thick white smoke to check in with the local police in Nanzhang County.

At first they lectured him: Change careers. Don't speak out. Live a normal life. Now, he usually just signs his name, his wife said, but it is clear that missteps can quickly draw the wrath of local authorities.

Police in Nanzhang County, Ganzhou city and Jiangxi province did not respond to requests for comment. In October, Li Qiang again wrote to Ivanka Trump and her brand.

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He said he got no response.

Ivanka Trump's actions show "that she does not care about these workers who are making her products, and is only concerned with making profits," Li said in an email. "As a public figure, she has the ability and resources to not only work on labor conditions at her own brand's factories, but also to help improve labor conditions of the global supply chain as a whole. However, she did not use her influence to do these things."

AN ORDINARY PERSON

Shortly after 6 p.m. on an October evening, Yu Chunyan left her office and walked through Shanghai's former French Concession, the wealthy heart of China's most prosperous city. She passed rows of thick plane trees, black against a darkening sky, and stepped into a discreet tea house.

Yu slid open the wooden door of a private room and peeked inside with a wide, nervous smile at the AP journalists she had agreed to meet. A chunky, colorless sweater hung off her body and her stocking feet poked out of white sandals despite the cold.

Yu slipped off her shoes and took a seat at the sunken table, doing her best to avoid the list of fancy teas glowing from a scrollable iPad menu. She began to talk about Kalen, and pulled out her phone to flip to their exchanges on WeChat.

There, in his tiny profile photo, was a familiar face.

"Do you know him?" she asked, surprised.

AP had been writing about him for months.

Kalen was Hua Haifeng.

Yu had no idea that her Kalen was the same Hua Haifeng who had been arrested while investigating Ivanka Trump suppliers. She listened, still and silent, to news of interrogations and surveillance, his son's sudden nightmares, the jail and the bucket of urine.

Her eyes welled. Elegant cakes lay untouched in front of her.

An hour later, she sent a WeChat message to Kalen.

"Do you have to take risks to work in your industry?" she asked.

Risks depend on politics, he wrote her, and the conditions of the country you live in. "From the beginning, I expected something like this could happen," he told her. "So it's not about bad luck. It was going to happen sooner or later."

"If you had another chance, would you do the same thing?" she asked.

"Yes," he answered. Hua told Yu that he had to live a life that embodied his values. He tried to be encouraging. "I am not saying that everyone has to pay that high a price."

But Yu had a sense that Hua had run up against forces neither of them could fully grasp, much less defeat. In her mind, she was recalibrating the risks of idealism.

"I wouldn't be able to do it," Yu said.

In late November, she left Shanghai to go back and live with her parents.

"I want to be an ordinary person," she said. "I don't want to get involved with controversial things."

Associated Press reporter Garance Burke in San Francisco and researchers Fu Ting and Chen Si in Shanghai contributed to this report.

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Grumpy Cat snatches lump of cash in California court

SANTA ANA, Calif. (AP) — It still won't make her smile, but Grumpy Cat has won some scratch.

A California jury gave the furry frown queen more than \$700,000 this week in a federal lawsuit over the use of her identity.

According to documents obtained by The Washington Post, owner Tabatha Bundesen of Morristown, Arizona, won the lawsuit first filed three years ago against the Grenade beverage company.

She signed on for the cat to endorse a "Grumpy Cat Grumpuccino," but the company subsequently used

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the cat's image to help sell other products, which an eight-person jury on Monday found was unauthorized. Grumpy Cat, whose dwarfism and underbite give her the permanent frown she's famous for, became an online phenomenon-turned-merchandising-machine after Bundesen first posted pictures of her in 2012.

Wall Street wobble, weak dollar pull Asian shares lower

By ELAINE KURTENBACH, AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares are mostly lower after stocks wobbled on Wall Street. A dip in the dollar's value against other currencies hit regional exporters' shares, as did talk of a more nationalist U.S. trade policy by Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross. The dollar sagged against other currencies after Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the currency's decline is good for U.S. exporters, suggesting he isn't likely to try to stop its slide.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 sank 0.9 percent to 23,723.60 and the Shanghai Composite index lost 0.3 percent to 3,548.93. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 0.1 percent to 32,916.51. South Korea's Kospi surged 0.9 percent to 2,559.86 while the S&P/ ASX 200 in Australia fell 0.2 percent to 6,042.60. Shares rose in Taiwan and Thailand but fell in Singapore and Indonesia.

DAVOS FACTOR: Mnuchin and Ross were at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. A weaker dollar can help exports from the U.S., but it take a toll on consumers and on smaller, more domestic companies by driving up costs of imported components. It's not good news for Asian exporters. Ross said the U.S. is fighting back against countries that have taken advantage of trade deals in the past. "Trade wars are fought every single day," he said. "Unfortunately, every single day there are various parties trying to violate the rules, and trying to take unfair advantage of things ... the difference is that U.S. troops are now coming to the ramparts."

ANALYST'S VIEWPOINT: "The overnight focus had all been on the U.S. dollar with another jab sending the currency weaker against major currencies," Jingyi Pan of IG said in a commentary. "Meanwhile, concern over trade and protectionism is currently the new flavor of the month, adding a tinge of cautiousness in the latest equity surge."

