

Groton Daily Independent

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“Let us be grateful to people who make us happy, they are the charming gardeners who make our souls blossom.”

-Marcel Proust

Chicken Soup
for the Soul.

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Open: Recycling Trailer in Groton
The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.



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Westby's 30th Anniversary
Ron and Lori Westby will celebrate their 30th wedding anniversary on Monday, July 16th, 2018. Greetings may be sent to 1103 N 2nd St Groton, SD 57445. No gifts please.

RAISING TEACHER PAY

Two years after SD bumped up salaries, officials want to maintain momentum

By T.D. Griffith

South Dakota no longer has the lowest-paid teachers in the nation, but education officials caution that lawmakers must maintain an aggressive approach to funding if that status is to continue.

According to 2018 rankings and estimates by the National Education Association, South Dakota had the highest percentage increase in average teacher salaries between 2015 and 2017, propelling the state from 51st in the country to 48th. That jump was funded by a half-cent sales tax, enacted by the Legislature in 2016, that was dedicated to enhancing teacher pay.

While South Dakota's average teacher salary rose from \$42,025 to \$46,979 during the two-year period, pushing it ahead of West Virginia, Oklahoma and Mississippi, on average the state's teachers are still compensated well below those in surrounding states, according to the NEA. Minnesota ranked 20th with an average salary of \$57,346; North Dakota ranked 27th, and Nebraska came in 30th, the NEA report stated.

School district administrators say the salary hikes have helped eased some shortages they were experiencing. But finding teachers for certain subjects remains a challenge and smaller districts still wrestle with hard-to-fill openings.

"If I had a crystal ball it would show progress, but there are challenges remaining," said Mary McCorkle, a 34-year former classroom teacher who has served as president of the South Dakota Education Association for the past four years. "The half-cent sales tax moved us from 51st to 48th and that's a significant increase. Is it where we stop? No."

The question of how the state can maintain momentum and further increase salaries is being studied by the Teacher Compensation Review Board set up by the Legislature.

Whether legislators can find additional state monies to further amp up teacher salaries remains to be seen, and further sales tax increases may be unpalatable to lawmakers who must answer to their constituents.

McCorkle said her organization had been meeting with the Teacher Compensation Review Board as recently as mid-June, to analyze data and eventually make recommendations to the next legislative session regarding school funding.

"We'll make recommendations to the Legislature and the new governor to see if we hold the course or if we need to make tweaks or whatever we need to do to remain competitive," she said. "Three years in, we're not done. We have to continue to focus on education in South Dakota and ensure that our schools have the resources they need and can hire teachers for the students of this state."

View from the top

The Associated School Boards of South Dakota, a nonprofit organization representing more than 850 local school board members, the school districts they govern and the students they serve, maintains a listing of all teacher vacancies statewide. Since South Dakota raised teacher pay two years ago, those listings have dwindled.

"As of May, we were much lower in terms of the number of postings compared with two years ago," said ASBSD Executive Director Wade Pogany. "I conclude that the teacher pay hike has lessened the number of openings because we are retaining more teachers now."

"The early data suggests some retention of teachers, particularly those eligible for retirement, have stayed," he added. "We don't know for how long, but we think it slowed the retirement process a little bit."

Pogany credits the governor and Legislature for implementing the new half-cent sales tax, the state's first increase since 1969, and dedicating its proceeds to improve teacher pay. But, he's quick to note that South Dakota still has work to do to remain competitive in the future.

"For them to say, in a conservative state like ours, that there is a teacher salary problem, and we'll institute a tax to increase salaries, was big," he said. "You never want to diminish that and say it wasn't

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enough. But, we need to keep moving the needle to become competitive. We raised the boat, but we're still last in the region."

Despite the increase in teacher pay, Pogany said many school districts in the state continue to battle funding challenges in a world where nothing, it seems, ever gets cheaper.

"The rural nature of the state and small schools, many with declining enrollment, means there are a lot of pressures when those factors are in place" he said. "They're struggling. Unless you have more kids, you scramble to get as many tax dollars as you can

State perspective

Tony Venhuizen, chief of staff to Gov. Dennis Daugaard, was intimately involved with the Governor's Blue Ribbon Task Force on Education, a group that examined the salary issue and recommended increases. He remains involved with the 22-member review board and said he recognizes that South Dakota must maintain its momentum when it comes to school funding.

"There's no doubt that pay increases have significantly changed our ability to attract teachers, but there is always progress to be made," Venhuizen said. "Our teacher workforce is in much better shape than it was three years ago, in terms of what we project for vacancies and new teachers coming in. I think it's clear that the salary increase has improved that area.

"South Dakota has been in last place in teacher pay for more than 30 years," he added. "The last time we weren't in last place was 1985. To some, 48th might sound low, but when you've been in dead last for more than three decades it's nice to be headed in the right direction."

Venhuizen and McCorkle agree that many rural school districts in South Dakota continue to have difficulty attracting teachers, particularly in the studies of mathematics and science. Some of those rural districts have even boosted teacher pay beyond the average increase of 11.8 percent to make those jobs more attractive, they noted.

"Anecdotally it's better, but some areas such as special education, mathematics and languages arts -- specialized areas -- have greater challenges in attracting teachers," McCorkle said. "It depends on where the school district is. Not everyone wants to be in a small community and some districts have an easier time attracting applicants versus more rural districts."

McCorkle also said a trend toward fewer retirements combined with increased number of graduates in education from South Dakota universities also had reduced widespread teacher shortages that were compounded by low pay.

Venhuizen said that he believed the state's commitment to improving teacher pay was critical on two fronts.

"The first was simple economics -- supply and demand," he explained. "If we wanted to increase demand, we had to raise salaries. It's a free market. The second was psychological. It was important for South Dakota to send the message that we value education, and we value teaching as a profession."

On the front lines

By and large, school district superintendents throughout South Dakota -- those charged with filling teacher vacancies -- applaud Gov. Daugaard and state legislators for directly addressing teacher pay which they say has eased shortages and made their districts more attractive to applicants.

"It was an important step," said West Central Superintendent Brad Berens. "Not a final step, but an important step."

Berens, who formerly served as assistant superintendent for Rapid City Public Schools before moving to Hartford a year ago, said his district now has a "nice pool of candidates" for its open teaching positions.

"Realizing that the pay gap was significant, increases in average teacher salaries meant that we were able to bring some energy to the teachers and to the profession," he said. "We're now able to better compete with surrounding states for teachers."

With 2,400 students and one of the fastest growing communities in the state, Spearfish Superintendent Kirk Easton agreed with Berens' assessment. He said the beauty of the Black Hills had always helped western South Dakota schools attract teachers and new residents.

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"We have been very fortunate in Spearfish the two years I have been here," said Easton, who previously worked for school districts in Lennox and Warner. "I would say a lot of folks want to teach and live in the Black Hills. We're also fortunate with Black Hills State University right here in the community, which means we tend to get a lot of applicants. We get 60 to 70 applicants for an elementary position, where in Warner we might have gotten 20. We have a huge pool to select from."

Easton also noted that enrollment had jumped 90 students in his first year at Spearfish, and increased another 77 students last year, resulting in bolstered aid under the state funding formula.

Meanwhile, Lead-Deadwood Superintendent Dan Leikvold, who oversees one of a handful of school districts in South Dakota not included in the state funding formula because local property tax revenues exceed the perceived need as defined by the state, said across-the-board teacher pay increases had made other districts more competitive with his district.

"When the new funding formula took place, we were in the top 10 in virtually every category for teacher pay, including new teachers, master's degrees and other categories," Leikvold said. "We gave the smallest teacher pay raise in South Dakota the first year the new funding formula went into place and Sturgis and Spearfish went past us like they were Mario Andretti. The following year we gave a 5 percent raise and it was largest pay raise for teachers in the state."

Lead-Deadwood currently pays new teachers a base salary of \$40,000 and the district's average teacher makes about \$49,000 per year, Leikvold said. Even with increased competition from other districts that are now paying teachers more, the Northern Hills superintendent said Lead-Deadwood continues to receive ample applications for all of its teacher vacancies.

"I hear all the anecdotes of teacher shortages in STEM areas and rural areas, but with the combination of high pay and our proximity to Black Hills State, as well as the draw of the Black Hills of South Dakota, we're always able to attract quality applicants," Leikvold said.

Rural challenges

Tucked in the ponderosa pines of the southern Black Hills sits South Dakota's smallest public school district, Elk Mountain. With just 14 students, three teachers, a paraprofessional and a solitary school located a couple of miles east of the Wyoming state line, district officials know the challenges of attracting qualified teachers to a rural setting.

"It's definitely a unique situation," said Superintendent Lisa Richardson, who also serves as a teacher to a small cast of students ranging from preschoolers to eighth graders. "We are so small and it's very difficult to attract teachers who can fit into this unique setting."

Beyond the pay, which averages \$43,000 per year, prospective teachers struggle with the school's small class-size and the fact the district offers no health insurance, Richardson said. Most importantly, she said it's critical that any applicant have the ability to teach multiple grades and blend with existing staff.

"It's hard to attract long-term teachers because we're out here in the country," Richardson explained. "We use our own vehicles for field trips and, because we're such a small staff, everybody really has to get along."

Despite its rural location, no cell phone service and a landline that is occasionally not working, Richardson said there are advantages to attending Elk Mountain School.

"The other teachers and I make less than other teachers, but for me it's about the ability to individualize studies for each student," she said. "Each of our students has an individualized learning plan and every member of our staff builds a relationship with every child. The neat thing, from my experience, is the close relationship the staff has with not only the students, but the families and the school board. We are all in this together and you don't see that everywhere."

This story was produced by South Dakota News Watch, a nonprofit news organization. Find more in-depth reporting at www.sdnewswatch.org.

ABOUT T.D. GRIFFITH

Tom Griffith, Deadwood, S.D., is a reporter for South Dakota News Watch. A fourth-generation South Dakotan, he has been a journalist, editor and photographer in Arizona, Montana and South Dakota. He also has written or co-authored more than 70 books and his travel features have appeared in more than 250 magazines and newspapers worldwide.

Agtegra Welcomes New Crop of Interns

(JULY 12, 2018; Aberdeen, S.D.) – Agtegra Cooperative, Aberdeen, S.D., kicked off another busy growing season by welcoming in 38 new interns at the annual Internship Kick-Off in Aberdeen.

Agtegra interns fill several vital roles for the cooperative during their internship. Agronomy interns get involved in precision agriculture, customer agriculture technologies, crop scouting, crop staging, weed identification, crop diseases and tissue sampling. Their internship is an essential blend of both classroom and hands-on learning.

“We like to put them in the classroom at the beginning of their internship to provide everyone with the same information and direction,” said Agtegra Intern Coordinator Katrina Schnabel. “Then it’s immediately to the field where they will spend the bulk of their summer with us.”

Non-agronomy interns fill roles in the Grain, Accounting, Operations, Dispatching and Information Technology divisions of Agtegra. The Agtegra internship program also includes presentations on co-op leadership, customer service skills, and value of a co-op. In addition, interns set goals for their experience, participate in a leadership develop assessment, and develop a summer project that is presented to their peers and the Agtegra leadership team in August at the end of their experience.

The following students are participating in the 2018 Agtegra Internship Program:

Alexis Esser – Redfield Agronomy
Allison Helget, Sleepy Eye, MN; Lake Area Technical Institute (LATI) – Huron Agronomy
Ashley Bertsch, Iroquois, S.D.; South Dakota State University (SDSU) – Yale
Austin Maag, Aberdeen; SDSU – Bath Agronomy
Bailey Miles, Wolsey; LATI – Admin Grain Marketing
Ben Hughes, Pierre; LATI – Kennebec Operations Intern
Blaine Rothacker, Redfield; SDSU – Redfield Crop Scout
Boston Knippling, Bonilla; LATI – Wolsey Applicator
Bradyn Wieker, Claremont; SDSU – Oakes Operations/Crop Scout
Braxton Steffen, Madison, S.D.; Mitchell Technical Institute (MTI) – Innovation Center
Casey Steffel
Cole Gerlach
Cole VanGorp, Stickney; MTI – Stickney Agronomy
Colin Geppert, Kimball; SDSU – Chamberlain Sales
Colton Hanson, Watertown; North Dakota State University (NDSU) – Bristol Crop Scout
Connor Brand, Faulkton; LATI – Faulkton Agronomy
Jacob Stinson, Corona, S.D.; LATI – Clark Aerial
Jared Houska, Chamberlain, S.D.; SDSU – Chamberlain Agronomy
Kaci Schimke, Wessington Springs; MTI – Alpena Scale/Bookkeeping
Keaton Peterson, Oakes, N.D.; Bismarck State College (BSC) – Oakes Agronomy
Kolton Haselhorst, Aberdeen; TBD – Warner Warehouse/Scouting
Landon Claeys, Huron; SDSU – Huron Crop Scout
Landon Kopecky, Aberdeen; TBD – Innovation Center Precision
Lorisa Schoenbeck, Aberdeen; Northern State University (NSU) – Admin Accounting
Lucas Hanna, Aberdeen; LATI – Faulkton Agronomy
Lucas Sternhagen, Groton; University of South Dakota (USD) – Admin IT
Mitchell Newman, NSU – Admin Accounts Payable
Molly Heinrich, Fargo; NDSU – Berlin Ag Ops/Crop Scout

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Nathan Kolda, Orient, S.D.; LATI – Miller Agronomy
Nick Christensen, Huron; LATI – Huron Aerial
Riley Gilbert, Ipswich; SDSU – Admin Seed Department
Riley Johnson, Aberdeen; SDSU – Warner Agronomy
Seth Howell, Columbia, S.D.; SDSU – Admin Plot Research
Seth Kirsch
Spencer Shaw, Brookings; SDSU – Carpenter Agronomy
Sutton Flint, Doland; LATI – Carpenter Operations
Tanner Jorgensen, Dagmar, MT; Montana State University (MSU) – Chamberlain Agronomy
Taylor Murray, Redfield; LATI – Redfield Operations
Tristin Fliehe, Brookings; SDSU – Admin Grain Marketing
Ty Whittlinger, Aberdeen; LATI – Admin Seed Department
Tyler Lebeda, Presho; TBD – Kennebec Agronomy Sales
Zach Butler, Jamestown; BSC – Eldridge Agronomy



West Nile Virus — South Dakota

July 11, 2018



Human West Nile Virus (WNV) reported to SD Department of Health (SD-DOH)

Human cases: 0

Hospitalized: 0

Deaths: 0

Counties

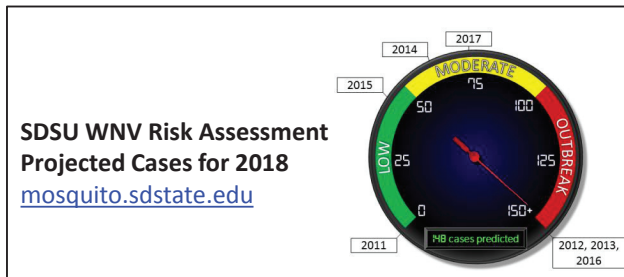
Human cases: None

Viremic blood donors: Potter, Todd

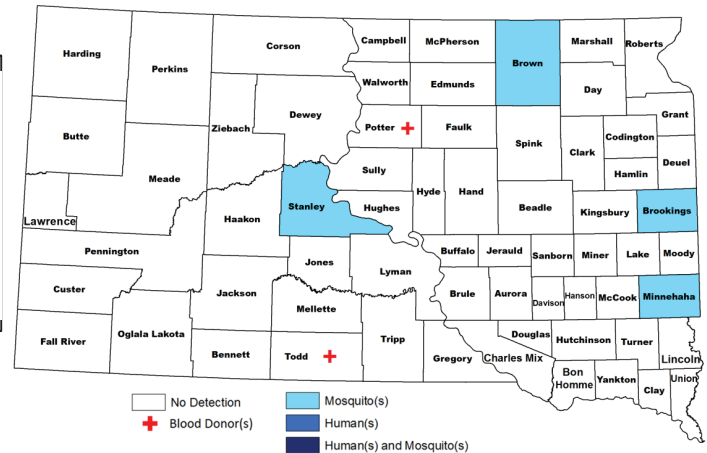
Positive mosquito detections: Brookings, Brown, Minnehaha, Stanley

What can you do to prevent WNV?

- Apply mosquito repellents to clothes and exposed skin
- Wear pants and long sleeves when outdoors
- Limit time outdoors from dusk to dawn
- Get rid of standing water, where mosquitoes can breed
- Support local mosquito control efforts



SD-DOH: Phone 800-592-1861; westnile.sd.gov
SDSU WNV risk assessment: mosquito.sdstate.edu
CDC West Nile: cdc.gov/westnile



Thune's Office Accepting Fall Internship Applications

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sen. John Thune (R-S.D.) is currently seeking college students to serve as fall interns in his office in Washington, D.C., as well as in his offices in Aberdeen, Rapid City, and Sioux Falls.

Interns in Thune's state offices will participate in constituent service and state outreach activities, while students in the Washington, D.C., office will have the opportunity to witness the legislative process, give Capitol building tours, and attend Senate votes and hearings. Both in-state and Washington, D.C., internships will allow students to work closely with constituents, hone their research and writing skills, and learn a multitude of valuable office skills.

"The opportunity to intern in a Senate office is one of the best ways to learn how our federal government works," said Thune. "Interns in my office will experience the inner workings of a Senate office firsthand, while improving their legislative knowledge and communication skills. I encourage all college students to consider applying for this rewarding experience."

Thune is chairman of the Senate Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation; and a member of the Senate Committee on Agriculture, Nutrition, and Forestry; and the Senate Committee on Finance.

