

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Jan. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 193 ~ 1 of 43



**The eastern sky was red and it cast a red tent on the steam from the ethanol plant west of Groton.** (Photo by Jay Peterson)

## Groton Area Schedule of Events

**Friday, January 18, 2019**

Speech Fiesta Debate at Watertown High School

No School - Faculty Inservice at Warner High School

6:30pm: Girls Varsity Basketball Game vs. Aberdeen Roncalli @ Aberdeen Roncalli High School.

### **Skating Rink Hours**

**Open Monday - Thursday: 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

**Friday: 4 p.m. to 10 p.m.**

**Saturday: 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.**

**Sunday: 1 p.m. to 9 p.m.**

### **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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## Roncalli pulls away from Groton Area in the second half

Aberdeen Roncalli pulled away in the second half to defeat the Groton Area Tigers in boys' basketball action played in Groton Thursday night, 59-43.

Groton Area took a 5-0 lead before Roncalli quickly rallied to take the lead. The game was tied three times as the Cavalier took a 15-12 lead at the end of the first quarter and a 32-26 lead at halftime. The Cavaliers outscored the Tigers, 11-5, to take a 43-31 lead going into the fourth quarter.

Groton Area had 16 turnovers while Roncalli had seven. The Tigers shot 25 percent in the first quarter, 75 percent in the second quarter, 15 percent in the third quarter and 33 percent in the fourth quarter. For the game, The Tigers were 15 of 45 for 33 percent. Roncalli made 43 percent in the first quarter, 46 percent in the second quarter, 44 percent in the third quarter and 43 percent in the fourth quarter. The Cavaliers made 22 of 50 shots for 44 percent. Cade Guthmiller and Treyton Diegel each made one three-pointers while the Cavaliers made six three-pointers. From the line, Groton Area made 10 of 17 shots for 58 percent off of Roncalli's 18 team fouls. Roncalli made 11 of 13 free throws for 85 percent off of Groton Area's 12 team fouls.

Brodyn DeHoet led the Tigers with 17 points followed by Jonathan Doeden with eight, Treyton Diegel had five, Jayden Zak and Austin Jones each had four, Cade Guthmiller had three and Kaden Kurtz had two points.

Brady Morgan led the Cavaliers with 20 points followed by Isaac VanOrman with 12, Brandon Fauth 10, Harrison Reede had six, Salesi Mouna had four, Grayden, Jacob O'Keefe and Max Reede each had two points and Sam Sather had one point.

Groton Area had more rebounds, 30-23, with Kurtz having eight and DeHoet seven. Jones had a block and Doeden had three of the team's seven assists. Groton Area had one steal while Roncalli had 13.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Allied Climate Professionals, Bahr Spray Foam, Blocker Construction, Doug Abeln Seed Company, James Valley Seed - Doug Jorgensen, John Sieh Agency, Locke Electric, Milbrandt Enterprises, Inc.; Northeast Chiropractic Clinic, Professional Management Services, Inc.; Sanford Health, Tyson DeHoet Trucking, Weber Landscaping.

Roncalli won the junior varsity game, 40-29. Jayden Zak led the Tigers with nine points followed by Cyruss DeHoet and Chandler Larson with four apiece, Lucas Simon and Lane Tietz each had three and Tristan Traphagen, Jace Krol and Abdimalik Mohamed each had two points.

Roncalli won the C game, 42-33. Cole Simon led Groton Area with 11 points followed by Jackson Cogley with 10, Wyatt Hearnen had five, Kannon Coats, Lane Tietz and Tate Larson each had two and Jordan Bjerke added a free throw.

Groton Area is now 4-6 on the season and will host Northwestern on Tuesday, Jan. 21.

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It's Girls' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Roncalli  
Cavaliers**

**VS**



**Groton Area Tigers**

Friday, Jan. 18, 2019

8:00 p.m.

at Aberdeen Roncalli

Broadcast of this game is sponsored by

**Aberdeen**  
**Chrysler Center**

901 Auto Plaza Drive  
Aberdeen, SD

**800.874.9173**

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

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda  
January 21, 2019 – 7:00pm  
Groton Community Center

1. Minutes
2. Bills
3. December Finance Report
4. Skating report
5. Second Reading of Ordinance #724 – City Council Meeting Dates
6. Election reminder – Petition circulation may begin January 25<sup>th</sup>, and petitions must be submitted by February 22<sup>nd</sup>
7. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
8. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
9. Adjournment



**81st Annual  
Carnival of Silver Skates**

Sunday, January 27<sup>th</sup>—2:00 and 6:30  
Groton Ice Rink—West Side of Groton, SD

Join us for a fun “Road Trip”!

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

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

\*\*Check us out on Facebook at “Silver Skates”





## Corn Ethanol Production Plays Important Role in South Dakota's Economy

Corn and corn ethanol production are vital components of South Dakota's economy. The corn ethanol industry supports thousands of jobs in our state and contributes a significant amount of revenue to our local communities. Corn ethanol has taken a hit in recent years, due in part to the high number of waivers issued by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to small refineries. This has reduced the amount of ethanol required by the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), thus reducing the demand for corn and corn ethanol.

The RFS is a program created by Congress and administered by the EPA that is aimed at increasing the use of renewable fuels such as corn ethanol in our nation's fuel supply. The RFS requires 15 billion gallons of corn ethanol to be blended into transportation fuel in 2019.

The Senate Environment and Public Works (EPW) Committee, on which I serve, recently held a confirmation hearing for President Trump's nominee to be EPA Administrator, Andrew Wheeler. Mr. Wheeler currently serves as EPA Acting Administrator and was EPA Deputy Administrator before that. The EPW Committee is responsible for oversight of the EPA, which is a job I take very seriously.

During Mr. Wheeler's hearing, I had the chance to ask him about the RFS, including the number of waivers issued by the EPA to small refineries. According to the Renewable Fuels Association, this data shows that for 2016 and 2017, the RFS volumes were effectively lowered by 2.25 billion gallons.

The RFS has provided the statutory certainty necessary for the corn industry to grow and thrive, and as a result corn ethanol has become a vital component of our nation's fuel supply. In granting so many waivers to small refineries, the EPA has effectively reduced the amount of ethanol required by the RFS and reduced the demand on corn and corn ethanol. This underscores the urgent need for year-round sales of E-15, which is 15 percent ethanol blended with 85 percent gasoline. Allowing for year-round sales of E-15 would be a huge win for corn and corn ethanol producers and could result in approximately 700 million additional gallons of ethanol sold, or 280 million additional bushels of corn annually.

President Trump has said on a number of different occasions that he supports year-round sales of E-15. I had a chance to reiterate the need for year-round E-15 sales when I was with the president during his visit to South Dakota last fall, and he agreed. I'm pleased Mr. Wheeler agrees for the need of year-round sales of E-15 as well. In a meeting I had with him recently and during his confirmation hearing, he reiterated to us that the administration and the EPA are committed to getting E-15 done before the summer driving season. We intend to hold him to that commitment.

An open marketplace with more fuel options for consumers encourages competition and drives down consumer fuel costs. E-15 also lowers evaporative and tailpipe emissions when compared to 10 percent ethanol fuel, improving the environment. Resolving this issue also provides a pathway to increase farm income at a time when producers are struggling with trade uncertainty, a depressed farm economy, low commodity prices and tight margins.

I plan to support Mr. Wheeler's confirmation and I look forward to working with him on these and other issues at the EPA that impact our state.

## Thank You to Sen. Thune

From the prairies to the badlands, agriculture and wildlife have helped shaped South Dakota's history, cultural heritage, and way of life. South Dakotans know that farmers and ranchers can be some of the best stewards of our land—and our communities and wildlife thrive when they're provided with tools and resources to responsibly steward the land.

No piece of federal legislation is more important for farmers, ranchers, or private lands conservationists than the Farm Bill. At a time when bipartisanship is elusive in Washington, Republicans and Democrats came together in December to pass the 2018-2022 Farm Bill. The bill, championed by Senator John Thune, directs billions of dollars a year to support rural communities by providing economic assurances and stability, while conserving land, water and wildlife. It is a win-win.

Even though the final bill garnered overwhelming bipartisan support, the behind-the-scenes negotiations were extremely contentious at times. Throughout every step of the Agriculture Committee's two-year process, Senator Thune served as a steady voice of reason, who consistently brought the parties together to find common-ground.

In Washington, Senator Thune has gained a reputation of being someone fiercely devoted to finding common-sense solutions that support both agriculture and conservation. Like Senator Mike Rounds, he's an advocate of what we call "collaborative conservation." It's the belief that we conserve and restore our wildlife populations and natural resources most effectively by working together collaboratively. After all, it is much more effective and less expensive to recover at-risk wildlife populations by investing in proactive conservation measures before the species decline to the point where they're endangered and require listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Examples of Senator Thune advancing collaborative conservation abound throughout the new Farm Bill. Senator Thune worked hard with Minnesota Senator Amy Klobuchar to take important steps in collecting and putting U.S. Department of Agriculture data to use to improve conservation practices and help farmers make important land management decisions. He also collaborated with Senator Rounds, Senator Klobuchar, and Colorado Senator Michael Bennett to improve the sodsaver program by closing a damaging loophole that allowed native grasslands to be plowed up for row cropping (the bill would have been even stronger had the House adopted more of Senator Thune's proposals, especially those related to expanding sodsaver protections for grasslands beyond the prairie pothole states and improving management of the Conservation Reserve Program).

Senator Thune had a strong hand in ensuring the final bill provides full, robust funding for conservation programs that are vitally important to South Dakota, like the Conservation Reserve Program which he worked tirelessly with Senator Rounds to expand. All told, the new Farm Bill keeps over 24 million acres of private land in conservation and allocates more than \$2.9 billion annually for conservation practices on additional millions of acres.

All of these policies are smart conservation, but they're also smart economics. States across the nation envy South Dakota's pheasant, duck, and deer populations—and the tourist dollars they support. While not as large as agriculture, outdoor recreation and conservation-related tourism are a large and growing part of our economy. Anglers, hunters, wildlife viewers, boaters, state park visitors, and snowmobilers generate nearly \$2 billion in economic activity annually across South Dakota. This supports more than 18,000 full and part-time jobs and \$520 million of income. Further, conserving habitat that supports healthy pollinator populations improves the output of every South Dakota farm.

As a result of Senator Thune's commitment to agriculture and collaborative conservation, our farmers will be more productive, our soils will be healthier, our streams and wetlands will be cleaner, and our wildlife will be more abundant. At a time when Washington can barely agree on naming a Post Office, Senator Thune is demonstrating that South Dakota common-sense can still prevail. And South Dakota's hunters, anglers, farmers and rancher—and anyone that eats healthy local food—owe him our thanks.

Collin O'Mara, CEO, National Wildlife Federation

Chris Hesla, Executive Director, South Dakota Wildlife Federation

## Thune, Markey Reintroduce Bill to Crack Down on Illegal Robocall Scams

WASHINGTON — U.S. Sens. John Thune (R-S.D.), a member of the Senate Commerce Committee and chairman of the Subcommittee on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet, and Ed Markey (D-Mass.), also a member of the Commerce Committee and author of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act, this week reintroduced the Telephone Robocall Abuse Criminal Enforcement and Deterrence (TRACED) Act (S. 151). Amidst ever-increasing numbers of robocall scams, the TRACED Act gives regulators more time to find scammers, increases civil forfeiture penalties for those who are caught, promotes call authentication and blocking adoption, and brings relevant federal agencies and state attorneys general together to address impediments to criminal prosecution of robocallers who intentionally flout laws.

"Robocall scams are more than just a nuisance to folks, they're a shameful tactic to prey on the vulnerable," said Thune. "The TRACED Act holds those people who participate in robocall scams and intentionally violate telemarketing laws accountable and does more to proactively protect consumers who are potential victims of these bad actors."

"As Americans continue to suffer an endless stream of harassing spoofed calls and robocalls, the bipartisan TRACED Act will provide every person with a phone much needed relief," said Markey. "To address the scourge of calls, we need a simple formula: call authentication, blocking, and enforcement, and this legislation achieves all three. I thank Chairman Thune for his continued partnership on this effort, and look forward to seeing this legislation through to its passage."

### **Summary of the TRACED Act:**

Broadens the authority of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to levy civil penalties of up to \$10,000 per call on people who intentionally flout telemarketing restrictions.

Extends the window for the FCC to catch and take civil enforcement action against intentional violations to three years after a robocall is placed. Under current law, the FCC has only one year to do so, and the FCC has told the committee that "even a one-year longer statute of limitations for enforcement" would improve enforcement against willful violators.

Brings together the Department of Justice, FCC, Federal Trade Commission (FTC), Department of Commerce, Department of State, Department of Homeland Security, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and other relevant federal agencies, as well as state attorneys general and other non-federal entities to identify and report to Congress on improving deterrence and criminal prosecution at the federal and state level of robocall scams.

Requires voice service providers to adopt call authentication technologies, enabling a telephone carrier to verify that incoming calls are legitimate before they reach consumers' phones.

Directs the FCC to initiate a rulemaking to help protect subscribers from receiving unwanted calls or texts from callers.

In 2018, when Thune served as chairman of the Commerce Committee, the committee heard testimony under subpoena from Adrian Abramovich, the president of a now defunct company called Marketing Strategy Leaders. Abramovich, who has since been assessed a \$120 million fine by the FCC for making nearly 100 million robocalls between 2015 and 2016, described a telemarketing operation as rather easy to put together and nimble, thus making enforcement difficult. His identification by the FCC and assessment of civil penalties raised questions for the committee about the lack of criminal prosecution for offenders caught intentionally and repeatedly violating telemarketing laws.

As one report estimated, the number of spam calls will grow from 30 percent of all phone calls last year to 42 percent of all calls early this year. The TRACED Act would give the FCC more flexibility to enforce rules in the short term, while setting in motion consultations to increase prosecutions of violations, which often require international cooperation.

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## Today in Weather History

January 18, 1979: An area of low pressure moving across the region brought widespread heavy snow of 5 to 10 inches to much of Minnesota from the 18th through the 20th. Travel was difficult if not impossible in many areas where there were near blizzard conditions. Schools and businesses closed along with many flights canceled.