WALL STREET: Stocks got off to a strong start, but technology companies took heavier losses as the day wore on, led by chipmakers after Texas Instruments gave a disappointing forecast for the current quarter. Apple also fell. The Standard & Poor's 500 index lost 0.1 percent to 2,837.54. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 0.2 percent to 26,252.12 after seesawing throughout the day. The Nasdaq composite fell 0.6 percent to 7,415.06 while the Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks skidded 0.7 percent, to 1,599.61.

CURRENCIES: The dollar dropped to 109.14 yen from 109.22 yen late Wednesday. The euro advanced to \$1.2421 from \$1.2411. The ICE US dollar index fell almost 10 percent in 2017 and is down 3 percent so far this year.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude rose 53 cents to \$66.14 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It gained \$1.14, or 1.8 percent, to \$65.61 a barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, gained 41 cents to \$70.94 per barrel. It added 57 cents to \$70.53 a barrel in London.

AP Markets Writer Marley Jay contributed to this story from New York and AP reporters Jamey Keaten and Pan Pylas contributed to this story from Davos, Switzerland.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 25, the 25th day of 2018. There are 340 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 25, 1858, Britain's Princess Victoria, the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, married Crown Prince Frederick William, the future German Emperor and King of Prussia, at St. James's Palace. (The ceremony's tradition-setting music, personally selected by the Princess Royal, included the "Bridal Chorus" from Richard Wagner's "Lohengrin" and the "Wedding March" by Felix Mendelssohn.)

On this date:

In 1533, England's King Henry VIII secretly married his second wife, Anne Boleyn, who later gave birth to Elizabeth I.

In 1890, reporter Nellie Bly (Elizabeth Cochrane) of the New York World completed a round-the-world journey in 72 days, 6 hours and 11 minutes. The United Mine Workers of America was founded in Columbus, Ohio.

In 1915, America's first official transcontinental telephone call took place as Alexander Graham Bell, who was in New York, spoke to his former assistant, Thomas Watson, who was in San Francisco, over a line set up by American Telephone & Telegraph.

In 1924, the first Winter Olympic Games opened in Chamonix (shah-moh-NEE'), France.

In 1945, the World War II Battle of the Bulge ended as German forces were pushed back to their original positions. Grand Rapids, Michigan, became the first community to add fluoride to its public water supply.

In 1955, the Soviet Union formally ended its state of war with Germany.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy held the first presidential news conference to be carried live on radio and television.

In 1971, Charles Manson and three women followers were convicted in Los Angeles of murder and conspiracy in the 1969 slayings of seven people, including actress Sharon Tate. Idi Amin seized power in Uganda by ousting President Milton Obote (oh-BOH'-tay) in a military coup.

In 1981, the 52 Americans held hostage by Iran for 444 days arrived in the United States.

In 1990, an Avianca Boeing 707 ran out of fuel and crashed in Cove Neck, Long Island, New York; 73 of the 158 people aboard were killed. Actress Ava Gardner died in London at age 67.

In 1993, a gunman shot and killed two CIA employees outside agency headquarters in Virginia (Pakistani national Mir Aimal Kansi was later tried and convicted of the shootings, and executed). Sears announced that it would no longer publish its famous century-old catalog.

In 1998, Pope John Paul II ended his historic journey to Cuba.

Ten years ago: President George W. Bush urged Congress to quickly pass an economic stimulus package void of extraneous spending, saying only quick action would kick-start the sputtering economy. Democrat Dennis Kucinich (koo-SIH'-nich) abandoned his presidential bid to focus on re-election to Congress.

Five years ago: The U.S. Department of Education declared that students with disabilities had to be given a fair shot to play on a traditional sports team or have their own leagues. Thousands of anti-abortion demonstrators marched through Washington to the steps of the U.S. Supreme Court to protest the landmark decision that legalized abortion. A prison riot in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, claimed 58 lives, nearly all of them inmates.

One year ago: President Donald Trump moved aggressively to tighten the nation's immigration controls, signing executive actions to jumpstart construction of his promised U.S.-Mexico border wall and cut federal grants for immigrant-protecting "sanctuary cities." The Dow Jones industrial average closed above 20,000 points for the first time, ending the day at 20,068, two months after the index crossed 19,000 points. Death claimed actress Mary Tyler Moore at age 80 and actor John Hurt at age 77.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Claude Gray is 86. Actress Leigh Taylor-Young is 73. Actress Jenifer (cq) Lewis is 61. Country musician Mike Burch (River Road) is 52. Rhythm-and-blues singer Kina is 49. Actress

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China Kantner is 47. Actress Ana Ortiz is 47. Drummer Joe Sirois (sih-ROYS') (Mighty Mighty Bosstones) is 46. Musician Matt Odmark (OHD'-mark) (Jars of Clay) is 44. Actress Mia Kirshner is 43. Actress Christine Lakin is 39. Rhythm-and-blues singer Alicia (ah-LEE'-shuh) Keys is 37. Actor Michael Trevino is 33. Pop musician Calum Hood (5 Seconds to Summer) is 22. Actress Olivia Edward is 11.

Thought for Today: "Love must be learned, and learned again and again; there is no end to it. Hate needs no instruction, but wants only to be provoked." — Katherine Anne Porter, American author (1894-1980).

Answer: When it is full