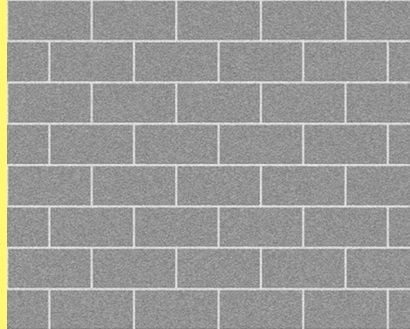
College students who are interested in interning in Thune's Washington, D.C., Aberdeen, Rapid City, or Sioux Falls offices should fill out an online application form with their resume and cover letter by August 6, 2018, at <https://bit.ly/2ukGMdO> or by searching "intern program" on thune.senate.gov. Mailed-in applications will no longer be accepted.

For more information, please call 202-224-2321.

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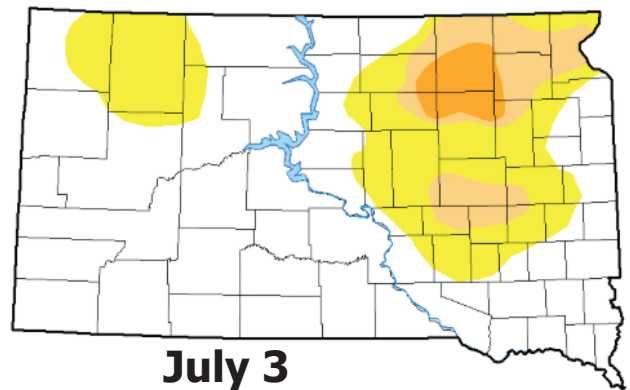
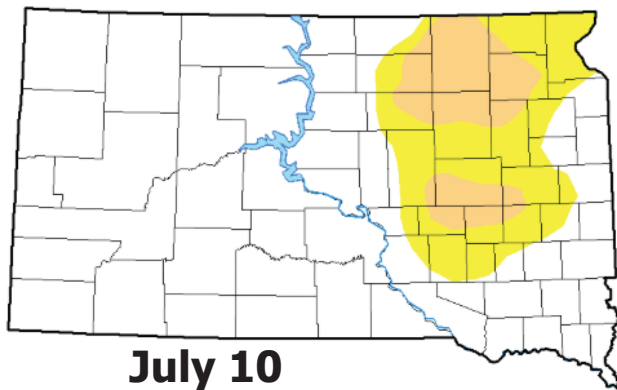
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Drought Monitor

Drought Classification

None D0 (Abnormally Dry) D1 (Moderate Drought) D2 (Severe Drought) D3 (Extreme Drought) D4 (Exceptional Drought)



An active thunderstorm pattern helped to bring ample precipitation to North Dakota, northern South Dakota, central and eastern Nebraska, and portions of western Kansas. The precipitation last week along with recent rains has allowed for improvements in the Dakotas. Severe drought was eliminated from both North and South Dakota while abnormally dry and moderate drought conditions contracted as well. All of the abnormally dry conditions were eliminated from northwest South Dakota and southwest North Dakota. Eastern Kansas remained dry and severe drought expanded through northeast Kansas and was introduced into southeast Kansas while moderate drought expanded as well. Southwest Kansas had a full category improvement to drought conditions this week as the recent wetness has helped improve drought in this part of the state. In Nebraska, the recent rains in June and early July did not impact all of the state equally and portions of southern Nebraska are starting to show lingering impacts due to dryness going back to the autumn of 2017. This area will need to be monitored closely for development in the coming weeks.

Portions of southeast Colorado improved this week in response to the recent wet pattern, but a new area of exceptional drought was introduced in eastern Colorado as conditions have been rapidly worsening in both the short and long term.

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Today in Weather History

July 13, 1964: Early morning low temperatures dropped into the lower to mid-30s across the northern half of the state. Some low temperatures include 32 degrees at Castlewood, 33 in Andover and 4 miles NW of Onida.

1895: A tornado that began in Cherry Hill, New Jersey made its way to Woodhaven, Long Island in New York. The image below is a hand-colored lantern slide in the Museum Library's Lantern Slide Collection.

1951: Rivers across eastern Kansas crest well above flood stage, causing the greatest destruction from flooding in the Midwestern United States to that time. Five-hundred-thousand people were left homeless, and 24 people died in the disaster.

1975 - Dover, DE, was deluged with 8.50 inches of rain to establish a 24 hour record for the state. (The Weather Channel)

1977 - Lightning struck a key electrical transmission line in Westchester County of southeastern New York State plunging New York City into darkness. (David Ludlum)

1980 - Afternoon highs of 108 degrees at Memphis, TN, 108 degrees at Macon, GA, and 105 degrees at Atlanta, GA, established all-time records for those three cities. The high of 110 degrees at Newington, GA, was just two degrees shy of the state record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Unseasonably cool weather prevailed across the Midwest. Ten cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Casper, WY, with a reading of 39 degrees. By way of contrast, record heat was reported in the eastern U.S., with highs of 93 degrees at Burlington, VT, and 101 degrees around Miami, FL. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - There were just three reports of severe weather across the country, and just one record high temperature reported. Thunderstorms brought much needed rains to the Tennessee Valley area, producing nine inches at Senatobia, MS. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A thunderstorm at Albany, GA, produced 1.40 inches of rain in forty minutes, along with wind gusts to 82 mph. Afternoon highs of 98 degrees at Corpus Christi, TX, 110 degrees at Tucson, AZ, and 114 degrees at Phoenix, AZ, equalled records for the date. Greenwood, MS, reported 55.65 inches of precipitation for the year, twice the amount normally received by mid July. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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BELIEVE IN**

**J
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"Believe in the Journey"

Ladies Luncheon & Program

Wednesday, July 18 at Noon

Bethesda Lutheran Church, Bristol

Silent Auction at 11:00 AM - Door Prizes

Dee Dee Raap - speaker








Advance tickets please: \$10

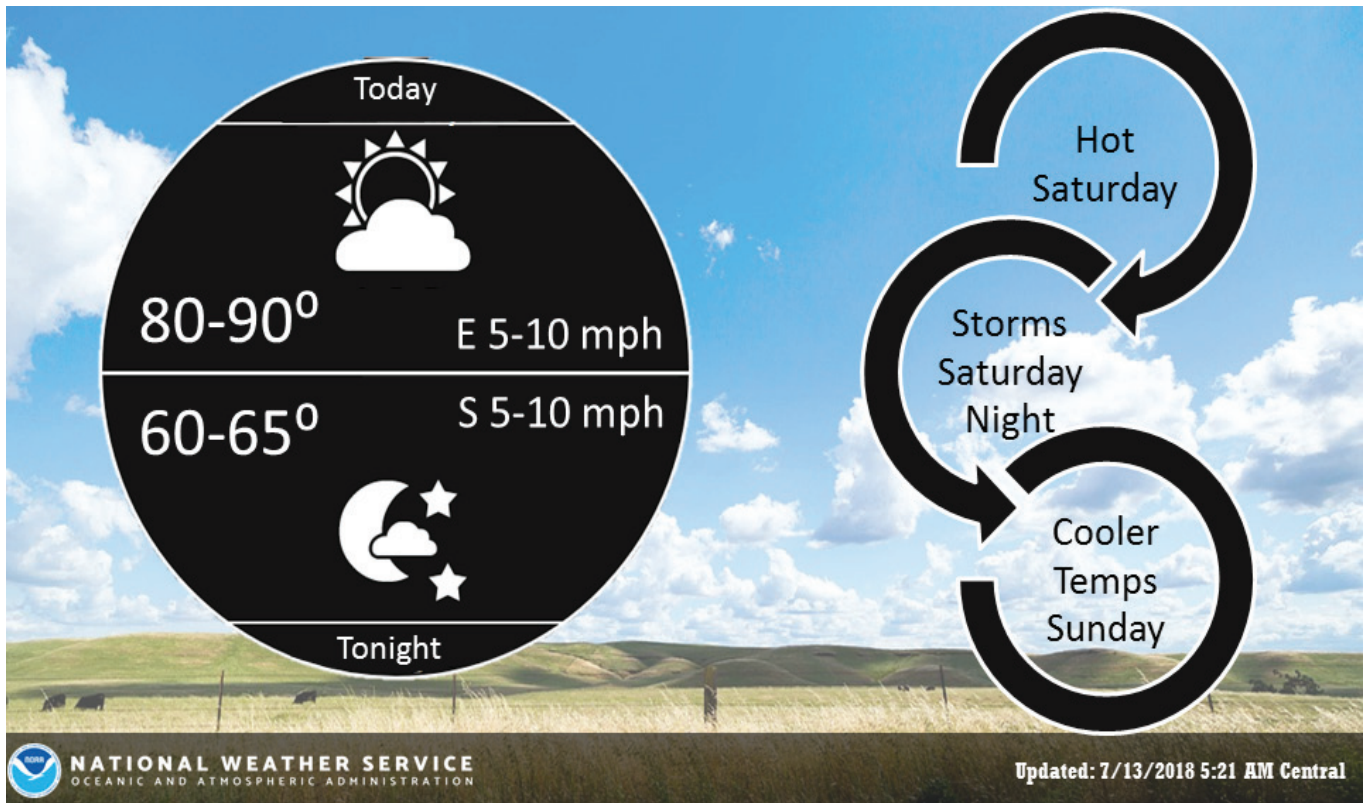
Call Kay Espeland 492-3507 or

Alice Jean Peterson 492-3351

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday	Sunday Night	Monday
						
Patched Fog then Sunny	Mostly Clear	Sunny	Mostly Clear	Chance T-storms	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny
High: 87 °F	Low: 62 °F	High: 88 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 79 °F	Low: 58 °F	High: 82 °F



The graphic features a large circular icon on the left divided into 'Today' and 'Tonight' sections. The 'Today' section shows a sun behind a cloud with a temperature range of 80-90° and wind speeds of E 5-10 mph. The 'Tonight' section shows a moon and stars with a temperature range of 60-65° and wind speeds of S 5-10 mph. To the right, a flow diagram with three circular nodes connected by arrows shows 'Hot Saturday', 'Storms Saturday Night', and 'Cooler Temps Sunday'. The background is a landscape of rolling green hills under a blue sky with white clouds.

Today
80-90° E 5-10 mph
60-65° S 5-10 mph
Tonight

Hot Saturday
Storms Saturday Night
Cooler Temps Sunday

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 7/13/2018 5:21 AM Central

Published on: 07/13/2018 at 5:24AM

High pressure will build into the area today and remain through Saturday, producing light winds, along with warm and humid conditions. There is the potential for a few isolated showers or sprinkles over east central South Dakota and west central Minnesota both early this morning and then again during the afternoon. A cold front will move through the area Saturday night and Sunday. This front will bring a chance of showers and thunderstorms, especially for areas along and to the west of the Missouri River.

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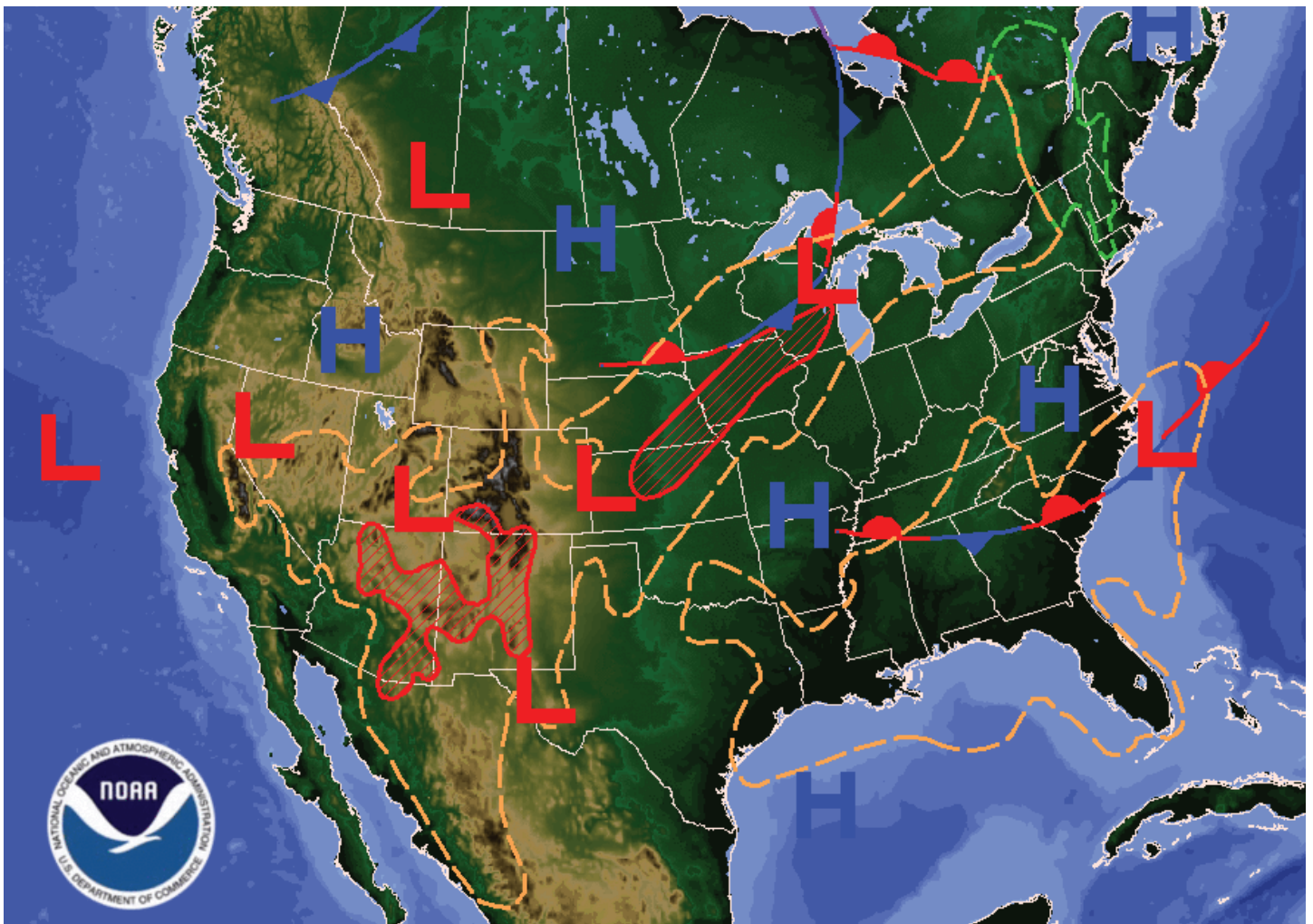
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Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 81.9 F at 3:46 PM
Heat Index: 85 at 3:40 PM
Low Outside Temp: 66.1 F at 7:39 AM
High Gust: 22.0 Mph at 6:55 AM
Precip: 0.32

Today's Info

Record High: 106° in 1936
Record Low: 44° in 1987
Average High: 84°F
Average Low: 59°F
Average Precip in July: 1.17
Precip to date in July: 2.15
Average Precip to date: 12.02
Precip Year to Date: 7.96
Sunset Tonight: 9:21 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:59 a.m.



Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Jul 13, 2018, issued 4:52 AM EDT
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by Tate with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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MORE THAN JUST WORDS

Quite often we are limited in our understanding of words that come from different cultures and times. The meanings of most words change from one generation to another and the way they are used can be quite confusing.

For example, we all have some idea of what the word "tall" means. But, if someone were to ask us how many inches it took to be considered a tall person we might all have a different answer in mind.

Consider the words in Psalm 119:105, "Your Word is a lamp for my feet and a light on my path." It would be easy to come to the conclusion that the writer is simply talking about a difficult time in life and that he had faith that God would take care of him. That's a beginning.

The word "lamp" in this passage is a symbol for life, joy and prosperity as well as guidance. So, the author wants us to know that if we follow the teachings of God's Word we will live a life that will be filled with a quality of enduring contentment and happiness. Where we are or the circumstances that surround us do not matter. But, of course, it all depends on our being obedient to God's rules. All of God's promises contain the principal of "If/Then." If we do what He asks, then we can expect His rewards.

"Light" is another interesting word. It refers to God's blessings that include joy, happiness, security and peace. John wrote: "In Him was life and that life was the light of all mankind. That light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it." God, then, is our Light!

How great our God is: In Him we "can have it all!"

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for the assurance of Your joy, happiness, security and peace that we have in You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture for Today: Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path.

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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)
- 1/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 4/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 5/4/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 5/27/2019 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)
- 12/01/2018 Olive Grove Golf Course 2018 Holiday Party

- Best Ball Golf Tourney
- SDSU Golf Tourney
- Sunflower Golf Tourney
- Santa Claus Day
- Fireman's Stag
- Tour of Homes
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News from the Associated Press

Government settles with accused Rapid City landlord

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The federal government has reached a settlement with a Rapid City apartment landlord accused of discrimination.

Amie Kelly allegedly favored a male renter over a single woman and her teenage daughter, and was accused of violating the Fair Housing Act. The case ended up in federal court when it couldn't be resolved administratively through the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development.

U.S. Attorney Ron Parsons says that under the settlement, Kelly doesn't admit to any wrongdoing but will pay the woman \$3,000 in damages.

South Dakota wheat production to be up substantially

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Wheat production in South Dakota this year is expected to be up substantially over 2017.

The Agriculture Department's latest estimates put South Dakota winter wheat production at 38 million bushels, up 83 percent from last year. Both acres and average yield are expected to be up.

Spring wheat production is projected to double, to 41.8 million bushels.

Oat production also is expected to be up in the state.

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press

Rapid City Journal, Rapid City, July 12

Governor candidates need to discuss real issue

The first shots fired in the South Dakota governor's race were duds if you work, own a farm or ranch, raise children, strive for college or technical school, seek health care or want to buy a home or rent an affordable apartment.

Rep. Kristi Noem, about to finish her fourth term in Congress after serving four years in the state Legislature, is offended that her opponent, state Sen. Billie Sutton, called her an "insider" in a digital media campaign.

In a press release sent Monday, Noem denied the allegation and counter-punched by calling Sutton a "long-time Pierre insider and card-carrying member of the Democratic establishment."