January 18, 1999: One to 4 inches of snowfall combined with winds of 30 to 45 miles an hour brought blizzard conditions to part of northeast South Dakota. Highway 12 and Interstate 29 were most affected by the low visibilities. There was a seven-car pileup on Highway 12 near Andover with minor injuries. As a result, traffic was shut off in the westbound lanes for a few hours. Over 200 people were stranded overnight at a restaurant near Summit. There was also a rollover north of Summit which resulted in minor injuries. One traveler said the visibility was frequently near zero.

January 18, 2014: A strong Alberta Clipper low-pressure system moved over the Northern Plains Friday night and Saturday morning. Anywhere from a trace to just near 3 inches of fresh snowfall accompanied this low-pressure system. Over this area, strong northwest winds of 25 to 40 mph developed by late Friday night with gusts of 45 to 55 mph. A few areas even experienced gusts to 58 mph or higher again. This system packed such a wallop that a couple of instances of thundersnow occurred as evidenced by the cloud to ground lightning strikes showing up in southwestern Day County and northwestern Clark County early Saturday morning.

Numerous reports of visibility reduced to one-quarter mile or less across northeast South Dakota, specifically on or just to the east of the Glacial Lakes region, were received.

1943: Idaho's coldest night on record occurred as the low temperature dropped to 60 degrees below zero at Island Park Dam.

1950: Oregon continued in the grips of one of its worst winter months ever. A significant winter storm brought a thick glaze of ice to Columbia River Gorge, stopping automobile traffic in its tracks. Hundreds of motorists were stranded and had to be rescued by train. Even that was difficult with the coating of ice. The storm caused widespread power outages. [Click HERE](#) for more information.

1971: A warm Santa Ana condition brought a 95 degree reading to Los Angeles, the highest January temperature on record. It was 95 degrees in Palm Springs, the highest temperature on record for January as well.

1973: The first tornado death of the year has been registered north of Corey, Louisiana during the afternoon hours. Although a girl was killed when a tenant farm was destroyed, a baby received only minor injuries when it was carried 300 to 400 yards by the tornado.

1980: A tropical depression that developed on January 15th became Tropical Storm Hyacinthe on the 18th. From the 18th through the 27th this storm produced a world record rainfall amount of 223.5 inches at Cratère Commerson, on the island of La Réunion.

1819 - A small but intense hurricane passed over Bay Saint Louis, MS. The hurricane was considered the worst in fifty years. Few houses were left standing either at Bay Saint Louis or at Pass Christian, and much of the Mississippi coast was desolate following the storm. A U.S. cutter was lost along with its thirty-nine crew members. The storm struck the same area that was hit 150 years later by Hurricane Camille. (David Ludlum)

1930 - The temperature at Greensburg, KY, soared to 114 degrees to set a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1934 - The temperature at Grofino, ID, climbed to 118 degrees to establish a record for Idaho. (The Weather Channel)

1952 - A severe storm with hail up to an inch and a half in diameter broke windows, ruined roofs, and stripped trees of leaves near Benson, AZ. The temperature dropped to 37 degrees, as hail was three to four inches deep, with drifts 46 inches high. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - Severe thunderstorms moving out of South Dakota across Iowa produce high winds which derailed eighteen piggyback trailer cars of a westbound freight train near Boone, IA. Sixteen of the cars fell 187 feet into the Des Moines River. The thunderstorms also spawned a number of tornadoes, including one which caused twenty-five to fifty million dollars damage at Sloan, near Sioux City, IA. (Storm Data)



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Winter Weather Advl...

**Today**



**100%**

Heavy Snow and Patchy Blowing Snow

High: 6 °F ↓

**Tonight**



Decreasing Clouds

Low: -14 °F


**Saturday**



Cold

High: 3 °F

**Saturday Night**



20% → 50%

Slight Chance Snow then Chance Snow

Low: -3 °F

**Sunday**



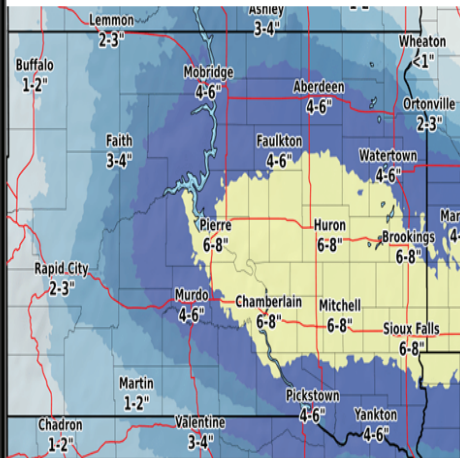
20%

Slight Chance Snow then Mostly Cloudy

High: 12 °F

## Moderate to Heavy Snow Today

### Expected Snowfall Amounts Today



### Timing

- Through this afternoon. Diminishing later this evening.
- Bitter cold temperatures moving in tonight.
- Gusty northeast winds persist through this evening.



### Impacts

- Difficult travel through this evening due to significant snowfall.
- Blowing and drifting snow with reduced visibilities expected, especially in open country areas.



### Uncertainty

- Potential for higher snowfall amounts further north.

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD



[weather.gov/Aberdeen](http://weather.gov/Aberdeen)



National Weather Service Aberdeen



@NWSAberdeen

Updated: 1/18/2019 5:13 AM Central

Published on: 01/18/2019 at 5:17AM

A winter storm moving through today will produce several inches of snowfall, especially along and south of U.S. Highway 212. Some blowing & drifting will also be possible, particularly in open areas. Bitterly cold wind chills will follow late tonight into Saturday morning.

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## Yesterday's Weather

High Outside Temp: 18 °F at 2:54 PM

Low Outside Temp: 2 °F at 1:17 AM

High Gust: 13 mph at 10:10 PM

Precip:

## Today's Info

Record High:

Record Low:

Average High: 22°F

Average Low: 1°F

Average Precip in Jan.: 0.29

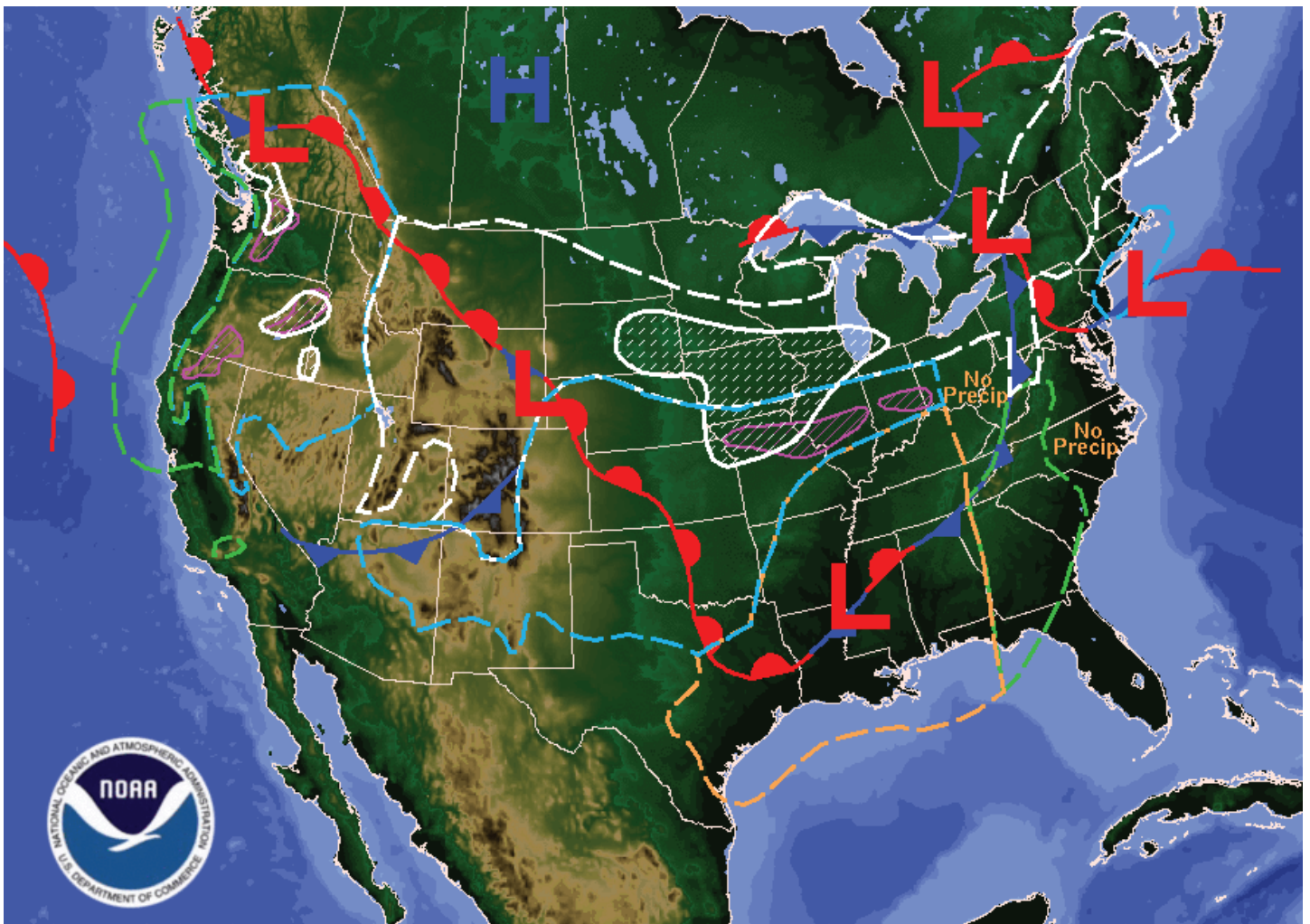
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 0.29

Precip Year to Date: 0.00

Sunset Tonight: 5:20 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:09 a.m.



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Fri, Jan 18, 2019, issued 4:58 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

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

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## CLEAN - IT MEANS WHAT IT MEANS

Son, said Freds mother, dinner is ready, and you havent washed your hands. They are dirty!

Theyre not dirty, he protested, just a little bit soiled.

According to Psalm 24, theres no difference between dirty and soiled. Only those who have clean hands and a pure heart are invited to worship God. So, what does the Psalmist mean when he talks about clean hands?

Clean hands literally means clean habits. Habits are formed over time and are rarely noticed until they draw attention to themselves in one way or another. A habit may be good or bad, depending on its outcome. If it leads to a self-nourishing behavior or something that leads to wellness or well-being, it is a good habit. But if it is a toxic behavior and leads to self-destruction or death, it is certainly a bad habit.

Clean habits would, of course, begin with a clean heart. The Bible is unapologetic when it reminds us what comes out of us has a home within us. In other words, God in - God out. If God is not dwelling within us, His ways certainly cannot come out of us.

We also need clean hopes, because we do not worship the idols of this world. If God is not in first place, He may as well be considered as being in last place. Why? Whatever is in first place is what we are indeed worshiping.

And we also need a clean history - not making any promises we do not intend to keep. If we say it, we must do it or make restitution make-up - what it costs the other.

Prayer: Lord, were careful not to touch unclean things or allow them to touch us. May we be that way toward sin. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 24:4a The one who has clean hands and a pure heart.

## 2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm
- 03/17/2019 Groton American Legion Spring Fundraiser
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program Transit Fundraiser (Middle Thursday in June)
- 06/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 06/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 06/21/2019 Best Ball Golf Tourney
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest
- 08/22/2019 First Day of School
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main
- 11/09/2019 Groton American Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course 2019 Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services



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## News from the Associated Press

### South Dakota schools close ahead of storm

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — An approaching winter storm has some school districts in South Dakota canceling classes.

The National Weather Service posted a winter storm warning for much of central and eastern South Dakota Friday. That warning stretches into southwestern Minnesota and southern Wisconsin.

Forecasters expect 4 to 7 inches of widespread heavy snow in South Dakota. Sioux Falls, Brandon Valley and Dell Rapids are among the schools closed Friday. Winds of 15 to 25 mph could cause blowing snow in rural areas.

### Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

#### BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Roncalli 59, Groton Area 43  
Akron-Westfield, Iowa 59, Elk Point-Jefferson 56  
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 70, Avon 47  
Baltic 70, Freeman Academy/Marion 61  
Beresford 66, Canton 41  
Bon Homme 56, Parkston 40  
Bridgewater-Emery 80, Howard 55  
Chamberlain 79, Miller 75, OT  
Corsica/Stickney 72, Ethan 64  
Dell Rapids 68, Madison 65  
Deuel 81, Britton-Hecla 66  
Faulkton 39, Ipswich 29  
Freeman 58, Menno 54  
Hanson 54, Canistota 52  
Irene-Wakonda 70, Alcester-Hudson 33  
Kimball/White Lake 80, Gregory 73, OT  
Lennox 66, Platte-Geddes 39  
Lower Brule 64, Crow Creek 61  
Marty Indian 66, Scotland 43  
Milbank 68, Hamlin 53  
Mitchell Christian 65, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 61  
Oelrichs 50, New Underwood 48  
Pierre 55, Sturgis Brown 53  
Pine Ridge 68, Winner 54  
Rapid City Christian 60, Bennett County 23  
281 Conference Tournament  
Seventh Place  
Sunshine Bible Academy 53, Wessington Springs 46  
Fifth Place  
Iroquois 52, Hitchcock-Tulare 25  
Third Place  
Highmore-Harrold 46, Wolsey-Wessington 45  
Championship(equals)

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James Valley Christian 55, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 49

## **GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**

Akron-Westfield, Iowa 47, Elk Point-Jefferson 34  
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 54, Avon 51  
Baltic 51, Freeman Academy/Marion 38  
Belle Fourche 55, Douglas 36  
Beresford 55, Canton 21  
Brookings 55, Sioux Falls Washington 50  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 76, Standing Rock, N.D. 29  
Clark/Willow Lake 54, Webster 37  
Dakota Valley 57, Tri-Valley 53  
DeSmet 52, Castlewood 40  
Deuel 47, Britton-Hecla 20  
Edmunds Central 41, Potter County 37  
Faulkton 60, Ipswich 46  
Hamlin 48, Milbank 20  
Harrisburg 48, Aberdeen Central 33  
Hill City 46, Lead-Deadwood 42  
Irene-Wakonda 63, Alcester-Hudson 34  
McLaughlin 63, Mobridge-Pollock 48  
Miller 44, Chamberlain 39  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 46, Kimball/White Lake 27  
Newell 36, Custer 23  
Parkston 47, Bon Homme 35  
Platte-Geddes 48, Gayville-Volin 30  
Scotland 48, Marty Indian 31  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 51, Brandon Valley 43  
Sully Buttes 60, Stanley County 18  
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 42, Mitchell Christian 28  
Wall 57, Philip 49  
Warner 62, Wilmot 25  
White River 81, Gregory 48  
Winner 57, Pine Ridge 56  
281 Conference Tournament  
Seventh Place  
Sunshine Bible Academy 44, Iroquois 35  
Fifth Place  
Wessington Springs 45, James Valley Christian 31  
Third Place  
Wolsey-Wessington 37, Highmore-Harrold 36  
DVC Tournament  
Consolation Semifinal  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 43, Elkton-Lake Benton 28  
Semifinal(equals)  
Deubrook 56, Arlington 28  
Estelline/Hendricks 38, Colman-Egan 25  
Little Moreau Tournament  
First Round  
Dupree 78, Tiospaye Topa 43  
Faith 68, Bison 22

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McIntosh 49, Lemmon 47  
Timber Lake 58, Harding County 35

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

## **Obanor, Weaver combine for 55 points; ORU beats South Dakota**

TULSA, Okla. (AP) — Kevin Obanor and D.J. Weaver combined for 55 points and Oral Roberts held off South Dakota for a 77-74 victory on Thursday night.

The 6-foot-8 freshmen forwards from Houston each had career highs in the win. Obanor scored 31 points on 7-of-14 shooting, made 16 of 18 free throws and grabbed 11 rebounds. Weaver was 8 of 11 from the floor, made five 3-pointers and finished with 24 points. Carlos Jurgens chipped in 14 points and Kerwin Smith had 10 rebounds for the Golden Eagles (8-13, 4-2 Summit League).

Obanor made two free throws to give Oral Roberts a 77-72 lead with 1:04 to play, and Tyler Peterson scored on a layup to pull South Dakota to 77-74 with 52 seconds remaining. Peterson missed a jumper with 15 seconds to go and Stanley Umude couldn't connect on a potential game-tying 3 with five seconds left.

Umude scored 21 points to lead South Dakota (8-10, 2-3). Peterson had 20 points and 12 rebounds, and Cody Kelley added 14 points with 10 boards.

Ranchers: Government shutdown restricts cattle transactions

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota ranchers say the partial government shutdown is stalling some cattle sales because checks from buyers require authorization from the Farm Service Agency.

Ranchers who have an FSA loan need an agent to co-sign the check before it can be cashed or deposited, the Rapid City Journal reported .

Laurie and Bernard Barnaud have been farming and ranching just east of the Belle Fourche Reservoir since 1993. They were scheduled to drive to town to sell around 50 calves today.

"We can sell them, but we can't get our money," Laurie said from her ranch in Nisland. "They will hand us a check, and it will sit pinned on the refrigerator until the government opens up. This is our income, and it's unavailable to us."

Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue addressed the issue by announcing early Wednesday that roughly half of the nation's FSA offices would open Thursday, Friday and Tuesday, including 25 offices in South Dakota. But the ranchers contend all the problems caused by the shutdown won't be rectified in a few days.

They're still required to pay off the 2018 operating loans before securing a new loan for 2019. Those services won't be available during the brief availability.

"I don't want their pity. I want action," Laurie asserted. "Everybody knows what happens when you don't pay the bills."

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

## **Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender to seek third 2-year term**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City Mayor Steve Allender says he'll seek a third two-year term in office. The former police chief defeated two-term incumbent mayor Sam Kooiker (KWAY'-kur) in 2015 and ran unopposed in 2017.

The Rapid City Journal reports that this year's mayoral election is June 4.

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

## South Dakota tourism has 9th straight year of growth in 2018

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota officials say the state's tourism industry reached record levels of visitors, spending and economic impact in 2018.

Officials said Thursday that South Dakota tourism marked its ninth consecutive year of growth. A new study by Tourism Economics finds that visitor spending reached \$4 billion in 2018, up 2.5 percent from a year earlier.

Visitation was about 14 million, up 1.4 percent.

Tourism Secretary Jim Hagen says tourism generates revenue and creates jobs.

Hagen says consumer confidence remains very high and 2019 will be a "really good year." Hagen says he feels confident that the partial federal government shutdown will end by the time peak season begins.

## State Senate panel advances permitless concealed carry law

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A Senate panel on Thursday approved a measure that would allow people to carry concealed handguns without a permit in South Dakota, advancing a conservative priority that supporters hope will be achieved under new Gov. Kristi Noem's administration.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted 4-3 to send the bill to the full chamber. A similar proposal passed the Legislature in 2017 before being vetoed by former Gov. Dennis Daugaard, but Noem offered support for a so-called constitutional carry law during her campaign.

Noem said Lt. Gov. Larry Rhoden met Thursday at her request with gun-rights advocates, law enforcement, community leaders and lawmakers about firearms legislation. The meeting was intended to discuss priorities and how to find agreement by the end of the 2019 session, she said.

"I've supported the principle of constitutional carry, and ... I've talked extensively about that, so we will look at specific language in each of these bills and see where the support is," Noem said. "I've also talked extensively about the fact that it's important to me that we consult with law enforcement officers ... because their role is incredibly important with making sure that we're protecting people while protecting people's rights."

It is now a misdemeanor for someone to carry a concealed pistol or to have one concealed in a vehicle without a permit; openly carrying a firearm in South Dakota is legal.

Senate President Pro Tempore Brock Greenfield, the permitless carry bill's sponsor, said people are being asked to "lease back" their constitutionally protected right to bear firearms under the current system.

"We're not trying to create a situation in which South Dakota is the Wild West," Greenfield said. "We're simply trying to create a situation in which we recognize that the Second Amendment is paramount and will not be infringed."

South Dakota Sheriffs' Association lobbyist Richard Tieszen, who opposed the measure, said the group believes the limitations that exist today under the permit process are reasonable. The association's greatest concern is that the proposal wouldn't apply just to state residents, but also to anyone who comes to South Dakota, he said.

Democratic Sen. Craig Kennedy, a bill opponent, said that he believes rules in state law that restrict who can get a permit wouldn't apply to people who carry concealed without one under the legislation. Some of the disqualifying factors are covered in other areas of the law, but not all of them, he said.

But Greenfield said he's simply seeking to change how law-abiding citizens can carry concealed handguns.

"My legislative intent is to simply affect the permitting process and not create a situation in which it's somehow legal for a person to possess a firearm when in present day it's illegal for that very person to obtain a firearm and to carry concealed," Greenfield said.

At least 13 states —including neighboring North Dakota — allow people to carry a concealed handgun without a permit, according to the National Rifle Association Institute for Legislative Action. At the end of November, there were roughly 107,000 pistol permits in South Dakota, according to the Secretary of State's office.

Daugaard rejected the 2017 constitutional carry bill, saying the state's current permitting process is



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"simple and straightforward." Another try failed last year after he issued a veto threat.

The Senate panel also voted Thursday to advance a measure that would allow firearms in the Capitol building. Republican Sen. Stace Nelson, the bill's main sponsor, said the measure would give lawmakers and state employees in the Capitol the ability to protect themselves "if and when something dire should happen."

State Court Administrator Greg Sattizahn said the measure causes concern that it's intended to limit the state Supreme Court's authority regulate weapons in the courtroom.

## Rural bankers in 10 states worry over farm loan defaults

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A monthly survey of rural bankers in parts of 10 Plains and Western states suggests banks are growing increasingly concerned about farm loan defaults in 2019.

More than 4 of every 10 bankers questioned for the Rural Mainstreet survey for January said they expect farm loan defaults to be the year's biggest challenge.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey, says their outlook is being negatively influenced by tariffs, trade tensions, weak commodity prices and the partial federal government shutdown.

The survey's overall index dropped to 51.5 from December's 54.2. Any score above 50 suggests a growing economy in the months ahead, while a score below 50 indicates a shrinking economy.

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

## SD Gov. Kristi Noem to give state budget address next week

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem says she will present her state budget proposal to the Legislature next week.

The Republican governor said Thursday that her first budget address will be held Jan. 23. Noem says the budget plan former Gov. Dennis Daugaard outlined in December was a starting point, but she'll make changes based on her priorities.

In her State of the State address earlier in January, Noem discussed priorities including mental health, fighting the methamphetamine epidemic and connecting more people to high-speed internet. She says the budget address will follow the outline she gave in the State of the State.

The Legislature will reshape the current budget and approve the next one during the 2019 session.

Daugaard's proposal for the 2020 budget year that starts July 1 envisioned roughly \$53 million in spending hikes.

## Parole denied in 1994 slaying of pregnant woman

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota corrections officials have denied parole for a man convicted of killing a pregnant mother in 1994.

Fifty-year-old Joaquin Jack Ramos pleaded his case for parole during a hearing Wednesday at the South Dakota State Penitentiary. Ramos was sentenced to life in prison after pleading guilty to first-degree manslaughter in the death of Debbie Jo Martines. She was 27 years old and pregnant with her fourth child when she was fatally shot in Rapid Valley.

The Argus Leader says about 10 people, including Martines' family, friends and the case's original prosecutor, Pennington County State's Attorney Mark Vargo, came to the hearing in opposition of Ramos' parole. Each said they don't think Ramos has changed or taken responsibility for the crime.

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

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## Death of technician in cell tower fall investigated

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Occupational Safety and Health Administration is investigating the death of a technician who fell from a cell tower in southwestern South Dakota.

Pennington County sheriff's officials say 23-year-old Andrew Psomas, of Broomfield, Colorado died Jan. 10 while working on a tower near Caputa east of Rapid City. Psomas was working for True North Tower, a company based in Sauk Rapids, Minnesota.

OSHA has six months to conduct an investigation into the death. It can issue citations or propose fines if the agency finds safety violations.

## Lawsuit filed over tribal police pursuit

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The parents of a woman who suffered permanent brain damage in a crash that followed a chase by tribal police in southeastern South Dakota are suing the federal government.

A second person in the vehicle that crashed has also filed suit in federal district court this week.

The Argus Leader reports Morgan Ten Eyck and Micah Roemen were passengers in a pickup truck stopped by Flandreau Santee Sioux police near a house where police had raided an underage party in June 2017. The pickup driver drove off after he was initially pulled over. Tribal police began a chase even though the stop was not on reservation land. The pursuit lasted more than 30 minutes and speeds exceeded 100 mph.

The lawsuit accuses tribal police of violating federal policy on high speed chases.

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

## May's foes gather as Britain's Brexit stalemate drags on

By JILL LAWLESS and GREGORY KATZ, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Talks to end Britain's Brexit stalemate appeared deadlocked Friday, with neither Prime Minister Theresa May nor the main opposition leader shifting from their entrenched positions.

May has been meeting with politicians from several parties in a bid to find a way forward after her European Union divorce deal was rejected by Parliament this week.

But she is unwilling to move her "red lines," which include taking Britain out of the bloc's customs union. And Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn refuses to meet with May unless she rules out the possibility of Britain leaving the EU with no deal.

May, who narrowly defeated a no-confidence vote triggered by Corbyn this week, said Thursday it was "not within the government's power to rule out no-deal" because by law Britain will leave the EU on March 29 "unless Parliament either agrees a deal with the EU or the U.K. ... chooses to stay in the EU permanently."

Britain's political chaos has spurred EU nations to step up preparations for a disorderly British exit. France and other countries are spending millions, hiring thousands of workers and issuing emergency decrees to cope with the possibility that Britain will crash out of the bloc, sparking major disruptions to travel and trade.

On Friday, a group of high-profile Germans made an emotional appeal to Britain to stay in the bloc. A letter published in the Times of London said that "without your great nation, this Continent would not be what it is today: a community defined by freedom and prosperity." It went on to list things Germans would miss about Britain, among them "tea with milk" and "going to the pub after work."

The signatories include Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer, leader of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Christian Democratic Union, Airbus chief Tom Enders and former German national soccer player Jens Lehmann.

Amid the political impasse, May's domestic opponents are gathering. Ex-Foreign Secretary Boris Johnson used a speech Friday to accuse May of lacking the "gumption" to get a favorable Brexit deal from the EU.

Johnson, who harbors ambitions of becoming party leader and prime minister, said May should use the crushing defeat of her withdrawal deal in Parliament as a cudgel to force the EU to give Britain a better deal.

He dodged a question of whether he would support May as party leader if a sudden general election is called, saying one wouldn't be necessary.

"Go back to Brussels and get a better deal," he urged May, even though EU leaders have said the with-

drawal agreement won't be renegotiated.

May will publish her revived Brexit blueprint on Monday, before lawmakers debate it — and doubtless try to alter it — on Jan. 29.

In neighboring France, the prime minister inspected his country's preparedness for a no-deal Brexit, visiting the Eurotunnel complex and meeting with small businesses on the English Channel coast.

Prime Minister Edouard Philippe made the trip to the Calais area Friday under heavy security. A day earlier, the French government activated its contingency plans for the possibility that Britain leaves the European Union on March 29 without rules in place for cross-border trade and travel.

France and other European countries are hiring thousands of customs and border agents and bolstering security at airports and ports to gird for a cliff-edge Brexit.

France is paying special attention to the Eurotunnel beneath the English Channel, which carries millions of passengers annually and freight trucks that play a significant role in Britain's trade with the continent.

Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit at: <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

## Zimbabwe in 'total internet shutdown' amid violent crackdown

By FARAI MUTSAKA, Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe on Friday faced a "total internet shutdown," a media group said, after a days-long violent crackdown on people protesting a dramatic fuel price increase. Badly injured people streamed into a hospital in the capital after alleged assaults by security forces.