Serious stuff? Not if you live in the real world where the issues are serious.

First, Noem appears a bit out of touch when she calls a Democrat a capitol insider. The party barely registers a blip on the state's political radar screen and has left little more than a toe print on any significant legislation in recent years. Its record of futility is undeniable.

Noem, on the other hand, is a former assistant majority leader for the political party that dominates every level of government in South Dakota. There is no disputing that Republicans set policy in this state.

But who is considered the most entrenched politician is not the issue in this race. While most agree the political status quo is not particularly adept at problem-solving or innovation, the parties have made their choices for the general election. Now, the conversation needs to be about what can be done to improve South Dakota's standard of living.

An election should be a contest of ideas. Rather than argue about insider status or proclaim what won't be done if elected, the candidates need to address critical quality-of-life issues — and there are many. For example:

— Agriculture is slumping

President Trump's trade wars pose a substantial threat to farmers and ranchers already contending with

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the softest markets in years. Retaliatory tariffs and uncertainty over trade pacts like NAFTA have heightened anxiety in the agricultural industry.

If the trade wars drag on what will Noem and Sutton do to protect and nurture an industry beyond supporting the farm bill?

— Workforce shortages, low wages

For decades, state officials and lawmakers have argued that South Dakota's low cost of living allowed workers to earn less yet enjoy comparable lifestyles to those in higher-paying states.

That is no longer the case, however. Health care is expensive regardless of where you live. The cost of housing in the state's larger cities is out of reach for many if not most young families. The cost of insurance, food, cellphones, internet service, cable TV, gasoline and utility services do not vary much from state to state any longer. As a result, more young people are leaving the state to earn more money and professionals are becoming more difficult to recruit.

What can the next governor do to put more money into the pockets of the working class and rebuild a workforce that currently is not meeting the demand for jobs in the state?

— Costly secondary education

Over the years, the state has shifted more college costs to students while universities have embarked on building projects that are primarily financed by those same students.

Consequently, college enrollment continues to flat line and those who do graduate have much more debt than their parents, which means many are looking for higher wages and that often takes them out of state. The state's colleges also have the highest tuition in the region.

Will either candidate work to reduce tuition and fees and incentivize more students to stay in the state after graduation?

— Access to health care

Congress' inability or unwillingness to rein in soaring health care costs is among the biggest burdens imposed on Americans. The state, however, can work harder to expand the health-care network to better serve smaller communities while providing low-cost screening opportunities for everyone. More mental health care facilities are needed, too. The state also needs a program to recruit more doctors and retain them in a more competitive environment.

What can a governor do to make health care more available, more competitive and promote prevention?

A governor's race that starts with finger-pointing is a red flag for those who desire real solutions to real problems. Let's all insist that these two candidates get out of the political playpen and treat us like adults. Tell us what you will do to make South Dakota a better place for those who live and work here.

American News, Aberdeen, July 10 **NSU wrestler shows his character by coming out**

Coaches like to talk character.

And Justice Horn has shown true character and bravery.

Horn is a Northern State University student from Missouri.

Not only that, he is a heavyweight wrestler for the Wolves. He also is a good student with a promising future in academics and athletics.

And recently, he told his teammates, schoolmates and the thousands of readers of this newspaper that he is gay.

Profound stuff for a 20-year-old athlete.

"I was battling with stuff and had to come to terms with who I am," Horn told American News reporter Cuyler Meade. "I was getting closer to God with who I am, realizing I can't live this life a lie. I was opening up to myself that this is who I am, and I have so many things to be grateful for and blessings in my life."

Horn wanted what we all want in life.

Honest relationships built on trust. And dishonesty or a lack of truthfulness was not something Horn wanted to be a part of his life.

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This was his way of extending his hand, heart and honesty.

Scary, we imagine, but also full of relief. This was part of a young man's journey through periods of darkness into the fullness of his light.

Some will condemn him, for who he is and how open he has become. He likely will face some rejection in months ahead because he opened up.

Others will embrace him and rejoice in the bravery, strength and honesty he has shown.

Count us in that camp.

"There were nerves obviously, but what really put me over the edge to where I needed to do it is I need to live a fearless life and stop hiding," Horn said. "I need to live life. Wherever things go, they go."

His words and choice to open up about his lifestyle certainly will help others who still linger in the shadows.

Just as it did for Horn when former Missouri college football star Michael Sam became the first openly gay player to be drafted in the NFL.

Horn found strength, encouragement and acceptance in Sam's story.

We imagine Horn's story, just as Sam's did, will help other athletes who are struggling with who they are. Especially in testosterone-injected sports such as football and wrestling that have an emphasis on their physicality.

Wrestling mats and football fields are not places where fear traditionally does well.

And fear of the unknown can be explosive and unpredictable in such places when the topic turns to sexual orientation.

Horn says his Northern State teammates and coaches have been supportive of him.

We are happy to hear that. We hope those type of receptions continue on campus, in the community and through the eyes of opponents.

Horn is a regular 20-year-old who is trying to find pockets of success in athletics, academics and life. He isn't searching for special treatment, he just wants normalcy.

He sounds just like the rest of us.

The Daily Republic, Mitchell, July 9

Week in review: the best, worst

CHEERS to the grand opening of the Mitchell Indoor Aquatic Center. Drive by the pool or take a swim inside and it's hard to not be impressed with the quality of the facility that is now available in Mitchell. It was an \$8 million investment that was hotly contested for most of the last four years. But now that the project is finished, it's hard to argue that the facility isn't an asset for the community and the region. And given there are two pools, two slides, play equipment, a zipline and therapy pool, there's something for everyone who makes use of the center.

HISSES to the news that 600 defendants nationwide have been accused of more than \$2 billion in false billings to federal health care programs or for their role in prescribing more than 13 million illegal doses of opioids and other narcotics. That includes a Wagner man who was indicted for two counts of obtaining hydrocodone by fraud. A year ago, a similar federal sweep for fraud resulted in 412 defendants. In the words of the U.S. Attorney General, "in many cases, doctors, nurses and pharmacists take advantage of people suffering from drug addiction in order to line their pockets." Here's hoping authorities make it clear that won't be tolerated.

CHEERS to the community of Ethan for its work to build a new veterans memorial in the city's park. It took three years and about \$50,000 in fundraising, but it will be a permanent tribute for the small town of fewer than 400 people. These are the types of projects that are meaningful for so many residents of the community and help leave an impression upon visitors to the community.

CHEERS to the peaceful passing of power at the most recent Mitchell City Council meeting, moving Mayor Bob Everson and the new council into place to govern. We take it for granted but it is, of course, one of the tenets of democracy. There will be disagreement but as long as civility has a place in the city's government, Mitchell will be in a good place. Let's hope Mitchell leaders continue to carry Mitchell forward

and do so in a respectful, civic manner.

Rapid City sees slumping sales tax collections

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City is facing hiring delays and cutbacks on nonessential purchases amid slugging sales tax revenues and the uncertain future of online sales tax collections.

The city's Legal and Finance Committee reported Wednesday that this year's sales tax collections are at \$10.6 million, which is a less than 1 percent increase compared to last year.

Pauline Sumption, director of the city's finance department, told the Rapid City Journal that the small increase is a problem because collections are typically projected to grow by around 2 percent each year.

"There's a little bit of concern about where we're going to end up at the end of the year for cash balance in the general fund," she said. "Sales tax is down and if we continue to spend what we've budgeted (for fiscal year 2018) and if we continue to bring in only what we have projected for revenue, we'll actually be down. Reserves will be down by \$2 million of what is needed."

Sumption recently met with city department directors and Mayor Steve Allender to recommend the city delay nonessential hires and purchases.

It's also unclear how the U.S. Supreme Court decision last month to allow states to collect sales tax from online retailers might augment the city's collections, Sumption said. The state Department of Revenue hasn't indicated how much Rapid City might be able to collect from online retailers, she said.

"We have so many unknowns on how the online sales tax collection is going to impact us, the closure of several retailers," said Alderman Jason Salamun. "At the same time we're hoping for a great summer season ... but I think it's something for us to keep our eye on."

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

States with laws still on the books that would ban abortion

By The Associated Press

President Donald Trump's appointment of Judge Brett Kavanaugh to the U.S. Supreme Court has raised the prospect that a new conservative court majority might consider overturning or weakening the 1973 Roe v. Wade ruling establishing a nationwide right to abortion.

Four states — Louisiana, Mississippi, North Dakota and South Dakota — already have laws designed to prohibit most abortions if the Roe ruling were overturned.

Several other states have laws adopted before the Roe ruling that ban many abortions and that have not been removed from their statutes. It's unclear whether those laws automatically would take effect if the Roe precedent were overturned. Some state courts also have ruled that abortion rights are protected under their state's constitution.

Here's a look at some states with old abortion laws still on the books or with newer laws that could be triggered if Roe were reversed:

ALABAMA: Imposes fines up to \$1,000 and jail terms of up to a year for those who "induce an abortion, miscarriage or premature delivery" unless necessary to preserve the life or health of a woman. Though updated over time, the abortion ban dates to 1852.

ARIZONA: Imposes prison sentences of two to five years for those who "procure the miscarriage" of a woman unless necessary to save her life. The abortion ban has been in the statutes since at least 1956.

ARKANSAS: Makes it illegal to provide any drug with the "intent to produce an abortion" or to "attempt to produce the abortion by any other means." The ban dates to a 1969 law, which had updated an 1875 abortion ban.

LOUISIANA: A 2006 law makes it a crime to cause "the termination of the life of an unborn human being." It creates an exception for abortions performed by a physician to prevent the death or "serious, permanent impairment of a life-sustaining organ" of a pregnant woman. Violations are punishable by up to 10 years in prison and fines of between \$10,000 and \$100,000. The law is to take effect only upon a

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U.S. Supreme Court decision that partly or fully reverses Roe v. Wade and restores the state's authority to prohibit abortions.

MASSACHUSETTS: Imposes sentences of up to seven years in prison and fines up to \$2,000 for providing any "noxious thing" or using an instrument with the "intent to procure the miscarriage of a woman." The abortion ban dates to 1845.

MICHIGAN: Makes it a felony to use an instrument or administer any substance with the intent "to procure the miscarriage" of a woman unless necessary to preserve her life. The abortion ban dates to a 1931 law.

MISSISSIPPI: A 2007 law prohibits all abortions except when necessary to preserve a woman's life or in cases of rape. Violations are punishable by imprisonment of one to 10 years. The law is to take effect after the state attorney general determines that the U.S. Supreme Court has overruled Roe v. Wade and that it is "reasonably probable" the law would be upheld in court.

NEW MEXICO: Makes it a crime to terminate or attempt to terminate a pregnancy unless conducted by a physician in a hospital when the pregnancy is likely to lead to the woman's death or "the grave impairment" of her "physical or mental health," or if the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest, or if "the child probably will have a grave physical or mental defect." The statute dates to at least 1972.

NORTH DAKOTA: A 2007 law makes it a felony to perform an abortion unless necessary to prevent the woman's death or in cases of rape or incest. Violations are punishable by up to five years in prison and a \$5,000 fine. The law is to take effect when the legislative council approves a motion recommended by the attorney general that it is "reasonably probable" the law would be upheld as constitutional.

OKLAHOMA: Imposes prison sentences of two to five years for using any means intended "to procure the miscarriage" of a woman unless necessary to preserve her life. Though updated over time, the laws date to 1910.

RHODE ISLAND: A 1973 law, enacted just a couple of months after the Roe ruling, imposes prison sentences of one to seven years for using an instrument or providing a "noxious thing" with the "intent to procure the miscarriage of any pregnant woman," unless necessary to preserve her life.

SOUTH DAKOTA: A 2005 law makes it a felony to use an instrument or provide any substance intended "to procure an abortion" unless necessary to preserve the woman's life. Violations are punishable by up to two years in prison and a \$4,000 fine. The law is to take effect when the U.S. Supreme Court recognizes the authority of states "to regulate or prohibit abortion at all stages of pregnancy."

WEST VIRGINIA: Imposes prison sentences of three to 10 years for using any means on a woman intended to "destroy her unborn child or to produce abortion or miscarriage," unless done to save the woman's life. The law dates to 1882.

WISCONSIN: Creates a felony for anyone other than the pregnant woman "who intentionally destroys the life of an unborn child," unless performed by a physician when necessary to save the woman's life. Though the law has changed over time, the abortion ban dates to at least 1849.

Mitchell man accused of firing shots from car during chase

MITCHELL, S.D. (AP) — A Mitchell man is facing drug and weapons charges for allegedly firing gunshots at another vehicle during a chase.

The Daily Republic reports 36-year-old Bernard Drapeau and 27-year-old Malissa Garmong were found early Wednesday near a car allegedly involved in the chase. Garmong also faces drug charges.

Authorities say a pickup hit Garmong's nearby parked car, and then followed Garmong and Drapeau in his vehicle as they drove away. Drapeau is accused of firing three shots from his car during the chase, but nobody was harmed.

Authorities say they found a scale with what they believed to be methamphetamine residue on Drapeau and about 2.8 ounces of what appeared to be meth near Garmong. Officials allege they also found meth and pills on Garmong.

It wasn't immediately clear if Garmong and Drapeau have attorneys.

___ Information from: The Daily Republic, <http://www.mitchellrepublic.com>

11 workers laid off at Aberdeen, Watertown newspapers

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — Dakota Media Group has laid off seven employees at the American News and the Farm Forum in Aberdeen and four workers at the Watertown Public Opinion.

Dakota Media Group Publisher Kevin Shaw says the company is restructuring to increase profitability. An unspecified number of vacant positions also will remain unfilled.

The layoffs represent about 7 percent of the Dakota Media Group workforce. Shaw says they should ensure the company is profitable through this year and into next year.

The workers who lost jobs are being given a severance package.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

4 struck in crosswalk in Rapid City; charges being mulled

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are determining whether to file charges against a driver who struck four pedestrians in a crosswalk in Rapid City.

Two adults and two children were taken to a hospital Tuesday night to be treated for unspecified injuries. They're expected to be OK.

Police do not believe the driver had been drinking.

The Rapid City Journal reports the names of the driver and pedestrians were not released.

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

Final 2 suspects sentenced in Marshall County sex abuse case

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The final suspects charged in a Marshall County sexual abuse case involving a teenager have been sentenced.

Twenty-year-old Michael Mejilla and 28-year-old Dustin Purcell were among five men charged in 2017 with illegal sexual interactions with a girl who was younger than 16. All of the suspects accepted plea agreements.

The American News reports that Purcell was sentenced to serve six years for statutory rape and possession of child pornography. Mejilla was sentenced to serve 1 ½ years for statutory rape and solicitation of a minor.

The two men from Britton also must pay restitution and fines.

Information from: Aberdeen American News, <http://www.aberdeennews.com>

Ex-boyfriend on trial in toddler's death

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A woman accused in the death of her young daughter has testified in the trial of her former boyfriend, also charged in the case.

Twenty-four-year-old Zachariah Poor Bear is being tried on charges of first-degree murder and assault resulting in injury to a minor. Prosecutors say Poor Bear fatally beat 19-month-old Aaliyah Horse three years ago in Pine Ridge while she was in his care.

The child's mother, 19-year-old Tracey Horse, testified Wednesday she left the toddler in Poor Bear's care so she could go look for some marijuana. Horse says Poor Bear was mad that he had to watch the child.

The Rapid City Journal reports defense attorney Paul Winter told jurors nobody knows who inflicted the child's injuries, how, where or when. Horse was charged in juvenile court in her daughter's death.

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

Most South Dakota crops rated in good condition

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The majority of most major crops in South Dakota are rated in good to excellent condition as summer progresses.

The federal Agriculture Department also says in its weekly crop report that sunflower planting is wrapping up, at 96 percent complete. That's just slightly behind the average pace.

Topsoil moisture supplies statewide are rated 82 percent adequate to surplus, with 77 percent of subsoil moisture in those categories.

Pasture and range conditions statewide are mostly rated fair or good.

Shouting, insults as FBI agent faces angry Republicans

By ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — An embattled FBI agent whose anti-Trump text messages exposed the Justice Department to claims of institutional bias vigorously defended himself at an extraordinary congressional hearing that devolved into shouting matches, finger-pointing and veiled references to personal transgressions.

Peter Strzok on Thursday testified publicly for the first time since being removed from special counsel Robert Mueller's team following the discovery of texts last year that were traded with an FBI lawyer in the run-up to the 2016 presidential election.

In a chaotic hearing that spanned 10 hours, he insisted he never allowed personal opinions to affect his work, though he did acknowledge being dismayed by Donald Trump's behavior during the campaign. He also said he had never contemplated leaking damaging information he knew about the Trump campaign. And he called the hearing "just another victory notch in Putin's belt," referring to Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"At no time, in any of those texts, did those personal beliefs ever enter into the realm of any action I took," Strzok told lawmakers.

In breaking his silence, Strzok came face-to-face with Republicans who argued that the texts had tainted two hugely consequential FBI probes he had helped steer: inquiries into Hillary Clinton's email use and possible coordination between the Trump campaign and Russia.

"Agent Strzok had Hillary Clinton winning the White House before he finished investigating her," said Rep. Trey Gowdy, Republican chairman of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee. "Agent Strzok had Donald Trump impeached before he even started investigating him. That is bias."

Republican Rep. Darrell Issa made Strzok read some of his texts aloud, including some with profane language. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Bob Goodlatte asked colleagues to imagine being investigated by someone who "hated you" and "disparaged you in all manner of ways."

"Would anyone sitting here today believe that this was an acceptable state of affairs, particularly at an agency whose motto is 'Fidelity, Bravery and Integrity'? I think not," Goodlatte said.

Strzok repeatedly insisted the texts, including ones in which he called Trump a "disaster" and said "We'll stop" a Trump candidacy, did not reflect political bias and had not infected his work.

He said the Trump investigation originated not out of personal animus but rather from concern that Russia was meddling in the election, including what he said were allegations of "extraordinary significance" of a Russian offer of assistance to a Trump campaign member.

He made clear his exasperation at being the focus of a hearing when Russian election interference had successfully sowed discord in America.

"I have the utmost respect for Congress' oversight role, but I truly believe that today's hearing is just another victory notch in Putin's belt and another milestone in our enemies' campaign to tear America apart," Strzok said.

The hearing brought to the surface a little-discussed reality of public service: Law enforcement agents and other government workers are permitted to espouse political views but are expected to keep them separate from their work. Strzok said he was not alone in holding political opinions, noting that colleagues

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in 2016 supported both Clinton and Trump but did not reflect those views on the job.

"What I am telling you is I and the other men and women of the FBI, every day take our personal beliefs, and set those aside in vigorous pursuit of the truth — wherever it lies, whatever it is."

To which Rep. Ted Poe, R-Texas, responded, "And I don't believe you."

Strzok said under aggressive questioning that a much-discussed August 2016 text in which he vowed "we'll stop" a Trump candidacy followed Trump's denigration of the family of a dead U.S. service member. He said the late-night, off-the-cuff text reflected his belief that Americans would not stomach such "horrible, disgusting behavior" by the presidential candidate.

But, he added in a raised voice and emphatic tone: "It was in no way — unequivocally — any suggestion that me, the FBI, would take any action whatsoever to improperly impact the electoral process for any candidate. So, I take great offense, and I take great disagreement to your assertion of what that was or wasn't."

Plus, he said, both the Clinton and Russia investigations were handled by large teams that "would not tolerate any improper behavior in me anymore than I would tolerate it in them.

"That is who we are as the FBI," Strzok said in an animated riff that drew Democratic applause. "And the suggestion that I, in some dark chamber somewhere in the FBI, would somehow cast aside all of these procedures, all of these safeguards and somehow be able to do this is astounding to me. It simply couldn't happen."

The hearing exposed clear partisan divides in the House judiciary and oversight committees, as Democrats accused Republicans of trying to divert attention from Trump's ties to Russia by excessively focusing on Strzok.

Democratic Rep. Steve Cohen of Tennessee said he would give Strzok a Purple Heart if he could. Rep. Bonnie Watson Coleman, D-New Jersey, said, "I have never seen my colleagues so out of control, so angry."

But Republicans eager to undermine Mueller's investigation berated Strzok, citing the texts as evidence of partisan bias within law enforcement. An inspector general report last month blamed Strzok and FBI lawyer Lisa Page for creating an appearance of impropriety through their texts but found that the outcome of the Clinton investigation wasn't tainted by bias.

At one point, Rep. Louie Gohmert, a Texas Republican, invoked Strzok's personal life by alluding to the fact the texts were exchanged while he and Page were in a relationship. Gohmert speculated about whether he looked "so innocent" when he looked into his wife's eyes and lied about the affair.

The comments sparked immediate objections from Democrats, who called them outrageous, and Strzok was livid. He told Gohmert the fact that he would say that "shows more what you stand for" than anything else. Gohmert tried to shout over him and the committee chairman vainly tried to restore order.

When Strzok declined to answer some questions on the Russia probe, Goodlatte suggested Republicans might recess the hearing and hold him in contempt. Democrats objected and Goodlatte eventually let the hearing proceed.

In his opening statement, Strzok acknowledged that while his text message criticism was "blunt," it wasn't directed at one person or party and included jabs not only at Trump but also at Clinton and Sen. Bernie Sanders.

He said he was one of the few people in 2016 who knew the details of Russian election interference and its possible connections with the Trump campaign, and that that information could have derailed Trump's election chances. But, he said, "the thought of exposing that information never crossed my mind."

FBI Director Chris Wray has said employees who were singled out for criticism by the inspector general have been referred to internal disciplinary officials. Strzok's lawyer said he was escorted from the FBI building last month as the disciplinary process proceeds.

Page, who left the FBI in May, is expected to be interviewed by lawmakers behind closed doors on Friday after being subpoenaed to appear.

Associated Press writer Chad Day in Washington contributed to this report.

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

Explosive Trump interview adds to chaos on 1st British visit

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

ELLESBOROUGH, England (AP) — Bringing chaos with him as he moves across Europe, President Donald Trump's pomp-filled welcome to Britain was overshadowed Friday by an explosive interview in which he blasted Prime Minister Theresa May, blamed London's mayor for terror attacks against the city and argued that Europe was "losing its culture" because of immigration.

Trump told The Sun newspaper on Thursday — in an interview that was published as he was feted by May at an opulent welcome dinner at a country palace — that he felt unwelcome in London because of protests, including a giant balloon that was being flown over Parliament on Friday depicting him as an angry diaper-wearing baby.

The president downplayed the fallout from the interview as he sat next to May on Friday for a bilateral meeting at Chequers, her official country house. He said they spent about 90 minutes talking at dinner and claimed they "probably never developed a better relationship than last night."

"The relationship is very strong," Trump insisted, though he did not directly answer questions about the Sun interview. The president also said NATO had "never been more united," a day after he roiled the military alliance's annual summit in Belgium by insulting allies' defense spending.

Interviewed before he left Brussels for the U.K, Trump accused May of ruining what her country stands to gain from its Brexit vote to leave the European Union. He said her former foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, would make an "excellent" prime minister, speaking just days after Johnson resigned his position in protest over May's Brexit plans.

Trump added that May's "soft" blueprint for the U.K.'s future dealings with the EU would probably "kill" any future trade deals with the United States.

"If they do a deal like that, we would be dealing with the European Union instead of dealing with the U.K., so it will probably kill the deal," Trump told the paper.

Trump, who has linked his own election to the June 2016 referendum in which a slim majority of British voters supported leaving the EU, complained, "The deal she is striking is a much different deal than the one the people voted on."

He also told the tabloid that he'd shared advice with May during Britain's negotiations with the EU and she ignored it.

The controversy will shadow the president across Britain on Friday much like the 20-foot (6-meter) tall balloon depicting him as an angry baby that will be airborne for his visit. The president opened the day by reviewing a private military exercise alongside May at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

"I guess when they put out blimps to make me feel unwelcome, no reason for me to go to London," he told The Sun, which is owned by his media ally Rupert Murdoch, who also owns Fox News in the United States.

Trump has been getting around by helicopter to avoid the protests in central London. After meeting with May, a scheduled joint news conference was sure to be dominated by the fallout from the interview before he visits Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle.

The interview was the latest breach of diplomatic protocol by Trump, whose predecessors tended to avoid criticizing their foreign hosts.

As for Johnson, Trump said: "I think he would be a great prime minister. I think he's got what it takes." He added, "I think he is a great representative for your country."

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders issued a statement after the interview was published, saying Trump "likes and respects Prime Minister May very much."

"As he said in his interview with the Sun she 'is a very good person' and he 'never said anything bad about her.' He thought she was great on NATO today and is a really terrific person," Sanders wrote.

On Thursday night, hundreds of demonstrators chanted outside the U.S. ambassador's residence in London, where Trump was staying, providing a preview of the forceful protests expected Friday.

Trump acknowledged he didn't feel welcome in the city, and blamed that in part on Mayor Sadiq Khan,

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who gave protesters permission to fly the 20-foot-tall baby Trump balloon.

Trump also blamed recent terrorist attacks there on Khan, who is Muslim. The president claimed Europe is "losing its culture" because of immigration from the Middle East and Africa.

"Allowing the immigration to take place in Europe is a sham," he said. "I think it changed the fabric of Europe and, unless you act very quickly, it's never going to be what it was and I don't mean that in a positive way."

Khan, whose grandparents hailed from Pakistan, responded by questioning why Trump repeatedly chose him to criticize.

"Paris, Nice, Brussels, Berlin. Cities in America all suffered terror attacks," Khan told British broadcaster Sky News. "And it's for President Trump to explain why he singled me as the mayor of London out and not the mayors of other cities and leaders of other cities."

In contrast to the president's sharp words, Trump's first event in England was an oasis of warm greetings at an evening reception Thursday at Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Winston Churchill, the larger-than-life British leader cited by the president as a model of leadership.

His departure from the U.S. ambassador's residence aboard the presidential helicopter was met by jeers from demonstrators banging pots and pans, and another group of protesters lined roads near the palace. Some signs read "Dump Trump," "Lock Him Up" and "There Will Be Hell Toupee." Police worked overtime, their days off canceled.

Trump was greeted at the palace by May, whose government has been rocked by resignations from ongoing tumult over Brexit.

The outdoor arrival ceremony at Blenheim — Trump wore a tuxedo and first lady Melania Trump a butter-yellow, chiffon, off-the-shoulder gown — was a grand affair marked by a military band in bearskin hats, hundreds of business leaders in black tie and gorgeous setting sunlight.

The mood was far less jovial in Belgium earlier in the day.

During his 28 hours there, Trump had disparaged longtime NATO allies, cast doubt on his commitment to the mutual-defense organization and sent the 29-member pact into a frenzied emergency session. He declared that the alliance was a "fine-tuned machine" that had acceded to his demands to speed up increases in military spending to relieve pressure on the U.S. budget. But there was little evidence they had bowed to his wishes on that front.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Darlene Superville and Ken Thomas in Washington contributed to this report.

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UK pound falls, UK politicians reel after Trump broadside

By JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The British pound fell and U.K. politicians reeled Friday from the tornado-blast of U.S. President Donald Trump, who humiliated Prime Minister Theresa May, dashed hopes of a quick U.S.-U.K. trade deal and praised May's opponents in the high-stakes battle over Brexit.

All in just 24 hours in Britain.

In an interview with The Sun newspaper, Trump slammed May's plans for Britain's departure from the European Union and praised her political rival Boris Johnson, who quit May's Cabinet this week over Brexit differences. He also criticized immigration in Europe and declared that London Mayor Sadiq Khan, a Muslim, had failed to stop terrorism.

The pound fell 0.6 percent to \$1.31 after Trump's comments, and May's government struggled to put a brave face on a presidential visit that has veered wildly off course.

"Trump claimed that Theresa May's current Brexit plan 'will probably kill' any potential U.S. trade deal, a comment that not only undermines the prime minister at the end of an already challenging week, but one

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that understandably sent sterling sharply lower," said Connor Campbell, an analyst at SpreadEx.

In Britain, where vicious differences are often masked by formal politeness, many politicians expressed shock that the U.S. president could be so downright rude.

In one of the milder responses, Universities Minister Sam Gyimah tweeted: "Where are your manners, Mr. President?"

Labour Party foreign affairs spokeswoman Emily Thornberry said "Donald Trump ought to have listened to his mother."

"I am assuming that his mum told him that when you go to someone's house you do not insult the host," Thornberry said.

Trump's Brexit broadside came as May was trying to shift stalled divorce negotiations with the EU into higher gear. Britain will leave the bloc in March, but the two sides have not yet agreed on what sort of relationship they will have after that.

On Thursday, as Trump flew into Britain, May's government published a plan that includes free trade in goods and a common trade rule book with the EU.

Trump said such a deal "will probably kill" any prospect of a U.S.-U.K. free-trade agreement. Boosting trans-Atlantic trade ties was one of Britain's main goals for Trump's first official visit to the U.K. as president.

May was hosting Trump for talks Friday at her country residence, Chequers, over a lunch of Dover sole, Chiltern lamb and lemon meringue pie.

Trump and his wife Melania will also have tea with Queen Elizabeth II at Windsor Castle later Friday.

With considerable optimism, Treasury chief Philip Hammond said May was looking forward to her talks with the president.

"I'm sure there will be a very positive discussion," he said.

But the truth is that Trump's attack could weaken May's already fragile hold on power. Her Conservative government is deeply split between supporters of a clean break with the EU and those who want to keep close ties with the bloc, Britain's biggest trading partner.

Brexit Secretary David Davis and Johnson, the former foreign secretary, both quit this week to protest May's trade plan. Johnson, who helped lead the campaign to take Britain out of the EU, accused May of killing "the Brexit dream."

In his interview, Trump praised Johnson — another unpredictable, talkative populist with a distinctive mop of hair.

"I think he would be a great prime minister. I think he's got what it takes," Trump said.

Trump also renewed his attack on Khan, London's mayor. The two politicians have clashed on Twitter over Trump's ban on immigrants from several mostly Muslim countries and on the president's views on crime and terrorism in Britain.

Trump claimed that London's first Muslim mayor "has done a very bad job on terrorism" and said Khan "has not been very hospitable" to him.

Khan's office gave permission for London protesters to fly a 20-foot (6-meter) balloon depicting the U.S. president as a screaming baby near Parliament as part of nationwide demonstrations Friday against Trump's visit.

Khan noted that other European and American cities had, like London, experienced terrorist attacks.

"And it's for President Trump to explain why he singled me as the mayor of London out and not the mayors of other cities and leaders of other cities," he told Sky News.

Some opposition lawmakers called for the British government to cancel Trump's tea with the queen.

Labour Party lawmaker David Lammy tweeted that Trump "hates that London chose a Muslim mayor. The President is racist. He does not deserve to meet our Queen today #StopTrump."

Author of Emmett Till book gave FBI interview recordings

By JAY REEVES and ALLEN G. BREED, Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Weeks after he published a book about the brutal slaying of Emmett Till, a North Carolina author received a call from FBI agents asking about his interview with a key witness who acknowledged lying about her interactions with the black teen.

Not long after that, Duke University scholar Timothy Tyson said, he turned over interview recordings and other research materials for his 2017 book on the 1955 case that shocked the nation and helped build momentum for the civil rights movement.

Hours after news broke Thursday about a renewed investigation prompted by the book, Tyson told reporters that he supports a fresh look at “one of the most notorious racial incidents of racial violence in the history of the world,” but doesn’t think his research alone will provide enough evidence for new charges.

“It’s possible that the investigation will turn up something. But there’s nothing that I know of, and nothing in my research, that is actionable, I don’t think,” he said. Still, he said investigators may be able to link it to other material in their possession.

Tyson’s 2017 book “The Blood of Emmett Till” quotes a white woman, Carolyn Donham, as saying during a 2008 interview that she wasn’t truthful when she testified that the black teen grabbed her, whistled and made sexual advances at a Mississippi store six decades ago.

A federal official familiar with the matter told The Associated Press that information in the 2017 book was what led federal investigators to re-examine the case. The official wasn’t authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to AP on condition of anonymity.

The reopening of the Till case was disclosed in a federal report sent to lawmakers in March that said the Justice Department had received unspecified “new information.” The report’s contents weren’t widely known until Thursday.

The case was closed in 2007, with authorities saying the suspects were dead.

The prosecutor with jurisdiction over the Mississippi community where Till was abducted, District Attorney Dewayne Richardson, declined to comment on whether federal authorities had given him new information since they reopened the investigation. The Justice Department also declined to comment.

It’s unclear what new charges could result from a renewed investigation, said Tucker Carrington, a professor at the University of Mississippi law school.

Conspiracy or murder charges could be filed if anyone still alive is shown to have been involved, he said, but too much time likely has passed to prosecute anyone for other crimes, such as lying to investigators or in court.

Two white men — Donham’s then-husband, Roy Bryant, and his half brother, J.W. Milam — were charged with murder but acquitted in the slaying of the Chicago teen, who had been staying with relatives in northern Mississippi at the time. The men later confessed to the crime in a magazine interview but weren’t retried. Both are now dead.

Donham, who turns 84 this month, lives in Raleigh, North Carolina. A man who came to the door at her residence declined to comment about the investigation.

Deborah Watts, co-founder of the Emmett Till Legacy Foundation, said it’s wonderful her cousin’s killing is getting another look but declined to discuss details, saying: “None of us wants to do anything that jeopardizes any investigation.”

Abducted from the home where he was staying, Till was beaten and shot, and his body was found weighted down with a cotton gin fan in a river. His mother, Mamie Till Mobley, had his casket left open. Images of his mutilated body gave witness to the depth of racial hatred in the Deep South and inspired civil rights campaigns.

Donham, then 21 and known as Carolyn Bryant, testified in 1955 as a prospective defense witness in the trial of Bryant and Milam. With jurors out of the courtroom, she said a “nigger man” she didn’t know took her by the arm in the store.

“He said, ‘How about a date, baby?’” she testified, according to a trial transcript released by the FBI

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a decade ago. Bryant said she pulled away, and moments later the young man “caught me at the cash register,” grasping her around the waist with both hands and pulling her toward him.

A judge ruled the testimony inadmissible. An all-white jury freed her husband and the other man even without it.

In the book, author Tyson wrote that Donham told him her testimony about Till accosting her wasn’t true. “Nothing that boy did could ever justify what happened to him,” the book quotes her as saying.

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles, Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi, and Jonathan Drew in Raleigh, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

Detaining immigrant kids is now a billion-dollar industry

By MARTHA MENDOZA AND LARRY FENN, Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Detaining immigrant children has morphed into a surging industry in the U.S. that now reaps \$1 billion annually — a tenfold increase over the past decade, an Associated Press analysis finds.

Health and Human Services grants for shelters, foster care and other child welfare services for detained unaccompanied and separated children soared from \$74.5 million in 2007 to \$958 million in 2017. The agency is also reviewing a new round of proposals amid a growing effort by the White House to keep immigrant children in government custody.

Currently, more than 11,800 children, from a few months old to 17, are housed in nearly 90 facilities in 15 states — Arizona, California, Connecticut, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, Virginia and Washington.

They are being held while their parents await immigration proceedings or, if the children arrived unaccompanied, are reviewed for possible asylum themselves.

In May, the agency issued requests for bids for five projects that could total more than \$500 million for beds, foster and therapeutic care, and “secure care,” which means employing guards. More contracts are expected to come up for bids in October.

HHS spokesman Kenneth Wolfe said the agency will award bids “based on the number of beds needed to provide appropriate care for minors in the program.”