"Our country is going through one of the most trying periods in its history," the Zimbabwe Catholic Bishops' Conference said in a sweeping statement lamenting the government's "intolerant handling of dissent" and its failure to halt economic collapse.

Media group MISA-Zimbabwe shared a text message from the country's largest telecom company, Econet, calling the government's internet order "beyond our reasonable control." The High Court will hear a challenge to the shutdown on Monday, the Zimbabwe Lawyers for Human Rights said.

A prominent pastor and activist who faces a possible 20 years in prison on a subversion charge arrived at court, one of more than 600 people arrested this week. Evan Mawarire has called it "heartbreaking" to see the new government of President Emmerson Mnangagwa acting like that of former leader Robert Mugabe.

Mawarire is accused of inciting civil disobedience online. "It's a shame what's happening," the pastor said.

International calls for restraint by Zimbabwe's security forces are growing, while Mnangagwa prepares to plead for more investment at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. He announced the fuel price increase on the eve of his overseas trip, leaving hardline former military commander and Vice President Constantino Chiwenga as acting president.

Gasoline in the economically shattered country is now the world's most expensive. Zimbabweans heeded a nationwide stay-at-home call earlier this week in protest. Rights groups and others have accused security forces of targeting activists and labor leaders in response, with the United States expressing alarm.

The U.N. human rights office on Friday urged Zimbabwe to stop the crackdown, noting reports of intimidating door-to-door searches by security forces.

The Zimbabwe Association of Doctors for Human Rights has said it had treated 68 cases of gunshot wounds and 100-plus other cases of "assaults with sharp objects, booted feet, baton sticks" and more.

Injured people streamed into a private hospital in the capital, Harare, on Thursday. Some had broken legs. A nurse attended to a man with a broken spine.

Albert Taurai told The Associated Press he had ventured out to look for bread when plainclothes officers wearing masks beat him up, accusing him of barricading roads.

Keith Frymore, a 21-year-old security guard, had a torn lip. He told the AP a group of uniformed soldiers attacked him at work.

"I need \$70 to get help here. I don't have that kind of money," he said.

Other hungry Harare residents who ventured out seeking food have reported being tear-gassed by police. Soldiers were still controlling long fuel lines in the capital on Friday, and many wary residents stayed at home.

Zimbabweans had briefly rejoiced when Mnangagwa succeeded Mugabe, who was forced out in late 2017, thinking the new president would deliver on his refrain that the country "is open for business." But frustration has risen over the lack of improvement in the collapsed economy, which doesn't even have a currency of its own.

The internet shutdown cuts off crucial access to the mobile money that Zimbabwe's government uses to pay teachers and other public workers. Some said they can no longer afford fares for public transport, and some shops have run out of basics such as bread.

Death tolls in this week's unrest have varied. Eight people were killed when police and military fired on crowds, Amnesty International said. Zimbabwe's government said three people were killed, including a policeman stoned to death by an angry crowd.

The demonstrations amount to "terrorism," Information Minister Monica Mutsvangwa said, blaming the opposition. State Security Minister Owen Ncube thanked security forces for "standing firm."

But among those arrested are several ruling ZANU-PF party community leaders as well as a soldier and a police officer.

The UK's minister for Africa, Harriett Baldwin, has summoned Zimbabwe's ambassador to discuss "disturbing reports of use of live ammunition, intimidation and excessive force" against protesters.

The European Union in a statement late Thursday noted the "disproportionate use of force by security personnel" and urged that internet service be restored.

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Associated Press photographer Tsvangirayi Mukwazhi in Harare contributed.

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## Congo court poised to rule on presidential vote challenge

By SALEH MWANAMILONGO and CARLEY PETESCH, Associated Press

KINSHASA, Congo (AP) — Congo's constitutional court is poised to rule as early as Friday on a challenge to the presidential election results. But the African Union continental body has issued a surprise last-minute request for Congo's government to suspend the announcement of final results, citing "serious doubts" about the vote.

Declared runner-up Martin Fayulu has requested a recount, alleging fraud.

Upholding the official election results could spark violence in a country hoping for its first peaceful, democratic transfer of power since independence in 1960.

The AU statement late Thursday said heads of state and government agreed to "urgently dispatch" a high-level delegation to Congo to find "a way out of the post-electoral crisis" in the vast Central African nation rich in the minerals key to smartphones and electric cars around the world.

The statement reflects concern by Congo's many neighbors that more unrest could spill across borders. The delegation including heads of state will leave for Congo on Monday, an AU spokeswoman said.

Congo's government dismissed the AU request, with spokesman Lambert Mende calling it a matter for judicial bodies, and "the independence of our judiciary is no problem." He added that "we will not refuse contacts with other members of the African Union."

Fayulu has asked the court for a recount of the Dec. 30 election, asserting that Congo's electoral commission published provisional results wildly different from those obtained at polling stations.

Congo faces the extraordinary accusation of an election allegedly rigged in favor of the opposition. Outside court, Fayulu has asserted that outgoing President Joseph Kabila made a backroom deal with the declared winner, Felix Tshisekedi, when the ruling party's candidate did poorly.



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The electoral commission has said Tshisekedi won 38 percent of the vote and Fayulu 34 percent. However, results compiled by the influential Catholic Church's 40,000 election observers show Fayulu won easily with 61 percent.

In leaked data published this week by some media outlets, attributed to the electoral commission and representing 86 percent of the votes, Fayulu won 59.4 percent while Tshisekedi received 19 percent.

The court could uphold the election results, order a recount or order a new election.

It is likely that the court, full of Kabila appointees, will confirm Tshisekedi's victory, said Adeline Van Houtte, an analyst at the Economist Intelligence Unit.

"It will come with the risk of increased instability, which could put a halt on the electoral transition," Van Houtte said in a statement. "However, it would also mean that Kabila will have avoided the worst-case scenario for him," a Fayulu presidency.

Fayulu, a lawmaker and businessman who is outspoken about cleaning up Congo's sprawling corruption, is widely seen as more of a threat to Kabila, his allies and their vast wealth. Tshisekedi, the son of charismatic opposition leader Etienne who died in 2017, is relatively untested and has said little since the election.

Congo's inauguration is set for Tuesday.

The election came after more than two turbulent years of delays as many Congolese worried that Kabila, in power since 2001, was seeking a way to stay in office. Barred from serving three consecutive terms, Kabila already has hinted he might run again in 2023.

All of the election results, not just in the presidential race, have been widely questioned after Kabila's ruling coalition won a majority in legislative and provincial votes while its presidential candidate finished a distant third.

Internet service was cut off in Congo the day after the vote to dampen speculation on the results. It still has not returned.

Election observers reported multiple problems, including the last-minute barring of some 1 million voters in the east, with the electoral commission blaming a deadly Ebola outbreak. That alone undermines the election's credibility, some observers said.

Fayulu asked the court to declare that the commission violated the constitution by not organizing elections in certain constituencies.

The court did not question the commission thoroughly enough in this week's hearing, warned the Synergy of Citizen Election Observation Missions, or SYMOCEL.

But for some Congolese who campaigned hard for Kabila to step aside, having an opposition figure take power is enough, despite questions about the vote.

Reflecting the yearning for stability after years of electoral unrest, 33 Congolese non-governmental groups and civil society movements on Thursday called on people to comply with whatever the court rules to "preserve the peace" in the interest of "national unity."

Petesched reported from Dakar, Senegal. Associated Press writer Elias Meseret in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia contributed.

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## Trump, Pelosi feud heats up again

By CATHERINE LUCEY, MATTHEW LEE, ZEKE MILLER and LISA MASCARO, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — She imperiled his State of the Union address. He denied her a plane to visit troops abroad.

The shutdown battle between President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is playing out as a surreal game of constitutional brinkmanship, with both flexing political powers from opposite ends of

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Pennsylvania Avenue as the negotiations to end the monthlong partial government shutdown remain stalled.

In dramatic fashion, Trump issued a letter to Pelosi on Thursday, just before she and other lawmakers were set to depart on the previously undisclosed trip to Afghanistan and Brussels. Trump belittled the trip as a "public relations event" — even though he had just made a similar warzone stop — and said it would be best if Pelosi remained in Washington to negotiate to reopen the government.

"Obviously, if you would like to make your journey by flying commercial, that would certainly be your prerogative," wrote Trump, who had been smarting since Pelosi, the day before, called on him to postpone his Jan. 29 State of the Union address due to the shutdown.

Denying military aircraft to a senior lawmaker — let alone the speaker, who is second in line to the White House, traveling to a combat region — is very rare. Lawmakers were caught off guard. A bus to ferry the legislators to their departure idled outside the Capitol on Thursday afternoon.

The political tit-for-tat between Trump and Pelosi laid bare how the government-wide crisis has devolved into an intensely pointed clash between two leaders determined to prevail. It took place as hundreds of thousands of federal workers go without pay and Washington's routine protocols — a president's speech to Congress, a lawmaker's official trip — became collateral damage.

Pelosi spokesman Drew Hammill said the speaker planned to travel to Afghanistan and Brussels to thank service members and obtain briefings on national security and intelligence "from those on the front lines." He noted Trump had traveled to Iraq during the shutdown, which began Dec. 22, and said a Republican-led congressional trip also had taken place.

Trump's move was the latest example of his extraordinary willingness to tether U.S. government resources to his political needs. He has publicly urged the Justice Department to investigate political opponents and threatened to cut disaster aid to Puerto Rico amid a spat with the island territory's leaders.

Some Republicans expressed frustration. Sen. Lindsey Graham tweeted, "One sophomoric response does not deserve another." He called Pelosi's State of the Union move "very irresponsible and blatantly political" but said Trump's reaction was "also inappropriate."

While there were few signs of progress Thursday, Vice President Mike Pence and senior adviser Jared Kushner dashed to the Capitol late in the day for a meeting with Republican Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. And the State Department instructed all U.S. diplomats in Washington and elsewhere to return to work next week with pay, saying it had found money for their salaries at least temporarily.

For security reasons, Pelosi would normally make such a trip on a military aircraft supplied by the Pentagon. According to a defense official, Pelosi did request Defense Department support for overseas travel and it was initially approved. The official wasn't authorized to speak by name about the matter, so spoke on condition of anonymity.

The official said the president does have the authority to cancel the use of military aircraft.

Rep. Adam Schiff of California slammed Trump for revealing the closely held travel plans.

"I think the president's decision to disclose a trip the speaker's making to a war zone was completely and utterly irresponsible in every way," Schiff said.

Trump's trip to Iraq after Christmas was not disclosed in advance for security reasons.

White House spokeswoman Sarah Huckabee Sanders said Trump wanted Pelosi to stay in Washington before Tuesday, a deadline to prepare the next round of paychecks for federal workers.

"We want to keep her in Washington," Sanders said. "The president wants her here to negotiate."

The White House also canceled plans for a presidential delegation to travel to an economic forum in Switzerland next week, citing the shutdown. And they said future congressional trips would be postponed until the shutdown is resolved, though it was not immediately clear if any such travel — which often is not disclosed in advance — was coming up.

Trump was taken by surprise by Pelosi's move to postpone his address and told one adviser it was the sort of disruptive move he would make himself, according to a Republican who is in frequent contact with the White House and was not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

While he maintained a public silence, Trump grew weary of how Pelosi's move was being received on cable TV and reiterated fears that he was being outmaneuvered in the public eye. Trump was delighted

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at the idea of canceling Pelosi's trip, believing the focus on the resources needed would highlight her hypocrisy for cancelling his speech, according to the Republican.

Trump has still not said how he will handle Pelosi's attempt to have him postpone his State of the Union address until the government is reopened so workers can be paid for providing security for the grand Washington tradition.

Pelosi told reporters earlier Thursday: "Let's get a date when government is open. Let's pay the employees. Maybe he thinks it's OK not to pay people who do work. I don't."

Trump declined to address the stalemate over the speech during a visit Thursday to the Pentagon, simply promising that the nation will have "powerful, strong border security."

Pelosi reiterated she is willing to negotiate money for border security once the government is reopened, but she said Democrats remain opposed to Trump's long-promised wall.

"I'm not for a wall," Pelosi said twice, mouthing the statement a third time for effect.

The shutdown, the longest ever, entered its 28th day on Friday. The previous longest was 21 days in 1995-96, under President Bill Clinton.

In a notice to staff, the State Department said it can pay most of its employees beginning Sunday or Monday for their next pay period. They will not be paid for time worked since the shutdown began until the situation is resolved, said the notice.

The new White House travel ban did not extend to the first family.

About two hours after Trump grounded Pelosi and her delegation, an Air Force-modified Boeing 757 took off from Joint Base Andrews outside Washington with the call sign "Executive One Foxtrot," reserved for the first family when the president is not traveling with them. It landed just before 7 p.m. at Palm Beach International Airport, less than 2 miles (3 kilometers) from the president's private club.

A White House spokesperson did not answer questions about the flight.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. government shutdown: <https://apnews.com/GovernmentShutdown>

Associated Press writers Jon Lemire, Matthew Daly, Mary Clare Jalonick and Lolita C. Baldor contributed to this report.

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

### 1. TRUMP, PELOSI FEUD HEATS UP

The president denies the House speaker the use of a military aircraft to visit troops abroad. This, after Pelosi sought to have Trump postpone his Jan. 29 State of the Union address.

### 2. BREXIT STALEMATE DRAGS ON

The British prime minister is unwilling to compromise on her "red lines," which include taking Britain out of the bloc's customs union, while the opposition leader wants assurances there will not be a "no deal" Brexit.

### 3. WHITE HOUSE HOPEFULS TACKLING DIVISIVE ISSUE

Monday's observance of what would have been Martin Luther King Jr.'s 90th birthday is prompting Democratic candidates to talk about race.

### 4. PALESTINIAN FORCES SOLDIER ON

Palestinian security forces press on despite Israeli raids in Ramallah and a looming cutoff in U.S. aid many fear will obliterate any remaining hope for a two-state solution.

### 5. OFFICER TO LEARN FATE IN LAQUAN MCDONALD SHOOTING

Jason Van Dyke was the first Chicago officer found guilty in an on-duty shooting in a half century and probably the first ever in the shooting of an African-American.