The agency’s current facilities include locations for what the Trump administration calls “tender age” children, typically under 5. Three shelters in Texas have been designated for toddlers and infants. Others — including in tents in Tornillo, Texas, and a tent-and-building temporary shelter in Homestead, Florida — are housing older teens.

Over the past decade, by far the largest recipients of taxpayer money have been Southwest Key and Baptist Child & Family Services, AP’s analysis shows. From 2008 to date, Southwest Key has received \$1.39 billion in grant funding to operate shelters; Baptist Child & Family Services has received \$942 million.

A Texas-based organization called International Educational Services also was a big recipient, landing more than \$72 million in the last fiscal year before folding amid a series of complaints about the conditions in its shelters.

The recipients of the money run the gamut from nonprofits, religious organizations and for-profit entities. The organizations originally concentrated on housing and detaining at-risk youth, but shifted their focus to immigrants when tens of thousands of Central American children started arriving at the U.S.-Mexico border in recent years.

They are essentially government contractors for the Health and Human Services Department — the federal agency that administers the program keeping immigrant children in custody. Organizations like Southwest Key insist that the children are well cared for and that the vast sums of money they receive are necessary to house, transport, educate and provide medical care for thousands of children while complying with government regulations and court orders.

The recent uproar surrounding separated families at the border has placed the locations at the center of the controversy. A former Wal-Mart in Texas is now a Southwest Key facility that’s believed to be the

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biggest child immigrant facility in the country, and First Lady Melania Trump visited another Southwest Key location in Phoenix.

Advocates on both sides of the aisle criticize the growing number of kids housed in government shelters, but they have different reasons — and they blame each other.

“You can’t put a child in a prison. You cannot. It’s immoral,” said Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, a New York Democrat who has been visiting shelters.

Gillibrand said the shelters will continue to expand because no system is in place to reunite families separated at the border. “These are real concerns that the administration has not thought through at all,” she said.

But President Donald Trump says cracking down on immigration ultimately can lead to spending less money and having fewer immigrants in government custody.

“Illegal immigration costs our country hundreds of billions of dollars,” he said at a recent rally. “So imagine if we could spend that money to help bring opportunity to our inner cities and our rural communities and our roads and our highways and our schools.”

In April, Attorney General Jeff Sessions announced a “zero tolerance policy” directing authorities to arrest, jail and prosecute anyone illegally crossing the border, including people seeking asylum and without previous offenses. As a result, more than 2,300 children were turned over to HHS.

In a recently released report, the State Department decried the general principle of holding children in shelters, saying it makes them inherently vulnerable.

“Removal of a child from the family should only be considered as a temporary, last resort,” the report said. “Studies have found that both private and government-run residential institutions for children, or places such as orphanages and psychiatric wards that do not offer a family-based setting, cannot replicate the emotional companionship and attention found in family environments that are prerequisites to healthy cognitive development.”

Some in the Trump administration describe the new policy as a “deterrent” to future would-be immigrants and asylum-seekers fleeing violence and abject poverty in Central America, Mexico and beyond.

But Steven Wagner, acting assistant secretary for the Administration for Children and Families — an HHS division — said the policy has exposed broader issues over how the government can manage such a vast system.

“It was never intended to be a foster care system with more than 10,000 children in custody at an immediate cost to the federal taxpayer of over \$1 billion dollars per year,” Wagner said in a statement.

The longer a child is in government custody, the potential for emotional and physical damage grows, said Dr. Colleen Kraft, president of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

“The foundational relationship between a parent and child is what sets the stage for that child’s brain development, for their learning, for their child health, for their adult health,” Kraft said.

“And you could have the nicest facility with the nicest equipment and toys and games, but if you don’t have that parent, if you don’t have that caring adult that can buffer the stress that these kids feel, then you’re taking away the basic science of what we know helps pediatrics.”

A judge in California has ordered authorities to reunite separated families within 30 days — and the government has completed more than 50 of the reunions of children under 5 by Thursday.

Police say they made an ‘error’ in arresting Stormy Daniels

By **ANDREW WELSH-HUGGINS, Associated Press**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Prosecutors on Thursday dropped charges against porn star Stormy Daniels just hours after she was arrested and accused of illegally rubbing undercover police officers’ faces against her bare breasts during a performance at a strip club.

Her attorney said she was “set up” in a Columbus police sting operation, calling it an “absurd use of law enforcement resources.” Police said they routinely conduct such undercover operations.

The 39-year-old adult film star, who claims to have had sex with Donald Trump before he became presi-

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dent, was charged with three misdemeanors, each punishable by up to six months in jail and a \$1,000 fine upon conviction. She was released on \$6,000 bail around daybreak Thursday.

By early afternoon, prosecutors said they were dropping the case because Ohio's law against physical contact between strippers and customers applies only to someone who "regularly" performs at a club. In Daniels' case, it was her first appearance at Sirens in Columbus.

A person who answered the phone at Sirens declined to comment.

Columbus police chief Kim Jacobs said "one element of the law was missed in error."

"A mistake was made, and I accept full responsibility," she said.

Officers were well within their area of responsibility when making the arrests, she added. But she said the officers' motivations will be reviewed internally. Without providing details, she said unsubstantiated allegations about their motivations were circulating on social media.

Daniels' lawyer called for an investigation into the arrest, saying some of the officers had what appeared to be "very Pro-Trump" social media pages. The lawyer, Michael Avenatti, tweeted screenshots from what he claimed was the Facebook page of one officer with a pseudonym and asked people to help confirm it.

Daniels considered reappearing at Sirens but later opted for a different club, Vanity Gentlemen's Club. She performed there for about 20 minutes early Friday, baring her breasts but not physically interacting with any patrons. A host had announced: "No phones, no photography, no touching!"

About 100 patrons were in the club and threw dollar bills on her as she performed, partly covering the stage.

Police said Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, smacked the faces of two female officers and one male officer with her bare breasts during the Wednesday night show. Officers knocked on the door of her tour bus after the performance and took her into custody in an arrest that Avenatti said left her "traumatized and rattled."

She was booked under a 10-year-old state law known as the Community Defense Act, which says dancers at "sexually oriented" businesses are prohibited from touching customers and vice versa.

Police said two other dancers were arrested along with Daniels. Prosecutors will decide whether to pursue charges against those women.

Police said Daniels' arrest was part of a long-term human trafficking investigation of adult clubs. They said they have made numerous arrests under the no-touching law but did not immediately provide a number.

The police department "engages in these operations routinely," spokesman Sgt. Dean Worthington said.

Franklin County Municipal Court records show 23 similar cases this year, including the charges against Daniels, 14 last year and six the year before.

Daniels has said she had sex with Trump in 2006, when he was married. Trump has denied it. Before the election, she was paid \$130,000 to stay silent in a deal handled by Trump's personal attorney Michael Cohen. She is suing to invalidate the nondisclosure agreement.

Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo in Los Angeles, Catherine Lucey in Washington, Lisa Cornwell in Cincinnati and Bob Lentz in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

US: Nearly half of youngest children not rejoining families

By COLLEEN LONG, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration said Thursday all eligible small children who were separated from their families as a result of its zero-tolerance immigration policy have been reunited with their parents.

But nearly half of the children under 5 remain apart from their families because of safety concerns, the deportation of their parents and other issues, the administration said.

The administration was under a court mandate to reunite families separated between early May and June 20, when President Donald Trump signed an executive order that stopped separations. The American Civil Liberties Union filed a lawsuit on behalf of a woman who had been separated from her child, and U.S.

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District Court Judge Dana Sabraw ordered all children reunited with their parents.

Fifty-seven children were reunited with their parents as of Thursday morning, administration officials said. "Throughout the reunification process, our goal has been the well-being of the children and returning them to a safe environment," according to a statement from the heads of the three agencies responsible for the process. "Of course, there remains a tremendous amount of hard work and similar obstacles facing our teams in reuniting the remaining families. The Trump administration does not approach this mission lightly."

Most of the reunions occurred by Tuesday's court-ordered deadline, but the government acknowledged in a court filing that 19 occurred Wednesday and one Thursday.

The ACLU proposed in a court filing that the administration should be monitored closely as a July 26 deadline approaches to reunite more than 2,000 children who are 5 and older with their parents. It asked the judge to require that all parental relations be verified and all background checks be completed by next Thursday. It also wants a daily report on how many families are reunited, starting Tuesday.

The ACLU also proposed that the administration be given no more than a week to reunite 12 young children with their now-deported parents, from whom they were separated at the border. The clock would start ticking as soon as the parent obtains travel documents for the child.

"There is no excuse for the Trump administration's missed deadline," said ACLU attorney Lee Gelernt. "Children are suffering because of it. The government must get these families back together."

The administration said in its filing that it is difficult to determine how much time is needed and that reunifications should occur "on a flexible schedule."

Both sides are due back in court Friday to expand on their proposals. It will be the fourth hearing in eight days, an indication of how closely the judge is watching his deadlines.

The U.S. officials said 46 of the children were not eligible to be reunited with their parents; a dozen parents had already been deported and were being contacted by the administration. Nine were in custody of the U.S. Marshals Service for other offenses. One adult's location was unknown, they said.

Of the deported parents, officials said they had chosen to leave their children behind. One deported father, however, told the Los Angeles Times earlier this week that he didn't realize what he was doing when he signed the paperwork to leave his child behind. It wasn't clear if he was one of the dozen; no names have been made public.

In 22 other cases, adults posed safety concerns, they said. Officials said 11 adults had serious criminal histories including child cruelty, murder or human smuggling. Seven were not determined to be a parent, one had a false birth certificate, one had allegedly abused the child. Another planned to house the child with an adult charged with sexually abusing a child.

"The seriousness of the crimes is the reason why we are not going to reunite them," Matthew Albence of Immigration and Customs Enforcement said of the 22 cases.

The 46 children will remain in the care of Health and Human Services, which will continue to seek to place them with a sponsor, such as another family member or even foster care, as it does for the more than 10,000 other minors who arrived in the U.S. without a relative. Children spend an average of 57 days in shelters before they're placed with a sponsor. They are given access to medical care and counseling, as well as school.

The zero-tolerance policy calls for the criminal prosecution of anyone caught crossing the border illegally. Because parents can't take their children to jail, they were separated. The move caused an international uproar. At least 2,300 children were separated from about 2,200 adults until the executive order was signed. Federal officials have been scrambling to reunite the children under a tight, two-week deadline set by the judge.

Part of the issue, administration officials said, is that the systems weren't set up to reunify parents with their children. Health and Human Services manages their care inside the U.S. Homeland Security has control over adults in immigration detention, and the Justice Department manages the immigration courts.

Earlier this week, government attorneys told Sabraw that the Trump administration would not meet the deadline for about 20 children under 5 because it needed more time to track down parents who have

already been deported or released into the U.S.

Sabraw indicated more time would be allowed only in specific cases where the government showed good reasons for a delay.

— Associated Press writer Elliot Spagat in San Diego contributed to this report.

Pompeo travels to Mexico to meet new leftist president-elect

By SUSANNAH GEORGE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will lead a Cabinet-level delegation to Mexico on Friday on the heels of a sea-change election there that could offer a chance for the neighbors to repair strained relations — or make them worse.

U.S.-Mexico ties have deteriorated significantly under President Donald Trump, who campaigned on building a border wall and who has repeatedly blamed Mexico for economic and social problems in the United States.

Most recently, tit-for-tat trade tariffs between Mexico and the U.S. amid tense negotiations over the North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA, have sparked fears of an all-out trade war. Trump has branded the free trade pact, which also includes Canada, as a job killer for Americans.

However, following the landslide victory of leftist Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, tensions have eased. Both leaders made positive statements following a telephone call earlier this month; the wall was not mentioned. Lopez Obrador will replace President Enrique Pena Nieto in December.

Joining Pompeo on Friday will be Trump's son-in-law and White House adviser Jared Kushner, who has played a key role in maintaining relations with Mexico, in part because of his close ties to the foreign secretary of the current government, Luis Videgaray. Also in the delegation will be Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen.

The State Department said the visit is intended to demonstrate the strength and importance of U.S.-Mexico relations and the Trump administration's eagerness to work with the incoming government. The entire delegation will meet separately with Pena Nieto and Lopez Obrador and discuss ways to combat transnational criminal organizations, the opioid epidemic in the U.S., trade tensions and irregular migration.

Sharing a nearly 2,000-mile (3,200-kilometer) border, Mexico and the United States have traditionally coordinated closely on security and immigration. Mexico is also the United States' third-largest trading partner for goods, with the U.S. buying about 80 percent of Mexico's exports from automobiles to fruit, vegetables and beer.

One proposed plan is to declare Mexico a "safe third country," meaning people traveling through Mexico hoping to claim asylum in the U.S. would have to do so in Mexico instead, according to a Mexican official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to brief the media. However, the official said, the proposal has very little support in Mexico as it would burden the country with tens of thousands more asylum seekers a year, something the country lacks the resources to tackle.

When asked about the plan earlier this week, Lopez Obrador did not respond directly, saying only that immigration shouldn't involve "coercive measures."

Mexico's president-elect has said development, the renegotiation of NAFTA and immigration will be the main topics of discussion Friday. Lopez Obrador, who campaigned heavily on increasing support for Mexico's poor and fighting government corruption, has said encouraging development in Mexico would help solve immigration problems.

Despite positive statements from both sides, the upcoming transition of power in Mexico also has the potential to destabilize U.S.-Mexico relations if either leader takes aim at the other to appeal to his political base at home. They're unlikely partners as they occupy opposite ends of the political spectrum.

Lopez Obrador has already announced that his government will cancel a pending purchase of U.S. helicopters as an example of cost-cutting measures. Initially the sale was promoted by the State Department as a move that would help a strategic partner fight against criminal organizations.

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And November midterm elections in the U.S. bring the possibility that Trump could return to the rhetoric of his presidential campaign that was derogatory toward Mexico.

Associated Press writer Mark Stevenson contributed from Mexico City.

Trump dishes up fresh dose of chaos aimed at May, Londoners

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and JILL COLVIN, Associated Press

BLLENHEIM PALACE, England (AP) — Dishing up a fresh dose of chaos on his European tour, President Donald Trump left behind a contentious NATO gathering in Brussels and moved on to Britain, where a pomp-filled welcome ceremony was soon overshadowed by an interview in which Trump blasted Prime Minister Theresa May, blamed London's mayor for terror attacks against the city and argued that Europe was "losing its culture" because of immigration.

Trump, in an interview with The Sun newspaper, said he felt unwelcome in London because of protests, including plans to fly a giant balloon over Parliament on Friday that depicts him as an angry baby in a diaper.

"I guess when they put out blimps to make me feel unwelcome, no reason for me to go to London," he said.

Trump, in the interview given before he left Brussels for the U.K., accused May of ruining what her country stands to gain from the Brexit vote to leave the European Union. He said her former foreign secretary, Boris Johnson, would make an "excellent" prime minister, speaking just days after Johnson resigned his position in protest over May's Brexit plans.

Trump added that May's "soft" blueprint for the U.K.'s future dealings with the EU would probably "kill" any future trade deals with the United States.

"If they do a deal like that, we would be dealing with the European Union instead of dealing with the U.K., so it will probably kill the deal," Trump told the paper.

Trump, who has compared his own election to the June 2016 referendum in which a majority of British voters supported leaving the EU, complained, "The deal she is striking is a much different deal than the one the people voted on."

He also told the tabloid that he'd shared advice with May during Britain's negotiations with the EU and she ignored it.

Details from Trump's interview with the paper became public as Trump was attending a black-tie dinner with May to welcome him to Britain with pomp and pageantry.

As for Johnson, Trump said: "I think he would be a great prime minister. I think he's got what it takes." He added, "I think he is a great representative for your country."

White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders issued a statement after the tabloid interview was published, saying Trump "likes and respects Prime Minister May very much.

"As he said in his interview with the Sun she 'is a very good person' and he 'never said anything bad about her.' He thought she was great on NATO today and is a really terrific person," Sanders wrote.

On Thursday night, hundreds of demonstrators chanted outside the U.S. ambassador's residence where Trump was staying on the outskirts of London, providing a preview of the forceful protests expected on Friday.

Trump acknowledged he didn't feel welcome in the city, and blamed that in part on Mayor Sadiq Khan, who gave protesters permission to fly the 20-foot-tall balloon depicting Trump as an angry baby.

Trump also blamed recent terrorist attacks there on Khan, who is a Muslim. The president claimed Europe is "losing its culture" because of immigration from the Middle East and Africa.

"Allowing the immigration to take place in Europe is a sham," he said. "I think it changed the fabric of Europe and, unless you act very quickly, it's never going to be what it was and I don't mean that in a positive way."

In sharp contrast to the president's sharp words, Trump's first event in England was an oasis of warm greetings at an evening reception at Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Winston Churchill, the larger-than-life

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British leader cited by the president as a model of leadership. That was just one of several helicopter rides on the agenda for Trump, whose staff opted to keep him largely out of central London and the swarms of demonstrators who are likely to provide some of the defining images of his first official trip to the U.K.

Trump's Marine One departure from the ambassador's residence was met by jeers from demonstrators banging pots and pans, and another pack of protesters lined roads near the palace. Some of their signs read "Dump Trump," "Lock Him Up" and "There Will Be Hell Toupee." Police worked overtime, their days off cancelled.

Trump was greeted at the palace by May, whose government has been rocked by resignations from ongoing tumult over Brexit.

The outdoor arrival ceremony at Blenheim — Trump wore a tuxedo and first lady Melania Trump a butter-yellow, chiffon, off-the-shoulder gown — was a grand affair marked by a military band in bearskin hats, hundreds of business leaders in black tie and gorgeous setting sunlight.

The mood was far less jovial in Belgium earlier in the day.

During his 28 hours there, Trump had disparaged longtime NATO allies, cast doubt on his commitment to the mutual-defense organization and sent the 29-member pact into a frenzied emergency session.