### 6. IRAN STATE TV: US-BORN NEWSCASTER TO APPEAR IN DC COURT

Marzieh Hashemi's son says his mother was arrested this past weekend in St. Louis by the FBI on a

material witness warrant.

## 7. 'ROAD AHEAD IS VERY DIFFICULT'

The electric car and solar panel maker Tesla, hoping to post a "tiny profit," says it plans to cut its staff by about 7 percent.

## 8. DEATH TOLL RISES IN COLOMBIA

Colombian authorities say the fatalities from a car bombing at a police academy in Bogota have more than doubled to 21.

## 9. POLICE: ARIZONA OFFICER KILLS TEEN BOY CARRYING REPLICA GUN

Police in Tempe say a suspected burglar shot to death by an officer was a 14-year-old boy carrying a replica 1911 airsoft gun.

## 10. 'THIS ONE IS PARTICULARLY GOOD'

The moon, Earth and sun will line up this weekend for the only total lunar eclipse this year and next. An added bonus: It'll be a supermoon.

## After cover-up trial, officer who shot teen to be sentenced

By **DON BABWIN** and **MICHAEL TARM**, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A judge rejected allegations that the shocking video of Laquan McDonald's death proved that Chicago police officers tried to stage a cover-up in the fatal shooting of the black teen. Now another judge must decide how long the officer who pulled the trigger spends behind bars.

Jason Van Dyke was convicted in October of second-degree murder and 16 counts of aggravated battery. He will likely go to prison for at least several years, if not decades, when he's sentenced Friday.

But critics of the police department and protesters who cheered Van Dyke's conviction are clearly worried after a judge on Thursday acquitted three officers accused of trying to conceal what happened to protect Van Dyke, who was the first Chicago officer found guilty in an on-duty shooting in a half century and probably the first ever in the shooting of an African-American.

"We will be down here tomorrow by the hundreds, and we will cry out for justice for Laquan," activist Eric Russell said after the hearing in which Cook County Judge Domenica Stephenson acquitted former officer Joseph Walsh, former detective David March and officer Thomas Gaffney on charges of obstruction of justice, official misconduct and conspiracy.

Friday's hearing will be emotional. Van Dyke's wife and young daughters, who pleaded for leniency in letters submitted to the judge, will make statements. Court officials do not know if McDonald's mother, who has remained silent ever since her son's Oct. 20, 2014, death, will speak.

The courtroom will be packed with activists worried that Judge Vincent Gaughan will impose a light sentence.

Thursday's verdict "means that if you are a police officer you can lie, cheat and steal," said a shaken Rev. Marvin Hunter, McDonald's great uncle.

Stephenson accepted the argument that jurors in the Van Dyke case rejected: that the video that sparked protests and a federal investigation of the police force was just one perspective of the events that unfolded on the South Side.

The judge said the video showed only one viewpoint of the confrontation between Van Dyke and the teen armed with a small knife. She found no indication the officers tried to hide evidence or made little effort to talk to witnesses.

"The evidence shows just the opposite," she said. She singled out how they preserved the graphic video at the heart of the case.

Prosecutor Ron Safer tried to put a positive spin on the verdict.

"This case was a case where the code of silence was on trial," he said, referring to the long tradition that officers do not report wrongdoing by their colleagues. "The next officer is going to think twice about filing a false police report. Do they want to go through this?"

Special prosecutor Patricia Brown Holmes said she hoped the verdict would not make officers reluctant



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to come forward when they see misconduct. Her key witness, Officer Dora Fontaine, described how she had become a pariah in the department and was called a "rat" by fellow officers.

In her ruling, the judge rejected prosecution arguments that the video demonstrated officers were lying when they described McDonald as moving even after he was shot.

"An officer could have reasonably believed an attack was imminent," she said. "It was borne out in the video that McDonald continued to move after he fell to the ground" and refused to relinquish a knife.

The video appeared to show the teen collapsing in a heap after the first few shots and moving in large part because bullets kept striking his body for 10 more seconds.

The judge said it's not unusual for two witnesses to describe events in starkly different ways. "It does not necessarily mean that one is lying," she said.

The judge also noted several times that the "vantage point" of various officers who witnessed the shooting were "completely different." That could explain why their accounts did not sync with what millions of people saw in the video.

Both Van Dyke's trial and that of the three other officers hinged on the video, which showed Van Dyke opening fire within seconds of getting out of his police SUV and continuing to shoot the 17-year-old while he was lying on the street. Police were responding to a report of a male who was breaking into trucks and stealing radios on the city's South Side.

Prosecutors alleged that Gaffney, March and Walsh, who was Van Dyke's partner, submitted false reports to try to prevent or shape any criminal investigation of the shooting. Among other things, they said the officers falsely claimed that Van Dyke shot McDonald after McDonald aggressively swung the knife at police and that he kept shooting the teen because McDonald was trying to get up still armed with the knife.

McDonald had used the knife to puncture a tire on Gaffney's police vehicle, but the video shows that he did not swing it at the officers before Van Dyke shot him and that he appeared to be incapacitated after falling to the ground.

Attorneys for the three men used the same strategy that the defense used at Van Dyke's trial by placing all the blame on McDonald.

It was McDonald's refusal to drop the knife and other threatening actions that "caused these officers to see what they saw," March's attorney, James McKay, told the court. "This is a case about law and order (and) about Laquan McDonald not following any laws that night."

The lawyers ridiculed the decision to charge the three officers, saying they merely wrote what they observed or, in March's case, what the other officers told him they saw. And they said there was no evidence that the officers conspired to get their stories straight.

"The state wants you to criminalize police reports," McKay bellowed at one point.

City Hall released the video to the public in November 2015 — 13 months after the shooting — and acted only because a judge ordered it to do so. The charges against Van Dyke were not announced until the day of the video's release.

The case cost the police superintendent his job and was widely seen as the reason the county's top prosecutor was voted out of office a few months later. It was also thought to be a major factor in Mayor Rahm Emanuel's decision not to seek a third term.

The accusations triggered a federal investigation, resulting in a blistering report that found Chicago officers routinely used excessive force and violated the rights of residents, particularly minorities. The city implemented a new policy that requires video of fatal police shootings to be released within 60 days, accelerated a program to equip all officers with body cameras and adopted other reforms to change the way police shootings are investigated.

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For more stories on the Laquan McDonald case: <https://apnews.com/LaquanMcDonald>

## Police: Arizona officer kills teen boy with replica gun

By ANITA SNOW, Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Police in a Phoenix suburb say a burglary suspect shot to death by an officer was a 14-year-old boy carrying a replica gun.

Authorities say officers in the city of Tempe reported a suspect burglarizing a car Tuesday and that he ran away holding what appeared to be a handgun.

During the chase, police say he turned toward the officers. One officer perceived that as a threat and shot the suspect, who died at a hospital.

Police said Wednesday that the teen had a replica 1911 airsoft gun in his possession, which they determined he had taken from vehicle along with some other items.

They say the shooting was captured on the officer's body camera. The police department did not immediately respond to a request by The Associated Press for access to the video.

The name of the teen and the officer who opened fire haven't been released.

But the ABC15 Arizona station interviewed a man and a woman identified as the boy's brother and mother, who said they wanted police to explain what happened.

The boy's brother Jason Gonzalez said, "A police officer has a Taser gun right? Why not shoot a Taser at him? He sees a young boy, my brother wouldn't shoot. I know he wouldn't shoot."

Speaking through a Spanish-English interpreter, the teen's mother Sandra Gonzalez said: "If they want to tarnish my son, they are wrong."

"Apart from the fact that they killed him, they want to destroy him," she said. "No. I won't allow it, I want justice."

A Facebook page believed to be the teen's shows photographs of a baby-faced boy with a peach-fuzz mustache, a few snaps with relatives and friends and a big, green truck. Friends of the family were putting together a GoFundMe page to pay for the teen's funeral costs.

The department said it will conduct its investigation in conjunction with the Maricopa County Attorney's office, as is customary in officer-involved shootings.

A self-described socialist group rallied in Tempe to draw attention to the case.

"We want to bring an end to the police brutality in Maricopa County and lock up killer cops," said activist Alexia Isais. "We are demanding that police be held accountable for the killings they are committing, mostly against unarmed, marginalized people."

A vigil was held Thursday outside the Tempe Police headquarters.

Since the beginning of the year, there has been at least one other police shooting that killed a teen in Maricopa County, Arizona's largest.

Earlier this month, a Phoenix police officer shot and killed a 19-year-old Jacob Michael Harris after surveillance officers reportedly saw him and three others carry out an armed robbery. Police say they were watching the group because they were suspects in several other robberies.

Also this month, an officer in the Phoenix suburb of Peoria shot and wounded a 17-year-old boy after getting a call about a robbery at an auto supply store. Officers said the boy had a gun. He was shot in the shoulder.

## McConnell's maneuvers take backseat to Trump in shutdown

By LISA MASCARO and ADAM BEAM, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — One of Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's guiding principles is: "There's no education in the second kick of a mule."

Now, deep into a government shutdown he cautioned President Donald Trump against, McConnell is not about to let himself be kicked again.

The Republican leader has been conspicuously deferential to Trump since the shutdown began. He's waiting on the president and Democrats to make a deal to end it. The result is an unusually inactive profile for the GOP leader who's often the behind-the-scenes architect of intricate legislative maneuvers to

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resolve bitter partisan stalemates.

Democrats complain publicly — and some Republicans grumble privately — that the Senate is not fulfilling its role as a co-equal branch of government, a legislative check on the executive. They worry about ordinary Americans facing hardship waiting for a resolution to the standoff over Trump's demand for money to build the border wall with Mexico.

But the Kentucky Republican, who is up for re-election in 2020 in a state where Trump tends to be more popular than he is, sees no other choice than to stand back and let the president who took the country into the shutdown decide how he wants to get out of it.

McConnell said the "solution to the problem" is for the president, who he reminds is the only one who can sign a bill into law, to reach an agreement with Democratic leaders Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer. "There's no way around that," he told reporters this week.

Democrats wonder whatever happened to the mastermind of earlier legislative logjams. After all, the 30-year veteran of the Senate devised the way out of a debt ceiling crisis when tea party Republicans challenged then-President Obama; he brokered the deal with then-Vice President Joe Biden to avert the so-called "fiscal cliff."

"A few years ago, Leader McConnell remarked, 'Remember me? I'm the guy that gets us out of shutdowns,'" said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, unearthing an interview McConnell did some years ago. "Well, Leader McConnell, now's the time.... allow a vote on legislation and reopen the government."

McConnell has plenty of solutions at the ready, allies say. But he sees no value in trying to execute a deal that Trump may not ultimately endorse. It's not only a waste of time, in his view, it potentially exposes Republican senators up for re-election in 2020, including himself, as sideways to Trump's wishes.

"Everyone is demanding that McConnell 'do something.' What?" asked GOP strategist Scott Jennings, a longtime McConnell ally. "What is McConnell — or anyone else — going to tell Trump? Hey man, give up on the wall? That's crazy."

Jennings said rather than being seen as weak leader, the opposite is true: McConnell is showing strength by protecting Republicans from taking votes on bills that put them or the president on the spot as they try to force Democrats' hand.

"He's not going to undercut the president of his own party," he said.

No sense being on the other side twice. Days before the shutdown, McConnell started executing the plan Republicans had largely agreed upon.

The strategy was simple: Give Trump a runway to take the case to the American people — including during his State of the Union address — before the next round of voting in February, according to Republicans familiar with the plan.

All systems were go until the morning of final passage, but Trump opposed it.

McConnell was frustrated. "He wasn't very happy about it to say the least," said retiring GOP Sen. Pat Roberts of Kansas. "He's a very crafty individual... very strategic... Mitch, if something doesn't work, he finds a way to make it work."

But this time, McConnell is not providing the way out. Yes, he's appearing at White House negotiating sessions. His staff meets for bipartisan talks with others. McConnell talks most every day to by phone to Trump. Asked about the senator's role during the shutdown, the president heaped on praise: "He's really been fantastic."

Yet the leader, who was required to sit still as a child battling polio, is nothing if not a patient person. And so he waits.

Not all Republicans embrace the strategy. Some are growing anxious that Senate is essentially idle while hundreds of thousands of federal employees go without pay, wreaking havoc on their households and putting the broader economy at risk.

"Right now, it's the Senate that really isn't doing anything, I think we should do something," said Sen. Ron Johnson, R-Wis., who is trying to build support for his bill to pay federal employees, including TSA airport security screeners, who are forced to work without paychecks.

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"I'm very sympathetic with the fact that we do need the president to sign something — so what's the point of bringing something up that's DOA -- but we certainly can show some leadership here," he said. "We could bring that up for votes."

As #MitchShutdown billboards dot the Kentucky countryside, McConnell, who will likely want Trump by his side as he runs for re-election, has given no indication he's feeling the heat.

He's likely more interested in voters like Mike Bickers of Lexington, a 65-year-old retired sales rep for Coca-Cola.

"I don't want Mitch McConnell to cave on this," Bickers said. "I want him to stick to his guns."

Trump won Kentucky in 2016 with nearly 63 percent of the vote, some 400,000 more votes than McConnell in his last Senate election. In 2018 Kentucky voters again embraced Trump in re-electing GOP Rep. Andy Barr, the congressman who was in a tight race until Trump visited, beginning a surge in Barr's favor.

McConnell's approval ratings, both nationally and in Kentucky, have never been high. But he has consistently been re-elected by running disciplined, well-funded campaigns.

One of the #MitchShutdown billboards is in Owensboro in western Kentucky, once a Democratic stronghold. Now its Republican mayor, Tom Watson, says he and many of the city's voters are happy to see McConnell and Trump "totally agree on something" over the border wall.

"Senator McConnell," said Watson, "I believe, is doing exactly what the Senate is supposed to do."

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Mascaro reported from Washington and Beam reported from Frankfort, Kentucky.

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For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. government shutdown: <https://apnews.com/GovernmentShutdown>

## Watchdog: Thousands more children may have been separated

By COLLEEN LONG and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Thousands more migrant children may have been split from their families than the Trump administration previously reported, in part because officials were stepping up family separations long before the border policy that prompted international outrage last spring, a government watchdog said Thursday.

It's unclear just how many family separations occurred at the U.S.-Mexico border; immigration officials are allowed under longstanding policy to separate families under certain circumstances. Health and Human Services, the agency tasked with caring for migrant children, did not adequately track them until after a judge ruled that children must be reunited with their families, according to the report by the agency's inspector general.

Ann Maxwell, assistant inspector general for evaluations, said the number of children removed from their parents was certainly larger than the 2,737 listed by the government in court documents. Those documents chronicled separations that took place as parents were criminally prosecuted for illegally entering the country under President Donald Trump's "zero tolerance" policy.

"It's certainly more," Maxwell said. "But precisely how much more is unknown."

Maxwell said investigators didn't have specific numbers, but that Health and Human Services staff had estimated the tally to be in the thousands.

Lee Gelernt, an American Civil Liberties Union attorney who sued on behalf of a mother separated from her son, said the separation policy "was a cruel disaster from the start. This report reaffirms that the government never had a clear picture of how many children it ripped from their parents."

Most of the tens of thousands of children who come into government custody cross the border alone. But the report found that in late 2016, 0.3 percent of children turned over to Health and Human Services had crossed with a parent and were separated. By the summer of 2017, that percentage had grown to 3.6 percent, officials said. The watchdog did not give exact numbers, but the total number of migrant children



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who passed through the agency's care during the 2017 budget year was 40,810. The separated children had already been released to sponsors, who are generally parents or other close relatives.

The inspector general did not say why the children had been separated before the zero-tolerance policy. Immigration officials are allowed to take a child from a parent in certain cases — serious criminal charges against a parent, concerns over the health and welfare of a child or medical concerns. That policy has long been in place.

Katie Waldman, a spokeswoman for Homeland Security, said the report reinforced what officials have long said. "For more than a decade it was and continues to be standard for apprehended minors to be separated when the adult is not the parent or legal guardian, the child's safety is at risk" or there's a record of a "serious criminal activity by the adult," she said.

In some cases, however, Homeland Security officials said a parent had a criminal history but did not offer details on the crimes, the watchdog reported.

The number of families coming across the border has grown even as overall illegal border crossings have decreased dramatically compared with historic trends. Over the past three months, families made up the majority of Border Patrol arrests.

The Administration for Children and Families, the division under Health and Human Services that manages the care of unaccompanied minors, said it generally agreed with the findings and noted the report did not find that the agency lost track of children under its care. It also noted new policies were in place to help track newly separated children. And the court never instructed officials to determine the number of children separated before the June 26 ruling.

Last spring, then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions said anyone caught crossing the border illegally would be criminally prosecuted. Families were brought into custody by U.S. Border patrol officials, then their parents taken to criminal court. If the parents were gone longer than 72 hours — the length of time Border Patrol is allowed to hold children — the children were transferred to the custody of Health and Human Services.

The practice prompted an outcry, with church groups and lawmakers calling the separations inhumane. Trump ordered an end to the separations on June 20. At the time, a federal judge who was already hearing the case of a mother separated from her son ruled that children must be reunited with their parents. Since the court order, 118 children have been separated.

Despite "considerable" effort by Health and Human Services to locate all the children placed in its care, the report said officials were still finding new cases as long as five months after the judge's order requiring reunifications.

"There is even less visibility for separated children who fall outside the court case," investigators concluded.

They said it's not clear the system put in place to track separated children is good enough. And the lack of detail from immigration authorities continues to be an issue.

The border remains a crucible for the Trump administration, with a partial government shutdown that has dragged on nearly a month over the president's demand for \$5.7 billion for a border wall that congressional Democrats are unwilling to provide.

The inspector general's office was also looking into other aspects of the separations, including the health and mental well-being of the children who had been separated. It expects to have other reports on the topic.

Democratic Rep. Bennie Thompson of Mississippi, chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee, said he would hold the government accountable in the matter. "The Trump administration, with its unique blend of incompetence, cruelty, and disregard for basic decency, misled the American public on one of its most heinous policies to date," he said in a statement.

## **Palestinian forces soldier on amid Israeli raids, US neglect**

**By MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH and JOSEPH KRAUSS, Associated Press**

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — On a cold winter's night earlier this month, a convoy of 10 Israeli armored jeeps drove into the heart of the West Bank city of Ramallah and parked in front of the Palestinian police

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headquarters.

Soldiers fanned out, searching nearby shops for security cameras after a pair of recent shooting attacks against Israelis in the occupied territory. The raid attracted dozens of stone-throwing Palestinians, and the Israelis responded with tear gas and rubber bullets.

It was the latest in a series of Israeli raids into urban areas that the Palestinians say undermine their own U.S.-trained security forces. Those forces have been coordinating operations with Israel in the West Bank for years but ties have frayed as the peace process ground to a halt.

"This humiliates the Palestinian Authority," said Zakariya Musleh, head of Palestinian military intelligence. "It's a clear message from the occupying power that we are not a partner for peace."

The Palestinian Authority has faced mounting protests over the security coordination as the Trump administration pursues policies seen by critics as obliterating whatever chance remains for a two-state solution, from recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital to cutting off economic aid to the Palestinians.

And yet the security coordination with Israel has endured for more than a decade, through one crisis after another, including three wars in Gaza and clashes at Jerusalem's holiest site.

This is in part because the Palestinian Authority and Israel have a shared enemy in the Hamas militant group, which drove Palestinian security forces from Gaza in a week of street clashes in 2007, less than two years after Israel withdrew from the territory.

The Israeli military declined to comment on the recent raids or the security cooperation.

Alon Eviatar, a retired Israeli colonel who served in the Palestinian territories for nearly three decades, said Israel is aware of the political pressure the Palestinian Authority faces. He said Israeli forces only launch their own West Bank raids in "sensitive cases" when they need to quickly apprehend an assailant or act on highly classified intelligence.

"The Israeli side was afraid (of) a real escalation in the West Bank, especially in Ramallah," he said, referring to last month's shootings, in which gunmen killed two Israeli soldiers at a West Bank bus stop and wounded seven Israelis outside a settlement, including a pregnant woman whose baby later died. Israeli forces killed one of the suspected gunmen in December and arrested the other earlier this month. Both were found north of Ramallah.

Palestinian security forces will face another setback at the end of January, when the U.S. is required to cut off its financial assistance because of a law known as the Anti-Terrorism Cooperation Act that was passed with bipartisan support last year.

Under the law, the Palestinian Authority would be disqualified from receiving any U.S. aid unless it agrees to pay court judgments of up to hundreds of millions of dollars on behalf of American victims of Palestinian attacks. The deadline for accepting that condition is Jan. 31. The administration and some pro-Israel members of Congress have been looking for ways to preserve the aid, but it's unlikely a fix will be found until after the shutdown ends.

The court settlements far exceed the aid itself, which totaled \$61 million last year. The U.S. has provided more than \$850 million to support the Palestinian security forces since 2007, when it ramped up assistance after Hamas seized Gaza.

Nabil Shaath, an adviser to Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas, said the looming cuts should be of more concern to the United States and Israel than to the Palestinians.

"They want that security support," he said. "The most unpopular thing we are doing now here is security coordination with the Israelis. Believe me, that's not the way to put pressure on us."

The U.S. aid is mainly spent on training and equipment, and salaries will not be affected. Israel is believed to support the U.S. assistance, but the prime minister's office declined to comment on the looming cuts.

As unpopular as the security coordination is, no one expects it to end anytime soon. The Palestine Liberation Organization's mini-parliament called for ending security coordination with Israel last year, the latest in a long line of heated statements and empty threats.

Abbas has always been staunchly opposed to violence. Cutting ties with Israel would presumably lead to the collapse of the Palestinian Authority. Israeli forces are deployed across the occupied West Bank, at military bases and checkpoints between and around nearly every Palestinian town and city.

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The funding and training of Palestinian security forces was historically seen as part of the process of building an independent state. But there have been no meaningful peace talks in a decade, and the Palestinians cut all contacts with the Trump administration when it recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital, effectively siding with Israel on one of the most divisive issues in the decades-old conflict.

These days, Abbas relies on the security forces to preserve his increasingly unpopular rule. The security forces have helped keep a tight lid on Hamas in the West Bank, where they have been accused of human rights abuses. They have also used force to break up protests against Abbas' policies.

Alaa Lahlouh, a former Palestinian officer who now researches security issues at the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, says the security coordination is deeply unpopular, but that authorities maintain it for political and personal reasons.

"The Palestinian Authority believes the security cooperation with Israel and the United States will enhance its role as a political partner," he said, adding that they also cooperate for personal reasons. Israel grants special movement privileges to senior Palestinian officials, allowing them to avoid crowded checkpoints.

The raids in Ramallah meanwhile cause "huge damage," Lahlouh said. "It shows the (Palestinian Authority) is useless in the face of Israel and only powerful when it comes to confronting its own people."

## MLK holiday represents big moment for 2020 Democrats

By **ERRIN HAINES WHACK, AP National Writer**

Monday's observance of what would have been Martin Luther King Jr.'s 90th birthday is emerging as an important moment for Democrats eyeing the White House to talk about one of the most divisive issues in American politics: race.

At least a half dozen declared or potential presidential candidates will attend events and talk about what King's legacy means to Americans in 2019.

Among them is former Vice President Joe Biden, who, amid intense speculation over whether he'll seek the presidency, will make his first public appearance of the year at the National Action Network's annual King breakfast in Washington with its founder, the Rev. Al Sharpton, and Martin Luther King III. Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg, still considering a bid, is also on the schedule. And New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, who jumped in the 2020 race this week, will appear with Sharpton later in the day in Harlem.

Meanwhile, Sens. Cory Booker of New Jersey and Bernie Sanders of Vermont will attend events in South Carolina, where black voters make up 60 percent of the Democratic primary. And Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren is expected to speak in Boston, where King attended seminary.

The King holiday marks the first time in the early days of the Democratic primary that so many White House hopefuls are holding public events on the same day. That reflects the wide-open nature of the 2020 field, which is likely to include several candidates of color for the first time. Some Democrats say the party's presidential nomination could ultimately go to the person who best navigates racial issues.

"On King Day, they should all have messages for how we enable people who live on the outskirts of hope to come back into the circle of opportunity," said Democratic strategist Donna Brazile. "That's what Dr. King would do."

Politics loom large over this year's remembrances. In a tweet earlier this week, President Donald Trump again mocked Warren, using the slur "Pocahontas" and referring to the 19th-century Battle at Little Bighorn and Wounded Knee Massacre. Rep. Steve King, an Iowa Republican, prompted bipartisan criticism with racist remarks that questioned how white supremacy and white nationalism became offensive terms. King has said his comments were taken out of context.

Against that backdrop, Sharpton said it's crucial for the candidates speaking on Monday to directly address racial politics.

"It will be telling if they do not represent an alternative to the situation we're in," he said, referring to the country's racial divisions. "They've got to deal with the issues in a way that we know that they're not just making a one-day-a-year speech."

"The challenge," he added, "is how you distinguish yourself without appearing disunifying."

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Last fall's midterm elections show the potential for assembling such coalitions, with several minority congressional candidates winning in mostly white districts. And while black Democrats suffered defeat in Georgia, Florida and Missouri, the gains they made show promise for minority candidates eyeing 2020.

Andrew Gillum, who lost his Florida gubernatorial bid in November by 30,000 votes, has met with several potential 2020 candidates in recent weeks, and he said the topic of race has come up. The issue was unavoidable in his own bid to become Florida's first African-American governor.

"Under no circumstance could I deny my race and how that has informed who I am today," Gillum said. "People aren't stupid. I don't want anyone to pull any punches about how race shows up in society and how it impacts us."

But the balance is tricky, particularly for candidates of color, he said.

For them, navigating race "is like walking on a lake freshly frozen," Gillum said. "You never know what step might take you under."

Regardless of their race, Democratic candidates will have to find a way to appeal to a broad coalition of voters with a message that energizes a diverse base without alienating whites whose support will also be crucial.

In a video accompanying the launch of her presidential exploratory committee, Warren included a chart outlining the disparate household wealth between white and black families and called for an economy that "works for all of us."

A similar video from Gillibrand included broad appeals such as a pledge to support the middle class, along with a clip of her saying, "It is outrageous to ask women of color to bear the burdens of every single one of these fights over and over and over again."

Alabama Sen. Doug Jones, who is white, defeated African-American challengers in his primary before going on to win a special election in 2017, becoming the first Democrat in a generation to represent the solidly Republican state. Jones said his background as the prosecutor who brought the 16th Street Baptist Church bombers to justice was an advantage with black voters, but added that he also had a proven track record on issues of equality, respect and voting rights long after that case.

"Folks are going to be looking at candidates and saying, 'Have you got a history of this, or is it just the first time you're looking at it?'" Jones said in an interview. "I talked about issues important to the African-American community, but they were really a lot of the same issues that were important to the white community: health care, jobs, education, those kitchen-table issues that cross all manner of racial lines and get to the heart of the matter."

Authenticity will be important for candidates, regardless of color, in delivering a message that resonates with voters, Jones said.

"If you're talking to the black preachers in the Black Belt of Alabama, you ought not be afraid of giving the same speech to the Chamber of Commerce in Madison County," he said. "It's a matter of messaging. You've got to be who you are. ... Not trying to pander to anyone, not to appear that you're pandering to anyone or not trying to minimize your support."

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Whack is The Associated Press' national writer on race and ethnicity. Follow her work on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/emarvelous>.

## Strike by Los Angeles teachers enters fifth day amid talks

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Los Angeles teachers will walk picket lines for a fifth day Friday after the union and school district officials returned to the bargaining table with hopes of ending the massive strike in the nation's second-largest school district.

Contract negotiations resumed Thursday for the first time in nearly a week with no word on whether either side provided a new offer.



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Union officials tempered expectations.

"We should be aware that we've been at this for 21 months and there are some very fundamental issues that there are key differences on. So an agreement is not going to take shape overnight," said Alex Caputo-Pearl, president of United Teachers Los Angeles. "But today there's been good and hard work on that."