Then, in a head-snapping pivot at the end, he declared the alliance a "fine-tuned machine" that had acceded to his demands to speed up increases in military spending to relieve pressure on the U.S. budget. But there was little evidence other leaders had bowed to his wishes on that front.

Trump claimed member nations had agreed to boost their defense budgets significantly and reaffirmed — after days of griping that the U.S. was being taken advantage of by its allies — that the U.S. remains faithful to the accord.

"The United States' commitment to NATO remains very strong," Trump told reporters at a surprise news conference following the emergency session of NATO members.

Neither Trump nor NATO offered specifics on what Trump said he had achieved. French President Emmanuel Macron quickly disputed Trump's claim that NATO allies had agreed to boost defense spending beyond their existing goal of 2 percent of gross domestic product by 2024.

"There is a communique that was published yesterday; it's very detailed," Macron said. "It confirms the goal of 2 percent by 2024. That's all."

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Darlene Superville and Ken Thomas in Washington contributed to this report.

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Trump says May's Brexit plan would kill UK-US trade deal

BY JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump lobbed a verbal hand grenade into Theresa May's carefully constructed plans for Brexit, saying Thursday that the British leader had wrecked the country's exit from the European Union and likely "killed" chances of a free-trade deal with the United States.

Trump, who is making his first presidential visit to Britain, told The Sun newspaper he had advised May on how to conduct Brexit negotiations, "but she didn't listen to me."

"She should negotiate the best way she knows how. But it is too bad what is going on," the president said.

The Rupert Murdoch-owned tabloid published an interview with Trump as May was hosting him at a black-tie dinner at Blenheim Palace, birthplace of Britain's World War II Prime Minister Winston Churchill — the leader who coined the term "special relationship" for the trans-Atlantic bond.

The Sun said the interview was conducted Thursday in Brussels, before Trump traveled to Britain. His remarks on Brexit came the same day May's government published long-awaited proposals for Britain's relations with the EU after it leaves the bloc next year.

The document proposes keeping Britain and the EU in a free market for goods, with a more distant

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relationship for services.

The plan has infuriated fervent Brexit supporters, who think sticking close to the bloc would limit Britain's ability to strike new trade deals around the world. Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson and Brexit Secretary David Davis both quit the government this week in protest.

Trump came down firmly on the side of the Brexiteers. He said Johnson, May's now ex-foreign secretary, "would be a great prime minister. I think he's got what it takes."

Meanwhile, Trump said what May proposed on Brexit would hurt the chances of a future trade deal between the U.K. and the United States.

"If they do a deal like that, we would be dealing with the European Union instead of dealing with the U.K., so it will probably kill the deal," Trump said.

He said "the deal she is striking is a much different deal than the one the people voted on."

In fact, much of Britain's division over Brexit — which has split the governing Conservative party and the public at large — stems from the June 2016 referendum on withdrawing from the EU not including language about what would come next.

May's government is trying to satisfy Britons who voted for their country to leave the bloc, but to set an independent course without hobbling businesses, security agencies and other sectors that are closely entwined with the EU.

May insisted earlier Thursday that her plan was exactly what Britons had voted for in the 2016 referendum.

"They voted for us to take back control of our money, our law and our borders," she said. "That is exactly what we will do."

Trump's undiplomatic attack on May, his host, will likely raise the temperature around an already controversial visit. Thousands of people are expected to protest against the president in London on Friday, when a 20-foot (6-meter) balloon depicting the president as a screaming baby will be flown near Parliament.

May and Trump are scheduled to hold talks and a joint news conference on Friday.

Trump's interview easily could overshadow the government's attempt to lay out plans for what it calls a "principled and pragmatic" Brexit.

Britain is currently part of the EU's single market — which allows for the frictionless flow of goods and services among the 28 member states — and its tariff-free customs union for goods. That will end after the U.K. leaves the bloc in March.

The plans laid out Thursday in a 98-page government paper gave Britain's most detailed answer yet to the question of what will replace them.

Under the blueprint, Britain would stick to a "common rulebook" with the EU for goods and agricultural products in return for free trade, without tariffs or border customs checks. Such an approach would avoid disruption to automakers and other manufacturers that source parts from multiple countries.

The government said Britain would act "as if in a combined customs territory" with the EU, using technology at its border to determine whether goods from third countries were bound for Britain or the EU, and charging the appropriate tariffs in those cases.

Britain says that will solve the problem of maintaining an open border between Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., and EU member Ireland.

Free trade would not apply to services, which account for 80 percent of the British economy. The government said that would give Britain "freedom to chart our own path," though it would mean less access to EU markets than there is now.

The plan also seeks to keep Britain in major EU agencies, including the European Aviation Safety Agency, the European Medicines Agency and the police agency Europol.

When the U.K. leaves the EU, it will end the automatic right of EU citizens to live and work in Britain. But Britain said EU nationals should be able to travel visa-free to Britain for tourism or "temporary business," and there should be measures allowing young people and students to work and study in Britain.

Other elements likely to anger Brexit-backers are Britain's willingness to pay the EU for access to certain agencies and the suggestion some EU citizens could continue to work in Britain visa-free.

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Pro-Brexit Conservative lawmaker Jacob Rees-Mogg colorfully described the plan as “the greatest vasalage since King John paid homage to Phillip II at Le Goulet in 1200.”

Pro-EU lawmakers, in contrast, think the proposed post-Brexit ties with the bloc are not close enough.

Trump DOJ appealing judge’s OK of AT&T-Time Warner merger

By MARCY GORDON, AP Business Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Stung by a federal judge’s dismissal of its objections to AT&T’s megamerger with Time Warner, the Trump Justice Department is challenging the decision with a legal appeal.

The Justice Department said in a one-sentence document Thursday it is appealing the ruling last month by U.S. District Judge Richard Leon, which blessed one of the biggest media deals ever following a landmark antitrust trial.

Leon rejected the government’s argument that the phone and pay-TV giant’s \$81 billion takeover of the entertainment conglomerate would hurt competition, limit choices and jack up prices for consumers to stream TV and movies.

Leon’s ruling allowed Dallas-based AT&T Inc. to absorb the owner of CNN, HBO, the Warner Bros. movie studio, “Game of Thrones,” coveted sports programming and other “must-see” shows.

The Justice Department’s appeal is lodged with the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, a step up from the federal district court where the six-week trial unfolded in the spring.

The merger was swiftly consummated, just two days after Leon’s June 12 ruling and almost as soon as the Justice Department signaled it wouldn’t seek to temporarily block the merger while it pondered an appeal. The deadline for closing the merger was June 21.

Some legal experts believe the government could have a hard time convincing the appeals court to overturn Leon’s ruling. Opposing the merger forced the federal antitrust regulators to argue against standing legal doctrine that favors mergers among companies that don’t compete directly with each other.

That type of combination is called a vertical merger.

It was the first time in decades the government had challenged that doctrine by suing to block a vertical merger.

Leon “tried his best to make it appeal-proof,” said Fiona Schaeffer, an antitrust attorney at Milbank, Tweed, Hadley & McCloy. Still, the Justice Department apparently believes it has an adequate legal basis to show an error in Leon’s ruling, Schaeffer said.

“I think the Department of Justice believes this is a really important case that will influence the legal standard for analyzing vertical mergers in the 21st century,” she said. “They’ve put a lot of resources into challenging this vertical merger in a full trial on the merits. They have already done the heavy lifting on the case, and appealing (Leon’s) opinion will be an incremental effort with a significant potential upside.”

For its part, AT&T said Thursday it’s ready to defend Leon’s ruling against the government’s appeal.

“The court’s decision could hardly have been more thorough, fact-based and well-reasoned,” the company’s general counsel, David McAtee, said in a statement. “While the losing party in litigation always has the right to appeal if it wishes, we are surprised that the (Justice Department) has chosen to do so under these circumstances. We are ready to defend the court’s decision.”

From the bench, Leon had urged the government not to ask for a halt to the deal, saying it would bring “a manifestly unjust outcome.” The deadline could be missed, allowing under the merger agreement for either company to walk away from the deal and forcing AT&T to pay Time Warner a \$500 million “breakup” fee.

AT&T is a phone, cable and satellite behemoth that became the biggest pay-TV provider in the U.S. with its acquisition of DirecTV in 2014. It claims about 25 million of the 90 million or so U.S. households that are pay-TV customers.

The merger fuses a company that produces news and entertainment with one that funnels that programming to consumers. AT&T asserted during the trial that it needed to grow to survive in the era of Google, Amazon and Netflix.

When the deal was first made public in October 2016, it drew fire from then-candidate Donald Trump,

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who promised to kill it "because it's too much concentration of power in the hands of too few." Trump has publicly feuded with Time Warner's CNN, calling it "failing" and a purveyor of "fake news." The president's statements didn't come up during the trial, though his antipathy loomed in the background.

AT&T has committed to certain conditions under which it will run Time Warner's Turner Broadcasting, which includes CNN. For instance, it will manage the Turner networks as part of a separate business unit, distinct from operations of AT&T Communications, which includes DirecTV and U-verse.

In addition, AT&T Communications will have no say in setting Turner's prices or other terms in contracts with companies that distribute its content.

That apparently wasn't enough, however, to satisfy the Justice Department.

Already the ruling has started opening the floodgates to deal making in the fast-changing worlds of entertainment production and distribution.

Just a day after Leon ruled, Comcast launched a \$65 billion cash bid for the bulk of 21st Century Fox — topping Disney's all-stock \$52.5 billion offer in December.

Waiting in the wings are potential big-billions deals involving Verizon and CBS and T-Mobile and Sprint.

Streaming rules Emmys as Netflix snaps 17-year HBO streak

By LYNN ELBER, AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When Netflix snapped HBO's 17-year streak as Emmy nominations leader, more than bragging rights switched hands. It represented the breathtaking change in how audiences get and watch TV and the threat to traditional TV networks from streaming services.

Especially one like Netflix, whose multibillion-dollar investment in programming allowed it to rocket Thursday to 112 nominations just five years after launching its first original series, "House of Cards." That's double the total of nods it earned in 2016 and just ahead of HBO's 108 nods (down two from 2017).

Another streamed series, Hulu's "The Handmaid's Tale," earned 20 nominations and a chance to defend its title as best drama series at the 70th Primetime Emmy ceremony airing Sept. 17 on NBC.

HBO still boasts the year's most-nominated series, "Game of Thrones" (22 nods) and "Westworld" (20), while Netflix fielded "The Crown" (13 nods) and "Stranger Things" (12).

"The more distribution platforms, the more content's getting created, the more people are going to be working. ... It's good news for us in the industry," said Maury McIntyre, TV academy president. It's also good news for viewers, he said, who will "always be able to find something they're going to like."

"It all about niche broadcasting now. You can make a show and find an audience. It may not be a core audience, but it can be a hard-core audience," he said.

Ted Sarandos, Netflix's chief content officer, saluted "our creative partners on their unprecedented success today" in a statement noting that the nominations were gained across a wide variety of categories, including scripted, documentary and comedy specials.

Netflix's deep-pockets approach has lured a number of TV's biggest creative stars, including Shonda Rhimes and Ryan Murphy, away from traditional outlets.

Broadcast networks are taking the hardest blow, with their ratings as well as awards diminishing as viewers search out the more distinctive — and edgy — programming on unregulated cable and streaming outlets. Police procedurals and the current network rage for sitcom revivals certainly failed to impress Emmy voters.

The short-lived revival of "Roseanne," canceled because of star Roseanne Barr's racist tweet, drew only one major nomination, a supporting actress nod for Laurie Metcalf. Another revival, "Will & Grace," got Emmy love for nominees Megan Mullally and Molly Shannon but the main stars and series itself were snubbed.

In the drama and comedies series categories, NBC drama "This Is Us" and ABC sitcom "black-ish" are the sole network contenders. NBC topped the broadcast tally with 78 nominations, fueled by 21 bids for "Saturday Night Live," still on a satiric tear against the Trump administration.

Donald Glover's "Atlanta" was the top comedy series nominee with 16 bids, poised to take advantage of the absence this time around of three-time winner "Veep." "Atlanta" will face newcomers including "The

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Marvelous Mrs. Maisel," "GLOW" and "Barry." Others in the category include "black-ish," "Silicon Valley," "Curb Your Enthusiasm" and "Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt."

The newbie comedies aced out long-time Emmy favorite "Modern Family," a five-time winner and perennial nominee since it debuted in 2009 on ABC.

"Killing Eve" star Sandra Oh made as the first actress of Asian descent to be nominated for lead acting honors in a drama series. Oh had earned five supporting bids for "Grey's Anatomy."

"I feel tremendous gratitude and joy with this nomination" and am "thrilled" for the show's cast and crew, Oh said in a statement. She added a postscript: "I think my mother at this moment may actually be satisfied".

The TV industry has made recent strides toward inclusion, with Glover and Sterling K. Brown of "This Is Us" winning top acting awards last year and both nominated again. Only one nominations category is all-white, and in three categories minority actors account for more than half the nominees.

Among the notable first-time nominees: Issa Rae for "Insecure," Darren Criss, Ricky Martin and Penelope Cruz for "The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story," Tiffany Haddish for "Saturday Night Live," Letitia Wright for "Black Museum (Black Mirror)" and John Legend for "Jesus Christ Superstar Live in Concert."

If Legend wins, he'll join the rarified club of "EGOT" performers who've won an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar and Tony.

HBO's fantasy dragons-and-swords saga is a two-time best drama winner that sat out the last year's awards because of its production schedule. Although it's up for top series honors, it drew only three supporting actor bids for cast members Lena Headey, Nikolaj Coster-Waldau and Peter Dinklage.

"The Handmaid's Tale," the dystopian sci-fi series based on Margaret Atwood's novel, drew 20 bids, including one for last year's best actress winner, Elisabeth Moss, and supporting bids for Alexis Bledel, Ann Dowd, Yvonne Strahovski and Joseph Fiennes.

Other drama series contenders are "Westworld" and "The Americans," nominated for its final season and with nods for stars Keri Russell and Matthew Rhys.

Competing with Moss, Oh and Russell for lead drama actress are Claire Foy for "The Crown," Tatiana Maslany of "Orphan Black" and Evan Rachel Wood of "Westworld."

Rhys and Brown will be up against Brown's castmate Milo Ventimiglia, along with Jason Bateman for "Ozark" and Ed Harris and Jeffrey Wright for "Westworld." Brown is also nominated for comedy series guest actor for "Brooklyn Nine-Nine."

Glover and Anderson's competitors for best comedy series actor are Ted Danson for "The Good Place," Larry David for "Curb Your Enthusiasm," William H. Macy for "Shameless" and Bill Hader for "Barry."

AP Writer Nicole Evatt contributed to this report.

Online: <http://www.emmys.com>

Lynn Elber can be reached at lelber@ap.org and on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/lynnelber> .

New ways to conquer sleep apnea compete for place in bedroom

By CARLA K. JOHNSON, AP Medical Writer

Every night without fail, Paul Blumstein straps on a mask that prevents him from repeatedly waking up, gasping for air.

It's been his routine since he was diagnosed with a condition called sleep apnea. While it helps, he doesn't like wearing the mask.

"It's like an octopus has clung to my face," said Blumstein, 70, of Annandale, Virginia. "I just want to sleep once in a while without that feeling."

It's been two decades since doctors fully recognized that breathing that stops and starts during sleep

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is tied to a host of health issues, even early death, but there still isn't a treatment that most people find easy to use.

Airway pressure masks, the most common remedy, have improved in design, getting smaller and quieter, but patients still complain about sore nostrils, dry mouths and claustrophobia.

Now, new ways of conquering sleep apnea, and the explosive snoring that comes with it, are vying for a place in the bedrooms of millions of people craving a good night's sleep. Products range from a \$350 restraint meant to discourage back sleeping to a \$24,000 surgical implant that pushes the tongue forward with each breath.

Mouthpieces, fitted by dentists, work for some people but have their own problems, including jaw pain. Some patients try surgery, but it often doesn't work. Doctors recommend weight loss, but diet and exercise can be challenging for people who aren't sleeping well.

So far, no pills for sleep apnea exist, but researchers are working on it. One drug containing THC, the active ingredient in marijuana, showed promise in a study this year.

What is sleep apnea? In people with the condition, throat and tongue muscles relax and block the airway during sleep, caused by obesity, aging or facial structure. They stop breathing, sometimes for up to a minute and hundreds of times each night, then awake with loud gasping and snoring. That prevents them from getting deep, restorative sleep.

They are more likely than others to have strokes, heart attacks and heart rhythm problems, and they're more likely to die prematurely. But it's hard to tease out whether those problems are caused by sleep apnea itself, or by excess weight, lack of exercise or something else entirely.

For specialists, the first-choice, most-studied remedy remains continuous positive airway pressure, or CPAP. It's a motorized device that pumps air through a mask to open a sleeper's airway. About 5 million Americans have tried CPAP, but up to a third gave up during the first several years because of discomfort and inconvenience.

Martin Braun, 76, of New York City stopped using his noisy machine and awkward mask, but now he's trying again after a car crash when he fell asleep at the wheel. "That's when I realized, OK this is serious stuff already," said Braun, who has ordered a quieter CPAP model.

Sleep medicine is a relatively new field. The most rigorous studies are small or don't follow patients for longer than six months, said Dr. Alex Krist of Virginia Commonwealth University, who served on a federal guidelines panel that reviewed sleep apnea treatments before recommending against screening adults who have no symptoms.

"We don't know as much about the benefits of treating sleep apnea as we should," said Krist, vice-chair of the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force.

While scientists haven't proved CPAP helps people live longer, evidence shows it can reduce blood pressure, improve daytime sleepiness, lessen snoring and reduce the number of times a patient stops breathing. CPAP also improves quality of life, mood and productivity.

With noticeable results, many CPAP users, even those like Blumstein with a love-hate relationship with their devices, persist.