Caputo-Pearl said negotiations likely would continue Friday and possibly through the weekend.

Mayor Eric Garcetti had urged both sides to resume talks at City Hall. The mayor does not have authority over the Los Angeles Unified School District but he has sought to help both sides reach an agreement.

Teachers planned a huge rally at downtown's Grand Park on Friday — the first day with no rain in the forecast since the strike began.

Clashes over pay, class sizes and support-staff levels in the district with 640,000 students led to its first strike in 30 years and prompted the staffing of classrooms with substitute teachers and administrators.

Parents and children have joined the protests despite heavy rain that has drenched the city. Overall attendance fell to 83,900 students on Thursday.

With state funding dependent on attendance, student absences cost the district about \$97 million over four days, the district said. At the same time, it doesn't have to spend about \$10 million a day on teacher pay.

The union representing principals urged LA Unified to close schools until the strike is over. If the district can't close the campuses, Associated Administrators of Los Angeles asked for additional resources for principals who have helped keep schools running while teachers walk picket lines.

In response, Beutner acknowledged the administrator's sacrifices but said LAUSD schools must remain open to provide a safe place for students.

All 1,240 K-12 schools in the district were open — a departure from successful strikes in other states that emboldened the LA union to act.

The union rejected the district's latest offer to hire nearly 1,200 teachers, counselors, nurses and librarians and to reduce class sizes by two students. It also included a previously proposed 6 percent raise over the first two years of a three-year contract. The union wants a 6.5 percent hike at the start of a two-year contract.

District officials have said teacher demands could bankrupt the school system. Superintendent Austin Beutner has urged the teachers to join him in pushing for more funding from the state, which provides 90 percent of the district's money.

Follow Weber at <https://twitter.com/WeberCM>

## The shutdown today: Trump grounds Pelosi trip abroad

By The Associated Press

What's up with the partial government shutdown on Day 28:

### WHAT'S NEW

The shutdown battle between President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi turned into an escalating game of constitutional brinksmanship as he denied her a military plane to visit troops in Afghanistan in apparent retaliation for her attempt to delay his State of Union address.

Federal workers caught in the middle apply for unemployment benefits and food stamps.

TSA officials say the rate of airport screeners missing work during the partial government shutdown has stabilized — but still at unusually high numbers — just before a three-day holiday weekend that is likely to bring bigger airport crowds.

The partial government shutdown is delaying training and other preparation for this year's wildfire season.

### QUOTES OF THE DAY

"I think a lot of people don't understand that while there's not fire going on out there right now, there's a lot of really critical work going on for the fire season — and that's not getting done," said Michael DeGrosky,

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chief of the Fire Protection Bureau for the Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. "One sophomoric response does not deserve another. Speaker Pelosi's threat to cancel the State of the Union is very irresponsible and blatantly political. President Trump denying Speaker Pelosi military travel to visit our troops in Afghanistan, our allies in Egypt and NATO is also inappropriate," said Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina.

## WHAT'S COMING NEXT?

The State Department has instructed all U.S. diplomats in Washington and elsewhere to return to work next week with pay, saying it had found money for their salaries at least temporarily despite the ongoing government shutdown.

## WHAT REMAINS CLOSED

Nine of the 15 Cabinet-level departments have not been funded, including Agriculture, Homeland Security, State, Transportation, Interior and Justice. Some iconic National Park facilities are shuttered as are the Smithsonian museums and the National Zoo in Washington. Nearly everyone at NASA is being told to stay home.

## WHO IS AT WORK BUT NOT GETTING PAID

An estimated 460,000 employees are working without pay, including at the FBI, TSA and other federal law enforcement offices. Also, about 340,000 workers have been furloughed. Some federal contractors have also discontinued their services, leaving thousands of employees temporarily without work and without a paycheck.

For AP's complete coverage of the U.S. government shutdown: <https://apnews.com/GovernmentShutdown>

## Was there collusion? Trump lawyer walks back earlier remarks

By **ERIC TUCKER** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE**, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani on Thursday walked back comments from the night before in which he maintained that he had "never said there was no collusion" between Russia and members of Trump's 2016 White House campaign.

Giuliani issued a statement aimed at clarifying a Wednesday night CNN interview that appeared to leave open the possibility of improper contacts during the campaign, in light of court filings in the past year that have detailed ties between Trump aides and Russia.

"I represent only the president, not the campaign," he told The Associated Press in an interview. "And I can only speak of what I know, and that is that I have no knowledge that anyone on the campaign illegally colluded with Russia. But I can only speak definitively about the president, as he is my client."

In a separate statement Thursday, he said that "there was no collusion by President Trump in any way, shape or form" and that he had "no knowledge of any collusion by any of the thousands of people who worked on the campaign."

That was an apparent reversal from the television appearance in which he said, "I never said there was no collusion between the campaign or between people in the campaign." He had previously denied any collusion.

It was not clear whether Giuliani in the television interview was reflecting a new position or talking point from the Trump legal team or was making a strategic attempt to get ahead of potentially damaging findings from special counsel Robert Mueller, who has been investigating potential coordination between Russia and the president's campaign.

Either way, the comment reflected a stark turnabout from long-standing denials by the White House and Trump advisers of improper collusion, and it underscored how the president's lawyers have adapted their message and defenses as additional revelations have emerged.

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In November 2016, for instance, Trump spokeswoman Hope Hicks said, "There was no communication between the campaign and any foreign entity during the campaign." Trump himself has repeatedly insisted there was no collusion during his successful White House run.

In a Fox News interview last May, Giuliani described the idea of Russian collusion as "total fake news" and said, "Unfortunately, it has become the basis of the investigation. Mueller owes us a report saying that Russia collusion means nothing, it didn't happen."

On Wednesday, Giuliani told CNN that even if some people working on the campaign did something wrong, the president was not part of any collusion.

"There is not a single bit of evidence the president of the United States committed the only crime you could commit here, conspired with the Russians to hack the DNC," Giuliani said, referring to the Democratic National Committee.

The comments on collusion came after Giuliani was confronted with prosecutors' allegations, detailed in court papers earlier this month, that former Trump campaign chairman Paul Manafort had lied to investigators about sharing campaign polling data with an associate whom U.S. authorities have tied to Russian intelligence.

Giuliani repeated to the AP on Thursday that there was no collusion "connected to Russian hacking" and that Manafort's sharing of polling data had nothing to do with the campaign or the president.

So far, Mueller has charged 33 people, including five Trump associates and 32 Russians accused of interfering in the election either through hacking or through a hidden social media campaign aimed at swaying American public opinion.

Giuliani also said the Trump legal team had told Mueller that the president would not answer any additional questions from prosecutors. Trump has so far answered only a limited number of questions in writing. Trump's lawyers have balked at the idea of a face-to-face interview with Mueller's office or having Trump questioned about potential obstruction of justice or other actions he took as president.

"We will not answer any further questions from them," Giuliani told the AP. "We made a definitive refusal. And now they have not gotten back to us in more than a month."

William Barr, Trump's nominee for attorney general, told the Senate Judiciary Committee this week that he wouldn't interfere with a Mueller request to subpoena the president to compel his testimony "if there was a factual basis for doing it."

Giuliani reiterated his desire to have an early look at whatever report Mueller produces at the conclusion of his investigation.

"We do think we should be given a courtesy of seeing it," Giuliani said. "We should see it before it is made public. Not to change it, but to prepare our own report as a rebuttal."

## China slump squeezes workers, hammers consumer spending

By JOE McDONALD, AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Yu Mingang had a good job helping Chinese manufacturers prepare to sell shares to the public until the cooling economy derailed those plans.

As demand for auditing services sank, the 25-year-old accountant in the eastern city of Hangzhou was laid off in December. Yu tightened his belt: No more movies or eating out. He put off buying a computer.

"I pay rent out of my savings," Yu said.

The downturn is squeezing urban workers and entrepreneurs the ruling Communist Party is counting on to help transform China from a low-wage factory into a prosperous consumer market.

Headline economic numbers still look healthy. Growth in 2019 is forecast at more than 6 percent, down only slightly from about 6.5 percent last year. But it is propped up by higher government spending, which masks sharp declines in other areas. Those are spooking the public and discouraging spending, which could make the downturn worse.

A tariff war with Washington over Beijing's technology ambitions is adding to anxiety over job losses and tumbling sales of cars, real estate and consumer goods.

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"I am worried about my job security and have cut spending on everything including clothes, vacations and changing smartphones," said He Siying, who works for an investment consulting firm in Beijing.

He, 32, was rattled when friends were laid off. One found a new job but the employer wanted her to work six days a week.

"I really dare not spend much," said He, who has a 1-year-old son.

That anxiety is hitting China's trading partners and global companies that increasingly count on Chinese consumers.

Apple Inc., General Motors Co., jeweler Tiffany & Co. and others say sales are down. Auto purchases shrank in 2018 for the first time in three decades. Japan and South Korea report lower exports of components for smartphones and other electronics sold in China.

The decline in economic growth that peaked above 14 percent in 2007 is partly intentional. Regulators clamped down on lending in late 2017 to cool a debt boom. But the downturn was sharper than expected.

The private sector has been hit hard.

"Many people have been laid off. People are having a hard time finding a new job and are panicking," said Summer Li, a 28-year-old product manager for an electronics company.

Yu, the Hangzhou accountant, said he lost his 100,000-yuan-a-year (\$14,000-a-year) job after demand for auditing services fell by one-third. Clients put off plans for stock market listings after profits sank below the level required by regulators.

"It happened due to the bad economic situation," he said.

The ruling party promised in 2013 to support entrepreneurs who create China's new jobs and wealth. But reform advocates complain President Xi Jinping's government has instead focused on expanding state-owned companies that dominate oil, banking and other industries.

Jolted by the deepening slump, Xi and other leaders have pledged to help private business by cutting taxes and regulation.

Premier Li Keqiang, the top economic official, met with bankers in December and told them to make 30 percent of new loans to private business, state media reported. The central bank announced a 100 billion yuan (\$14 billion) loan fund on Dec. 19 for small companies.

Exports to the United States held up through late 2018 despite President Donald Trump's tariff hikes. But sales shrank 3.5 percent in December compared with a year earlier as those penalties started to hurt demand.

Jittery companies and consumers already were putting off investments and big purchases.

"Consumer confidence is weaker and uncertainty has increased. The U.S.-China trade war is feeding into that," said Rajiv Biswas, chief Asia-Pacific economist for IHS Markit. "That is obviously a risk to the growth outlook for 2019."

The slowdown is adding to pressure from wrenching changes in jobs and industry that already were under way.

The ruling party has wiped out millions of steel and coal mining jobs in a marathon campaign to shrink those bloated state-owned industries.

Since 2017, Beijing, Shanghai and other big cities have forced out migrant workers who lack official permission to live there. Local leaders say they want to reduce crowding, but restaurants, retailers and other companies depend on migrants as employees and increasingly as customers.

The sales manager at a Beijing dealership for one of China's biggest automakers said purchases have fallen by half. He blamed the departure of migrants who buy lower-priced models starting at 50,000 yuan (\$7,000).

"Many such customers returned to their hometowns because there wasn't much work for them," said the manager, who asked that he and his employer not be identified by name. "Sales of high-end cars also plunged because the buyers own businesses serving migrant workers."

Overall, disposable consumer income rose by a relatively healthy 5.7 percent in the first three quarters of 2018, but that was down from 2017's 6.6 percent. Retail sales growth fell to a lower-than-expected 8.6 percent from a year earlier in November, its weakest rate in five months.



Construction, the industry that powered China's boom in past decades, also is struggling.

Some cash-strapped developers in China's northwest have resorted to paying contractors by giving them apartments, according to Anne Stevenson-Yang of J Capital Research, a financial research firm.

The contractors hope to sell later, but some developments are three-quarters vacant, said Stevenson-Yang.

The owner of a Cantonese restaurant in southwestern Beijing said she wants to give up and return to her hometown near Shanghai but can't find a buyer for the business.

"I am making a profit but can't earn a lot from it," said the owner, who would give only her surname, Yue.

Economists expect the downturn to bottom out this year as government stimulus gains traction.

But cautious spenders like Paige Fu, an assistant to the general manager of a company in the film industry, are wary.

"I worry the economy will keep sliding," Fu said.

AP researcher Yu Bing contributed.

## Talks resume in effort to end strike by LA teachers

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER, Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A new round of contract negotiations started Thursday between Los Angeles school district officials and a teachers union as thousands of educators picketed in the rain.

The announcement that the two sides would sit down for the first time in nearly a week didn't indicate whether any new contract offers would be on the table.

Union officials tempered expectations.

"After 21 months of negotiations I think it would be an unrealistic expectation to say that this is going to be over after today because there are hard issues to work through," said Alex Caputo-Pearl, president of United Teachers Los Angeles.

Talks broke off Friday, sending tens of thousands of teachers onto the street. Thursday was the fourth day of the walkout.

Mayor Eric Garcetti had urged both sides to resume talks on Thursday at City Hall. The mayor does not have authority over the Los Angeles Unified School District but he has sought to help both sides reach an agreement.

Clashes over pay, class sizes and support-staff levels in the district with 640,000 students led to its first strike in 30 years and prompted the staffing of classrooms with substitute teachers and administrators.

Parents and children have joined the protests despite heavy rain that has drenched the city. Overall attendance fell to 83,900 students on Thursday.

With state funding dependent on attendance, student absences cost the district about \$97 million over four days, the district said. At the same time, it doesn't have to spend about \$10 million a day on teacher pay.

The union representing principals urged LA Unified to close schools until the strike is over. If the district can't close the campuses, Associated Administrators of Los Angeles asked for additional resources for principals who have helped keep schools running while teachers walk picket lines.

All 1,240 K-12 schools in the district were open — a departure from successful strikes in other states that emboldened the LA union to act.

The union rejected the district's latest offer to hire nearly 1,200 teachers, counselors, nurses and librarians and to reduce class sizes by two students. It also included a previously proposed 6 percent raise over the first two years of a three-year contract. The union wants a 6.5 percent hike at the start of a two-year contract.