Blumstein was diagnosed about 15 years ago after he fell asleep behind the wheel at a traffic light. He shared his frustrations with using a mask at a recent patient-organized meeting with the Food and Drug Administration, as did Joelle Dobrow of Los Angeles, who said it took her seven years to find one she liked.

"I went through 26 different mask styles," she said. "I kept a spreadsheet so I wouldn't duplicate it."

Researchers are now focused on how to get people to use a mask more faithfully and predicting who is likely to abandon it and could start instead with a dental device.

"It's the bane of my existence as a sleep doctor," said Dr. James Rowley of Wayne State University in Detroit. "A lot of what sleep doctors do in the first few months after diagnosis is help people be able to use their CPAP."

Getting it right quickly is important because of insurers' use-it-or-lose-it policies.

Medicare and other insurers stop paying for a rented CPAP machine if a new patient isn't using it enough. But patients often have trouble with settings and masks, with little help from equipment suppliers, accord-

ing to Dr. Susan Redline of Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston.

All told, it can drive people toward surgery.

Victoria McCullough, 69, of Escondido, California, was one of the first to receive a pacemaker-like device that stimulates a nerve to push the tongue forward during sleep. Now, more than 3,000 people worldwide have received the Inspire implant. Infections and punctured lungs have been reported; the company says serious complications are rare.

McCullough said she asked her doctor to remove the device soon after it was activated in 2015.

"It was Frankenstein-ish. I didn't like it at all," McCullough said. "My tongue was just thrashing over my teeth."

Others like the implant. "My quality of life is 100 percent better," said Kyleene Perry, 74, of Edmonds, Washington, who got one in February after struggling with CPAP for two years. "People are saying, 'You look so much better.' I have a lot more energy."

The THC pill, known as dronabinol, already is used to ease chemotherapy side effects. A small experiment in 73 people suggests it helps some but wasn't completely effective. It may work better in combination with CPAP or other devices, said researcher David Carley of the University of Illinois at Chicago. He owns stock in Respire Rx Pharmaceuticals, which has a licensing agreement with the university for a sleep apnea pill.

As the search for better treatments continues, listening to patients will be key, said Redline.

"We are actually just treating a very tiny percentage of people effectively," she said.

AP News Researcher Jennifer Farrar in New York contributed to this report.

Follow AP Medical Writer Carla K. Johnson on Twitter: @CarlaKJohnson

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Syrian government raises its flag over cradle of 2011 revolt

PHILIP ISSA, Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — For the first time in more than seven years, the Syrian government raised its flag Thursday over Daraa, the first city to revolt against President Bashar Assad in 2011 and plunge the country into its calamitous civil war.

The display is laden with symbolism as the government moves to stamp out the last of the uprising against the 52-year-old Assad who has ruled with an iron fist over Syria for 18 years. His father Hafez Assad was president for three decades before him.

Officials accompanied by state media crews hoisted the two-star flag over the rubble of the city's main square, allowing it to wave in sight of the shell of the Omari Mosque where protesters first gathered in demonstrations demanding reforms then Assad's ouster in the spring of 2011.

The mosque has since been destroyed in the government's brutal crackdown against the city, which ranged from alleged torturing of dissidents to shelling the city with tanks and planes.

With control over Daraa, government forces can now focus on clearing the last pockets of the opposition and, separately, the Islamic State group from the frontier at the Golan Heights, which Israel seized from Syria in a 1967 war.

The corner of southwest Syria is an important corridor for trade between Syria and Jordan, and onward to the oil-rich Gulf states. But most of the important fighting against the revolt has already been concluded in shattering battles farther to the north for the main cities of Damascus, Aleppo, and Homs, and territories in between.

Some 400,000 people have been killed in seven years of war.

Protests in Daraa in 2011 against the government's mistreatment of teenage detainees ignited a national revolt against decades of authoritarian rule.

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Ahmad Masalmeh, a media activist formerly based in Daraa, said fighters in the city had accepted an offer of amnesty from the government, and let back in the state institutions and symbols of Assad's rule.

Rebels refusing to accept the deal will be exiled with their families to other rebel-held parts of the country.

The agreement follows a template imposed by the government and its Russian and Iranian backers that has forced hundreds of thousands of Syrians, including media activists, army defectors, and draft dodgers and their family members to give up their homes to lift the sieges against their cities.

Human rights monitors say the arrangements amount to a program of political and demographic engineering in Syria to secure Assad's rule.

Government forces launched an offensive to recapture southwest Syria and the areas neighboring Jordan and Israel on June 19. They surrounded Daraa's rebel-held quarters on Monday. Dozens have been killed in the campaign, including 162 civilians, according to Rami Abdurrahman, director of the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights — among them women and children.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told reporters at a news conference that the world body had tried "to prevent a bloodbath" in the region.

Late last month, Guterres had called for an immediate end to military operations and a return to cease-fire arrangements agreed to by Russia, the United States and Jordan.

"I think that our action was useful in that regard," he said. "But again the objective must be and remains entirely for us a political solution."

Mohamad al-Hanous, Daraa's governor, said government forces were in control of 80 percent of the city, according to the government-linked Central Military Media outlet, while Syrian state media reported late Wednesday that rebels in Daraa had agreed to surrender their heavy and medium weapons.

Under the terms of the agreement, Russia will deploy military police to maintain order in Daraa and facilitate the transition back to government rule, said a media activist inside who asked for anonymity out of concern for his safety.

Russian mediators are warning fighters and civilians against leaving Daraa for Idlib, the northwest Syrian province where over a million displaced Syrians are living in dire conditions and exposed to government airstrikes and the possibility of a future offensive.

"Idlib is a crematory," the activist said Russian mediators warned him.

Humanitarian groups say more than 300,000 people have been displaced by the government's southern offensive, moving toward the Jordanian border and to Quneitra, a province that borders Israel.

Israel and Jordan's borders are closed to refugees, and the aid group Oxfam said Thursday it was unable to deliver enough aid across the Jordan border to meet the needs of the internally displaced residents.

The circumstances are especially perilous for journalists and media activists, who say they fear for their lives if they are captured by government troops.

The Committee to Protect Journalists said Wednesday at least 70 journalists were trapped in southwest Syria and required protection.

Syria is one of the most dangerous countries in the world for journalists, according to CPJ. At least 120 journalists have been killed in the country in relation to their work since the conflict began in 2011, according to CPJ research. At the time of CPJ's most recent prison census, at least seven journalists were in Syrian state prisons while many others are missing.

Masalmeh, the media activist, said he was smuggled out of southwest Syria to Jordan four days ago, leaving his parents and extended family in Daraa.

He said he had not heard from them in two days.

Associated Press writer Edith M. Lederer at the United Nations contributed.

NATO insists it's united as Trump lashes allies over budgets

By LORNE COOK and JAMEY KEATEN, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — NATO leaders pledged Thursday to stand united against foes like Russia despite a tumultuous summit that saw U.S. President Donald Trump rip into his allies for failing to boost defense spending, casting a dark cloud over the world's biggest security alliance.

A year after fueling doubts about whether Washington would defend allies who refuse to pay their fair share, Trump launched into the two-day summit in Brussels by berating Germany, among others. Still, by the time it was over he was ebullient, saying that European allies and Canada had "really stepped up their commitment" — and intimating that his relentless hectoring had forced other allies to spend more than NATO's long-term goal of 2 percent of GDP on defense.

"Now we're very happy and have a very, very powerful, very, very strong NATO — much stronger than it was two days ago," Trump declared after what he described as a "fantastic meeting."

He was, however, short on details.

That's because, despite the political rhetoric, Trump — like his other 28 allies — signed a summit communique that had been agreed to by their ambassadors last weekend, five days before the summit began. Not a word was changed, officials confirmed.

The 23-page text did contain a reference to an old spending pledge the leaders made in 2014 after Russia annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula, convincing NATO of the importance of halting spending cuts. The more than 20 allies not spending 2 percent of GDP on their national military budgets pledged at the time to start investing more as their economies grew, and to move toward that goal by 2024.

Quizzed about whether Trump had demanded that his allies boost their budgets beyond 2 percent, Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg — who as NATO chairman has the unenviable job of speaking for all 29 allies — said: "We have made many decisions. You can read them in the declaration."

French President Emmanuel Macron was more straightforward. The declaration signed by the 29 NATO leaders, he said, "confirms the goal of 2 percent by 2024. That's all."

Among the most tangible decisions the allies did make was an invitation for Macedonia to join once its name dispute with Greece is resolved and a referendum held confirming its new name of North Macedonia. The leaders also signed off on a much-expanded military training mission in Iraq, and vowed to keep funding the Afghan military — to the tune of around \$1 billion a year — until 2024.

More modest announcements were made, most aimed at an increasingly belligerent Russia. Many have been in preparation for at least six months, having been endorsed by ambassadors, foreign and defense ministers to make it easier for the leaders to put pen to paper.

Two new military commands will be created — one in Norfolk, Virginia, the other in Ulm, Germany — to better move troops and equipment across the Atlantic and around Europe in times of crisis. The leaders also backed a plan to deploy 30 battalions, 30 air squadrons and 30 battleships within 30 days as reinforcements, but it is unlikely to be close to operational before 2020.

Indeed, very little happened in Brussels that had not been planned well in advance; apart from Trump sparking an unscheduled discussion about defense spending. The U.S. leader raised the issue during talks with NATO partners Georgia and Ukraine, and Stoltenberg invited those partners to leave so debate could continue freely.

"I felt, we all felt, that we needed more time for a discussion on burden sharing," Stoltenberg explained to reporters afterward — even though the summit statement had been signed the previous day. He claimed that the extraordinary session had sparked "a new sense of urgency and all allies agreed to redouble their efforts."

Stoltenberg did note that more than \$40 billion had been added to defense budgets since Trump came to office. Still, European economies have been growing recently, making the 2 percent of GDP target ever harder to achieve, and Trump's spending demand is at least in part aimed at drumming up business for the U.S. defense industry.

Questioned repeatedly about Trump's unpredictable demands, Macron injected a note of gravity, under-

lining that NATO's work is important, that it involves the lives of men and women — U.S. Corporal Joseph Maciel from California was killed in an insider attack in southern Afghanistan last weekend — and must not be taken lightly.

"Without doubt these days, modern law gives more importance to the background noise than the music that was played," Macron said as the summit wound down.

"President Trump is the leader of a great country. So he does what we all do. When we draw up a communique, we generally read it, we negotiate, and then we support it. So he knows what he's signed up to," Macron said.

The target of much of Trump's ire, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, left Brussels as unruffled and unflappable as ever, telling reporters that "there was a clear commitment to NATO by all."

Associated Press writer Raf Casert in Brussels contributed to this report.

Serena Williams nears 8th Wimbledon title, 24th Slam overall

By HOWARD FENDRICH, AP Tennis Writer

LONDON (AP) — Yes, this will be Serena Williams' 10th Wimbledon final. Yes, it's her 30th title match at any major. And, well, sure, she's widely regarded as not just the best of her era, but any era.

Let others shrug at this latest accomplishment, as if all it signified were merely another chance at another in a long line of trophies. Williams is not shy about saying she, for one, is impressed by this. Rightly so. For it was only about 10 months ago she was having a baby and then dealing with a serious health scare that followed.

Even after all of that, even after more than a year away from the game, even in only the fourth tournament of her comeback, Williams showed she's still capable of dominance. Especially at the All England Club, where a relatively routine 6-2, 6-4 victory over 13th-seeded Julia Goerges of Germany on Thursday put Williams one win away from an eighth championship.

She's also closing in on her 24th Grand Slam title, which would equal Margaret Court's all-time record.

"A lot of people were saying, 'Oh, she should be in the final,'" the 36-year-old Williams said. "For me it's such a pleasure and a joy because, you know, less than a year ago, I was going through so much stuff."

After hitting five aces with a serve that reached 119 mph, delivering 16 winners to only seven unforced errors, and covering the court so well with speed and effort, Williams will face another German, 11th-seeded Angelique Kerber, on Saturday.

"Whatever happens, honestly," Williams said, "it's an incredible effort from me."

The left-handed Kerber, a former No. 1 and two-time major champion, beat 12th-seeded Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 6-3 earlier Thursday.

"Seeing her back, it's great," said Kerber, who has lost six of eight previous matches against Williams. "I know that she is always pushing you to the limits."

Kerber let 2017 French Open champion Ostapenko determine the outcome of nearly every point. By the end, Ostapenko had far more winners, 30-10, and far more unforced errors, 36-7.

Williams vs. Kerber will be a rematch of the 2016 final. Williams won that for a second consecutive Wimbledon title, then sat out the grass-court tournament last year while pregnant, part of a 16-month gap between majors.

After giving birth to daughter Olympia last September, Williams was treated for blood clots.

"I lost count after, like, four surgeries," said Williams, who has been wearing compression leggings this fortnight as a precaution.

Her first Grand Slam tournament back was the French Open, where she won three matches before withdrawing last month because of an injured chest muscle.

All of the time away pushed someone who's spent more than 300 weeks ranked No. 1 down the rankings — she began Wimbledon at 181st, but was seeded 25th on account of her past success — and no one could quite be sure how the American would fare over these two weeks.

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Not even Williams knew.

"This is not inevitable for me. I had a really tough delivery ... and almost didn't make it, to be honest," Williams said. "I remember I couldn't even walk to my mail box, so it's definitely not 'normal' for me to be in a Wimbledon final."

The victory over Goerges extended Williams' winning streak at Wimbledon to 20 matches, dating to the start of the 2015 edition. She's also won her past 15 Grand Slam matches since the start of the 2017 Australian Open, which she won while pregnant.

That title pushed her past Steffi Graf's record of 22 majors in the half-century professional era; Court won some of her Slams during the amateur era.

Williams' match against Goerges was even until 2-all, 30-all. Until then, Goerges, the first seeded player Williams faced these two weeks, showed she was capable of trading power from the baseline and big serves with Williams.

There were moments when watching Goerges made it easy to wonder how it could be possible she never had been past a major's fourth round until now. Or, more to the point on this afternoon, how such a stinging serve and groundstrokes didn't help her avoid first-round exits each of the past five years at Wimbledon.

But she couldn't keep up with Williams, who grabbed 18 of 22 points and five consecutive games to close the first set and begin the next.

"She brings her 'A game' in a lot of important moments," Goerges said. "We saw that she improved every single match she's playing here."

There was one brief blip to come: Williams got broken for the only time while serving for the match at 5-3. Immediately, though, she broke back at love to end it, placing her left fist on her chest when Goerges' last shot landed long.

Later, Williams was asked whether this has been her most trying comeback in a career that's had its share, including an earlier bout with blood clots in her lungs.

"I don't know if it's been the toughest, because I have Olympia. For me, I only see joy out of it," Williams said with a smile. "In a way, it's by far the toughest, but in a way it's by far the best."

Follow Howard Fendrich on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/HowardFendrich>

More AP tennis coverage: <https://www.apnews.com/tag/apf-Tennis>

Player-coach bond may have saved lives in Thai cave ordeal

By EDDIE PELLIS, AP National Writer

The day-to-day pearls of wisdom imparted by coaches to players — from youth sports, to high school, to college and even the pros — are well-known: Try your hardest, don't lose focus, support your teammates, keep your chin up.

Sometimes, heeding that advice can lead to winning a game or a championship.

In the case of the 12 youth soccer players trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand, it may have helped save their lives.

Unsure of their prospects for more than two weeks while they awaited rescue, the kids and their coach found themselves in a life-and-death struggle that placed an acute focus on the value of teamwork, positive attitude and strong leadership.

Everyone made it out alive, in no small part, according to rescuers and sports experts, because they listened to their coach, Ekapol Chanthawong, or "Coach Ake," and remembered the lessons athletes have been absorbing on soccer pitches, basketball courts and baseball diamonds for decades.

"The role of sports is that sports skills become life skills," said John O'Sullivan, founder of the Changing the Game Project, which teaches about the value of sports in everyday life. "It's learning to work with others, depending on your teammates, trusting them. These things become life skills when they're

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intentionally taught through sports. These kids had to use these sports-life skills much sooner than they might have hoped for.”

The best in the coaching business are often those who master the art of subtly instilling habits that can carry over to different venues later in life. The general idea: Making a good pass won't necessarily lead to a win that day. But doing all the small things it takes to be a good teammate could have a profoundly positive effect down the road.

“The lesson isn't always the outcome,” said John Tauer, the title-winning basketball coach at Division III University of St. Thomas in Minnesota, who also teaches social psychology. “We talk about it all the time. We don't control the outcome. We control the effort and how we play together.”

In the case of the cave ordeal, he said, “it was, ‘How do we get through the next five minutes together?’ It was staying calm if someone's panicking. Doing all those little things put them in a situation where they could achieve that goal.”

Chanthawong spent nearly a decade as a Buddhist monk and learned the art of meditation — a skill that may have conveyed a sense of calm to the boys, ages 11 to 16, as they awaited rescue while the days turned into weeks.

He had also spent lots of time with the kids before the harrowing trip. The team's off-the-field adventures included cycling trips, river rafting, swimming in waterfalls and exploring caves.

They were the sort of team-building trips that coaches use to build rapport among teammates who might not otherwise see each other off the field. Those kinds of bonding experiences can also serve to establish the coach as a trustworthy figure.

“Trust isn't just about his ability to coach soccer,” O'Sullivan said. “It's about his connection to these kids. It's about being dependable, believable, vulnerable and all these other things. When you go into this situation where it's ‘I'm going to try to save your life,’ that's when trust really, really matters.”

There were other teams at work saving the kids — up to 100 military rescuers, including Thai Navy SEALs, all of whom took part in teambuilding exercises of their own.

The head of the U.S. rescue contingent, Derek Anderson, described the soccer team's survival and rescue as the ultimate example of teamwork. He said the boys were “incredibly resilient.”

“What was really important was the coach and the boys all came together and discussed staying strong, having the will to live, having the will to survive,” Anderson said.

It took about nine hours to extract each of the 12 trapped players and their coach from the winding cave. Each player had to wear diving equipment and make it through a maze of dark waterways.

“The lesson here is about doing things the right way, trusting that we're all on the same page, and then, at some level, it's rolling the dice,” Tauer said. In sports, as in the cave crisis, “a leader tries to put you in a spot to do everything to the best of your ability. But then, you've got to trust.”

Sparse details on Iowa plans that bypass Obama's health law

By **BARBARA RODRIGUEZ** and **DAVID PITT**, Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Josh Crist made the two-hour drive to the Iowa Capitol in April to celebrate Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds' signing of a new health care option designed to lower costs by skirting requirements of the Affordable Care Act.

The 35-year-old farmer and electrician from Tipton figured the new plans offered through the conservative and politically powerful Iowa Farm Bureau were certain to reduce the more than \$2,000 monthly bill he pays for his family's health insurance. He had feared the cost would climb as his existing policy expires, forcing him to buy from an ACA exchange without help from subsidies.

But nearly four months later, Crist is still waiting to see the fine print on what exactly would be covered under the Farm Bureau plans, and he's no longer sure he'll sign up.

“There's a lot of unknowns right now,” he said.

The new Iowa option, which Republicans and some Democrats in the Legislature pushed through before knowing many of the details, represents another attempt by GOP-controlled states to chip away at some

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of the federal rules imposed under the 2010 law championed by former President Barack Obama. It comes as the Trump administration says it's freezing payments under an "Obamacare" program that protects insurers with sicker patients from financial losses.

"Many Iowans faced a choice of going broke or going without health care coverage. And that's really not a real choice," Reynolds' campaign tweeted earlier this month. "That's why we found an Iowa approach to help our farmers and small business owners."

There is no state oversight of the new law, which the Iowa Farm Bureau is offering with assistance from an insurance company. Democrats argue cutting costs can only be achieved by slashing benefits, siphoning young and healthy customers away from the ACA market while increasing the burden for elderly and sicker recipients.

National health care experts have reacted skeptically, arguing it could be a moneymaker for the Farm Bureau but won't help people most in need.

"If you're collecting premiums from people who don't use health care services very much you can make money," said Sabrina Corlette, a health policy research professor at Georgetown University. "It's when you actually have to cover medical services that insurance becomes a less-profitable business."

Iowa Insurance Commissioner Doug Ommen said about 26,000 residents quit buying individual policies this year "due to the demoralizing rates faced by Iowa citizens not eligible for subsidies caused by structural defects in the ACA." Some of that group may have found work that offered insurance or joined a small group policy.

Ommen's office estimates only about 600 Iowans continued to pay premiums out of their own pockets last year. Many others likely gave up on buying health insurance altogether, determining it's unaffordable.

Many self-employed Iowans who buy their own insurance are farmers, which is why the Farm Bureau stepped up to offer policies.

Under the law, the Farm Bureau will decide coverage options and prices, pay claims and assume the financial risk. Wellmark Blue Cross and Blue Shield will process claims and provide access to its network of clinics, doctors and hospitals.

By not technically being labeled insurance, the law allows the Farm Bureau to ignore ACA rules and operate without consumer oversights provided by the Iowa Insurance Division.

The Farm Bureau, a nonprofit with 159,000 members, modeled its plan after a Tennessee law approved in 1993. It was promoted as a way to serve people who can't afford insurance sold through marketplaces established by the ACA.

Wellmark Chief Administrative and Legal Officer Cory Harris rejected arguments that the Farm Bureau policies will provide skimpy coverage.

"Who would buy that? Farm Bureau hasn't gone through all of this to offer a product that the market doesn't want," Harris said.

A Farm Bureau spokeswoman said there are still no specifics to offer about the policies, noting it could be October or November before they offer plan details to members. The open enrollment period for the ACA runs from Nov. 1 through Dec. 15.

Sarah Lueck, a health policy expert at the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, said Iowa's "mystery plan" approach contrasts with other states, such as Wisconsin and Minnesota, which have tried to keep premiums stable by compensating insurers that accept high-risk clients.

"How this rolls out, when it rolls out and how many people they're going to try to touch, can have a big impact on the rest of the insurance market," she said.

Reynolds has argued Iowa's insurance market was "robust" before the Affordable Care Act and that the Farm Bureau plans would be similar to some offered years ago.

Iowa had one of the lowest uninsured rates in the country back then, although "comprehensive health insurance was unaffordable for many lower to moderate income earners," according to an analysis earlier this year by the state's insurance commissioner.

Now, a big concern for some Iowans is that the new Iowa law allows policies with lifetime caps on cov-

erage, which is prohibited under the ACA.

The Farm Bureau also could require applicants to complete a lengthy health questionnaire, base premium costs on existing conditions or deny coverage to cancer survivors or those with chronic ailments like diabetes. A Tennessee questionnaire, for example, asks whether the applicant in the past seven years has been treated, diagnosed or experienced symptoms of any of nearly 70 medical conditions including varicose veins, high cholesterol, celiac disease, headaches and back pain.

That's troubling to Erin Mobley, a 31-year-old PhD student at the University of Iowa who was diagnosed with a form of cancer when she was 6. While she has been in remission for years, Mobley still visits with multiple doctors to ensure she stays healthy.

"It makes me a little nervous to think what could happen," she said.

Karen Pollitz, a senior fellow at the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation, questioned Iowa's decision to give the Farm Bureau so much autonomy in offering health coverage.

"It's like states saying, 'We don't want to offer public schools,'" she said.

Millions from anonymous donors to influence Kavanaugh fight

By **RICHARD LARDNER, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Millions of dollars from anonymous donors are helping shape the fight over President Donald Trump's Supreme Court nominee as Republicans and Democrats undertake a bruising battle for ideological control of the nation's loftiest tribunal.

Even before Trump's announcement Monday that he had picked Brett Kavanaugh, a federal appeals court judge, advocacy groups had begun lining up for and against the nomination and said they would spend heavily to influence the outcome of what's expected to be a tumultuous confirmation process.

One of the most prominent groups on the right, the Judicial Crisis Network, said it's prepared to spend as much as \$10 million or more in a pro-Kavanaugh advertising campaign that includes targeting vulnerable Senate Democrats. The liberal Demand Justice has spelled out plans for a \$5 million effort to oppose Kavanaugh, beginning with ads aimed at pressuring moderate Republicans.

While the groups' positions on Kavanaugh are clear, their sources of cash aren't.

The anonymity is made possible by federal rules that permit groups structured as tax-exempt social welfare organizations to shield the identities of their benefactors. The upshot is that deep-pocketed donors may wield significant influence without ever revealing who they are, unless they choose to.

Brendan Fischer of the nonprofit Campaign Legal Center said the arrangement is problematic because the public has no way of knowing whether the donors have a specific interest in a matter that may come before the Supreme Court. It also allows the donors to be rewarded by strategically disclosing their donations to people in positions of authority in Washington.

"This secrecy prevents the public from evaluating these messages and keeps legislators from properly weighing the lobbying pressures to which they are subjected," he said.

Demand Justice and the Judicial Crisis aren't the only advocacy groups mobilizing around Kavanaugh's nomination, but they're two of the most visible.

Demand Justice launched stopkavanaugh.com shortly after Trump introduced Kavanaugh on Monday night. The website described his nomination as "the biggest fight of our lifetimes." The Judicial Crisis Network set up confirmkavanaugh.com, calling Kavanaugh "a person of impeccable character, extraordinary qualifications, independence, and fairness."

The Judicial Crisis Network has received robust financial support for years from the Wellspring Committee, an obscure nonprofit founded a decade ago. Conservative activist Neil Corkery is Wellspring's president and sole board member. He previously was treasurer of the Judicial Crisis Network. His wife, Ann Corkery, ran Wellspring before he did, according to federal tax return records.

Both groups are registered as social welfare organizations, which are permitted to engage in limited political activities as long as politics isn't their primary focus. Known by their IRS designation as 501(c)(4)s, they often include civic-minded groups such as homeowner associations and volunteer fire departments.

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"Involvement in political campaigns is not social welfare activity," according to the political money website Open Secrets. "But it's allowed as long as it is less than half of what the organization does."

Wellspring donated \$39.3 million to the Judicial Crisis Network between 2010 and 2016, according to the tax filings. The single largest contribution, \$23.4 million, was made in 2016, the same year President Barack Obama nominated Merrick Garland, also a federal appeals court judge, to the Supreme Court following Justice Antonin Scalia's death. Garland's nomination would be blocked by Senate Republicans, who argued the winner of the 2016 presidential race should pick Scalia's replacement.

The Judicial Crisis Network said it spent more than \$17 million in 2016 and 2017 to run ads against Garland's nomination and later in support of Neil Gorsuch, the federal appeals court judge nominated to the high court by Trump and confirmed by the Senate to replace Scalia.

Wellspring isn't required to disclose its donors. A list of its contributors for 2016, the latest year for which tax records are publicly available, excludes their names and addresses. It shows \$32.2 million in contributions from eight separate sources. One donation was for \$28.4 million, nearly 90 percent of Wellspring's total revenue for that year.

Neil Corkery declined to say how much Wellspring donated to the Judicial Crisis Network in 2017 and thus far in 2018. A message conveyed through Wellspring's office manager said that information will be available after the tax returns for those years are filed. The organization's 2016 return was submitted last November, so it may be months before new numbers are released.

The Judicial Crisis Network and Wellspring share another connection: a small, largely unknown company called the BH Group LLC. Wellspring paid the BH Group \$750,000 for unspecified public relations work while the Judicial Crisis Network paid the company \$947,000 for unspecified research, according to tax records for 2016. The BH Group donated \$1 million to Trump's inaugural committee in December 2016.

Demand Justice was formed just a few months ago and is structured in such a way that it doesn't have to file annual tax returns. That's because it's "fiscally sponsored" by a tax-exempt social welfare organization called the Sixteen Thirty Fund. The Sixteen Thirty Fund files federal tax returns but doesn't have to disclose the identities of its donors.

Beth Kanter, a spokeswoman for the Sixteen Thirty Fund, said the organization "is nimble and can get projects off the ground quickly in a way that donors can't do on their own." In addition to Demand Justice, there are nearly 40 other initiatives sponsored by the Sixteen Thirty Fund, according to information filed with the District of Columbia's Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs.

Kanter said the Sixteen Thirty Fund "strictly follows all laws." The organization's president is Eric Kessler, the founder of Arabella Advisors and a former Clinton administration official. The executive director of Demand Justice is Brian Fallon, a former top aide to Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., who later advised Hillary Clinton's presidential campaign in 2016.

The Sixteen Thirty Fund's tax return for 2016, the latest available, lists more than 60 donors who gave \$21 million in contributions that ranged from \$5,000 to \$7.3 million.

"We have a diverse set of donors that share our commitment to social justice," Kanter said.

Associated Press investigative researcher Randy Herschaft in New York contributed to this report.

Follow Richard Lardner on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/rplardner>

Asian shares mostly higher; Japan's Nikkei up on weak yen

By YOUKYUNG LEE, AP Business Writer

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Asian shares are mostly higher, rebounding from jitters over the U.S.-China trade disputes for a second straight day.

KEEPING SCORE: Japan's Nikkei 225 jumped 1.3 percent to 22,483.13 and South Korea's Kospi gained 0.8 percent to 2,302.32. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index added 0.3 percent to 28,578.86. But Shanghai Composite Index in mainland China fell 0.6 percent to 2,821.73. In Australia, S&P-ASX 200 dipped 0.2

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percent to 6,255.10. Stocks in Singapore, Taiwan and other Southeast Asian markets were higher.

ANALYST'S TAKE: Despite recent escalations in trade battles, "the sky hasn't fallen just yet as optimism crept back into the market," said Stephen Innes, OANDA's head of trading in Asia Pacific region. "The broader market continues to remain in wait and see mode for further details on how China might retaliate on trade."

TRADE: China has yet to give details on what kind of "firm and forceful measures" it would use to respond to the fresh round of potential tariff hikes on \$200 billion of goods announced by the U.S. on Tuesday. But Beijing stepped up pressure on Washington by suggesting that U.S. companies lobby American leaders. The U.S. and China are yet to resume negotiations over the dispute that led to tariff hikes on each other's goods.

WALL STREET: U.S stocks finished higher on Thursday led by tech companies. The S&P 500 index rose 0.9 percent to 2,798.29. The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.9 percent to 24,924.89. The Nasdaq jumped 1.4 percent to 7,823.92, closing at an all-time high. The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks added 0.4 percent to 1,690.28.

OIL: Benchmark U.S. crude lost 2 cents to \$70.31 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract dipped 0.1 percent to settle at \$70.33 a barrel on Thursday. Brent crude, used to price international oils, fell 35 cents to \$74.10 per barrel in London. It finished 1.4 percent higher at \$74.45 per barrel on Thursday.

CURRENCIES: The dollar rose to 112.65 yen from 112.52 yen. The euro fell slightly to \$1.1666 from \$1.1672.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, July 13, the 194th day of 2018. There are 171 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 13, 1960, John F. Kennedy won the Democratic presidential nomination on the first ballot at his party's convention in Los Angeles, outdrawing rivals including Lyndon B. Johnson, Stuart Symington and Adlai Stevenson.

On this date:

In 1787, the Congress of the Confederation adopted the Northwest Ordinance, which established a government in the Northwest Territory, an area corresponding to the eastern half of the present-day Midwest.

In 1793, French revolutionary writer Jean-Paul Marat was stabbed to death in his bath by Charlotte Corday, who was executed four days later.

In 1863, deadly rioting against the Civil War military draft erupted in New York City. (The insurrection was put down three days later.)

In 1923, a sign consisting of 50-foot-tall letters spelling out "HOLLYWOODLAND" was dedicated in the Hollywood Hills to promote a subdivision (the last four letters were removed in 1949).

In 1939, Frank Sinatra made his first commercial recording, "From the Bottom of My Heart" and "Melancholy Mood," with Harry James and his Orchestra for the Brunswick label.

In 1965, President Lyndon B. Johnson nominated Thurgood Marshall to be U.S. Solicitor General; Marshall became the first black jurist appointed to the post. (Two years later, Johnson nominated Marshall to the U.S. Supreme Court.)

In 1972, George McGovern received the Democratic presidential nomination at the party's convention in Miami Beach.

In 1977, a blackout hit New York City in the mid-evening as lightning strikes on electrical equipment caused power to fail; widespread looting broke out. (The electricity was restored about 25 hours later.)

In 1978, Lee Iacocca was fired as president of Ford Motor Co. by chairman Henry Ford II.

In 1985, "Live Aid," an international rock concert in London, Philadelphia, Moscow and Sydney, took place

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to raise money for Africa's starving people.

In 1999, Angel Maturino Resendiz (ahn-HEHL' mah-tyoo-REE'-noh reh-SEHN'-deez), suspected of being the "Railroad Killer," surrendered in El Paso, Texas. (Resendiz was executed in 2006.)

Ten years ago: An assault by militants on a remote U.S. base in Afghanistan close to the Pakistan border killed nine American soldiers and wounded 15. Anheuser-Busch agreed to a takeover by giant Belgian brewer InBev SA. Talk show host Les Crane died in Greenbrae, Calif., at age 74.

Five years ago: A jury in Sanford, Florida, cleared neighborhood watch volunteer George Zimmerman of all charges in the shooting of Trayvon Martin, the unarmed black teenager whose killing unleashed furious debate over racial profiling, self-defense and equal justice. Actor Cory Monteith, who'd shot to fame in the hit TV series "Glee" but was beset by addiction struggles, was found dead in a hotel room in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada; he was 31. Attorney Leonard Garment, 89, a friend and adviser to President Richard Nixon, died in New York.

One year ago: A federal judge in Hawaii weakened President Donald Trump's travel ban by vastly expanding the list of U.S. family relationships that visitors from six Muslim-majority countries could use to get into the country. President Donald Trump defended his son's meeting with a Russian lawyer during the presidential campaign, characterizing it as standard campaign practice. China's most prominent political prisoner, Nobel Peace Prize winner and human rights campaigner Liu Xiaobo (lee-OO' show-BOH') died in prison of liver cancer at the age of 61.

Today's Birthdays: Game show announcer Johnny Gilbert (TV: "Jeopardy!") is 94. Actor Patrick Stewart is 78. Actor Robert Forster is 77. Actor Harrison Ford is 76. Singer-guitarist Roger McGuinn (The Byrds) is 76. Actor-comedian Cheech Marin is 72. Actress Daphne Maxwell Reid is 70. Actress Didi Conn is 67. Singer Louise Mandrell is 64. Rock musician Mark "The Animal" Mendoza (Twisted Sister) is 62. Actor-director Cameron Crowe is 61. Tennis player Anders Jarryd is 57. Rock musician Gonzalo Martinez De La Coteria (Marcy Playground) is 56. Comedian Tom Kenny is 56. Country singer-songwriter Victoria Shaw is 56. Bluegrass singer Rhonda Vincent is 56. Actor Kenny Johnson is 55. Roots singer/songwriter Paul Thorn is 54. Country singer Neil Thrasher is 53. Actor Ken Jeong is 49. Bluegrass musician Mike Barber (The Gibson Brothers) is 48. Singer Deborah Cox is 45. Actress Ashley Scott is 41. Rock musician Will Champion (Coldplay) is 40. Actor Fran Kranz is 37. Actress Aya Cash is 36. Actor Colton Haynes is 30. Actor Steven R. McQueen is 30. Soul singer Leon Bridges is 29. Actress Hayley Erin ("General Hospital") is 24. Actor Kyle Harrison Breitkopf (BRYT'-kahpf) is 13.

Thought for Today: "If I were to wish for anything, I should not wish for wealth and power, but for the passionate sense of the potential, for the eye which, ever young and ardent, sees the possible. Pleasure disappoints, possibility never." — Soren Kierkegaard, Danish philosopher (1813-1855).