District officials have said teacher demands could bankrupt the school system. Superintendent Austin Beutner has urged the teachers to join him in pushing for more funding from the state, which provides 90 percent of the district's money.

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AP reporter John Antczak contributed to this report.

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## Sorry America, team you love to hate headed to Super Bowl

By BARRY WILNER, AP Pro Football Writer

NOT THEM AGAIN!

Sorry America — at least outside of New England — but the team you love to hate is headed back to the Super Bowl.

Sure, there are negatives to point out with these Patriots. They haven't looked much more than mediocre on the road. Their defense is vulnerable, especially against dynamic passers, and Kansas City certainly has one of those in Patrick Mahomes.

New England's coaching staff tends to take away an opponent's biggest threat. Who is that with the Chiefs, though? Mahomes has Tyreek Hill, Travis Kelce and Sammy Watkins as dangerous targets. He has a running game that hasn't really missed Kareem Hunt since he was released.

Oh yeah, Tom Brady also is 41. At times, he's looked it this season.

And there are so many positives to list, especially when the Patriots (12-5) get this far. Such as being to eight Super Bowls with Brady at quarterback, winning five. Such as their superb demolition of the Chargers, an opponent many thought was the most balanced team in the postseason; though the Chargers' defense looked from the outset as if it wanted no part of frigid Foxborough.

Oh yeah, Brady is 41. He's seen pretty much everything, and will particularly like the looks of the spotty pass coverage Kansas City (13-4) provides.

The entire environment seems to work for New England.

"Yeah, I think this team thrives on it," receiver Phillip Dorsett says. "Obviously, there's no elephant in the room, we're 3-5 on the road and everybody is going to criticize us for that. We've got our backs against the wall and we've just got to go out there and play our best game. That's the only thing that really matters."

It also matters that Chiefs coach Andy Reid rarely outsmarts the Patriots. Indeed, Reid's only Super Bowl trip was spoiled by New England when it beat Reid's Eagles for the 2004 title. Reid is 2-6 vs. the Patriots, and lost 43-40 on Oct. 14 at Gillette Stadium.

The Chiefs are 3-point favorites, which accounts for the home-field edge. Except in the upcoming arctic conditions, and with the pedigree of the Patriots, this is a matchup Kansas City won't win.

UPSET SPECIAL: PATRIOTS, 27-23

Los Angeles Rams (plus 3) at New Orleans Saints

A 45-35 shootout victory for Drew Brees and the Saints on Nov. 4 came in the Superdome. These two have a return matchup Sunday to get to the Super Bowl, and with all their firepower, this one could come down to one factor: experience.

That edge clearly falls to the hosts. New Orleans (14-3) has been a postseason regular since coach Sean Payton and Brees hooked up in 2006. This is the Saints' third NFC championship appearance — a loss at Chicago in January 2007, an overtime win over Minnesota at home three years later. The Saints won the Super Bowl that season, as well.

Los Angeles (14-3) had the only unanimous member of the All-Pro team, defensive tackle Aaron Donald. And the Saints lost key DT Sheldon Rankins to a torn Achilles tendon last weekend. Still, this side of the ball looks like a wash.

The site of this game is more critical than in the AFC. The way the Superdome rocks can be disruptive to opponents, and uplifting to the homies. Just look at the Saints' win against defending champion Philadelphia last Sunday.

So give us Brees' calmness and creativity over Jared Goff's relative newness.

BEST BET: SAINTS, 34-26

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Last Week: Against Spread (1-3). Straight up (3-1)  
Season Totals: Against spread (134-113-9). Straight up: (174-88-2)  
Best Bet: 8-11 against spread, 13-6 straight up  
Upset special: 10-9 against spread, 9-9-1 straight up

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/tag/NFL> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## Federal workers caught in the middle apply for unemployment

By MICHELLE R. SMITH, Associated Press

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Thousands of federal employees and their families are applying for unemployment and food stamps to get by as the longest government shutdown in U.S. history drags on with no end in sight. But for some of them, it has been an exercise in confusion and frustration.

Others, meanwhile, are hesitant to apply, knowing they will have to pay back the unemployment benefits when they finally return to work.

The U.S. Labor Department on Thursday reported that the number of furloughed federal employees seeking unemployment benefits has jumped, from fewer than a thousand per week before the shutdown to more than 10,000 during the week that ended Jan. 5.

The nearly 4-week-old stalemate over President Donald Trump's demand for funding for a border wall affects about 800,000 employees. When it started, roughly 420,000 were told to work without being paid, and 380,000 others were sent home with no pay. Some of those numbers have shifted in the past week as agencies such as the IRS have called tens of thousands back to work.

Trump signed legislation Wednesday to guarantee employees will be given back pay once the shutdown ends. But that also means those who obtain unemployment benefits to get by in the meantime will have to repay the money.

The Labor Department has said that federal employees who aren't working during the shutdown can collect unemployment, while those who are on the job without pay cannot.

But the rules are being applied unevenly. California Gov. Gavin Newsom, for example, said the state will give benefits to people still on the job despite the federal guidance prohibiting it.

"The good news is we're going to do it, and shame on them," he told TSA workers during a visit Thursday to Sacramento International Airport.

He said workers in California's employment development department may authorize benefits for federal employees who are still working and that he's confident those workers will pay the state back.

The rules made no sense to Charisma Banks, whose husband is deployed on a ship with the Coast Guard. The Chesapeake, Virginia, mother of a 9-year-old boy called the state unemployment office to ask whether her husband could qualify for benefits. She was told no.

"They're like, 'Here's where it gets sticky: Even though he's not getting a paycheck, he's still employed,'" she said.

Banks, 34, has signed her son up for free lunch at school and applied for a grant from the American Legion. "I don't even know how to go to food banks, but I had to learn this week," she said.

Will Kohler, a furloughed, \$38,000-a-year IRS tax examiner in Covington, Kentucky, applied for unemployment but ran into another kind of complication: His application is in limbo because the Treasury Department office that needs to verify his claim is closed as a result of the shutdown.

Kohler said many co-workers are in the same predicament. Not a single one has been approved for unemployment, he said. He said workers like him are stuck in a difficult position, in part because they are restricted by government ethics rules from getting many kinds of outside work.

"When it gets to a point where government employees have to go to a food bank, this is not the America that I grew up in," he said. "It's mind-boggling. It really is."

Mick Devine, the New England vice president for the National Air Traffic Controllers Association, said some of his union's members have been hesitant to apply for unemployment because they will just have

to give it back.

Kathy Catanzaro, an administrator at Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, said she is seeing the same thing: "People are a little bit apprehensive about filing because they know they'll have to pay it back once they're paid and get back to work."

An untold number of workers are also tapping other public assistance programs such as food stamps. In Corpus Christi, Texas, Haley Hernandez, a stay-at-home mother of four and wife of an active-duty member of the Coast Guard, said she has applied for free lunches for her children, and she is awaiting an electronic food stamps card in the mail. She wonders how they will pay their \$1,400 mortgage.

"This is a first for us," Hernandez said. "Honestly, it's pretty shameful, I feel, that any government employee would have to ask for food stamps or any kind of assistance like that. You would think that they would take better care of their service members."

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Associated Press writer Chris Rugaber contributed to this report from Washington.

## Judge acquits 3 Chicago officers of Laquan McDonald cover-up

By DON BABWIN and MICHAEL TARM, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A judge on Thursday acquitted three Chicago officers of trying to cover up the 2014 shooting of Laquan McDonald, dismissing as just one perspective the shocking dashcam video of the black teenager's death that led to protests, a federal investigation of the police department and the rare murder conviction of an officer.

In casting off the prosecution's entire case, Judge Domenica Stephenson seemed to accept many of the same defense arguments that were rejected in October by jurors who convicted officer Jason Van Dyke of second-degree murder and aggravated battery. He is scheduled to be sentenced Friday.

The judge said the video showed only one viewpoint of the confrontation and that there was no indication the officers tried to hide evidence.

"The evidence shows just the opposite," she said. She singled out how they preserved the graphic video at the heart of the case.

McDonald's family questioned how the two cases could produce such different decisions. His great uncle, the Rev. Marvin Hunter, told reporters that the verdict means "that if you are a police officer you can lie, cheat and steal."

"To say that these men are not guilty is to say that Jason Van Dyke is not guilty." He added: "It is a sad day for America."

Prosecutor Ron Safer tried to put a positive spin on the verdict.

"This case was a case where the code of silence was on trial," he said, referring to the long tradition that officers don't report wrongdoing by their colleagues. "The next officer is going to think twice about filing a false police report. Do they want to go through this?"

Special prosecutor Patricia Brown Holmes said she hoped the verdict would not make officers reluctant to come forward when they see misconduct. Her key witness, officer Dora Fontaine, described how she had become a pariah in the department and was called a "rat" by fellow officers.

The shooting has provoked periodic street protests since 2015, when the video came to light, and the acquittals could renew that movement.

"We will be down here tomorrow by the hundreds, and we will cry out for justice for Laquan," activist Eric Russell said.

The trial was watched closely by law enforcement and critics of the department, which has long had a reputation for condoning police brutality.

Officer Joseph Walsh, officer Thomas Gaffney and detective David March were accused of conspiracy, official misconduct and obstruction of justice. All but Gaffney have since left the department. They asked the judge, rather than a jury, to hear the evidence.

After the verdict, Walsh would say only that the ordeal of being charged and tried was "heart-breaking



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for my family, a year and a half.”

In her ruling, the judge rejected prosecution arguments that the video demonstrated officers were lying when they described McDonald as moving and posing a threat even after he was shot.

“An officer could have reasonably believed an attack was imminent,” she said. “It was borne out in the video that McDonald continued to move after he fell to the ground” and refused to relinquish a knife.

The video appeared to show the teen collapsing in a heap after the first few shots and moving in large part because bullets kept striking his body for 10 more seconds.

The judge said it’s not unusual for two witnesses to describe events in starkly different ways. “It does not necessarily mean that one is lying,” she said.

The judge also noted several times that the vantage points of various officers who witnessed the shooting were “completely different.” That could explain why their accounts did not sync with what millions of people saw in the video.

Both Van Dyke’s trial and that of the three other officers hinged on the video, which showed Van Dyke opening fire within seconds of getting out of his police SUV and continuing to shoot the 17-year-old while he was lying on the street. Police were responding to a report of a male who was breaking into trucks and stealing radios on the city’s South Side.

Prosecutors alleged that Gaffney, March and Walsh, who was Van Dyke’s partner, submitted false reports about what happened to try to prevent or shape any criminal investigation of the shooting. Among other things, they said the officers falsely claimed that Van Dyke shot McDonald after McDonald aggressively swung the knife at the officers and that he kept shooting the teen because McDonald was trying to get up still armed with the knife.

McDonald had used the knife to puncture a tire on Gaffney’s police vehicle, but the video shows that he did not swing it at the officers before Van Dyke shot him and that he appeared to be incapacitated after falling to the ground.

Attorneys for Gaffney, Walsh and March used the same strategy that the defense used at Van Dyke’s trial by placing all the blame on McDonald.

It was McDonald’s refusal to drop his knife and other threatening actions that “caused these officers to see what they saw,” March’s attorney, James McKay, told the court. “This is a case about law and order (and) about Laquan McDonald not following any laws that night.”

The lawyers ridiculed the decision to charge the three officers, saying they merely wrote what they observed or, in March’s case, what the other officers told him they saw. And they said there was no evidence that the officers conspired to get their stories straight.

“The state wants you to criminalize police reports,” McKay bellowed at one point.

City Hall released the video to the public in November 2015 — 13 months after the shooting — and acted only because a judge ordered it to do so. The charges against Van Dyke were not announced until the day of the video’s release.

The case cost the police superintendent his job and was widely seen as the reason the county’s top prosecutor was voted out of office a few months later. It was also thought to be a major factor in Mayor Rahm Emmanuel’s decision not to seek a third term.

The accusations triggered a federal investigation, resulting in a blistering report that found Chicago officers routinely used excessive force and violated the rights of residents, particularly minorities. The city implemented a new policy that requires video of fatal police shootings to be released within 60 days, accelerated a program to equip all officers with body cameras and adopted other reforms to change the way police shootings are investigated.

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For more stories on the Laquan McDonald case: <https://apnews.com/LaquanMcDonald> .

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## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Jan. 18, the 18th day of 2019. There are 347 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Jan. 18, 1957, a trio of B-52's completed the first non-stop, round-the-world flight by jet planes, landing at March Air Force Base in California after more than 45 hours aloft.

On this date:

In 1778, English navigator Captain James Cook reached the present-day Hawaiian Islands, which he named the "Sandwich Islands."

In 1904, actor Cary Grant was born Archibald Leach in Bristol, England.

In 1911, the first landing of an aircraft on a ship took place as pilot Eugene B. Ely brought his Curtiss biplane in for a safe landing on the deck of the armored cruiser USS Pennsylvania in San Francisco Harbor.

In 1919, the Paris Peace Conference, held to negotiate peace treaties ending the First World War, opened in Versailles (vehr-SY'), France.

In 1936, Nobel Prize-winning author Rudyard Kipling, 70, died in London.

In 1943, during World War II, Jewish insurgents in the Warsaw Ghetto launched their initial armed resistance against Nazi troops, who eventually succeeded in crushing the rebellion. The Soviets announced they'd broken through the long Nazi siege of Leningrad (it was another year before the siege was fully lifted). A U.S. ban on the sale of pre-sliced bread — aimed at reducing bakeries' demand for metal replacement parts — went into effect.

In 1967, Albert DeSalvo, who claimed to be the "Boston Strangler," was convicted of armed robbery, assault and sex offenses. (Sentenced to life, DeSalvo was killed in prison in 1973.)

In 1975, the situation comedy "The Jeffersons," a spin-off from "All in the Family," premiered on CBS-TV.

In 1991, financially strapped Eastern Airlines shut down after more than six decades in business.

In 1993, the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday was observed in all 50 states for the first time.

In 2001, President Bill Clinton, in a farewell from the Oval Office, told the nation that America had "done well" during his presidency, with record-breaking prosperity and a cleaner environment.

In 2005, the world's largest commercial jet, the Airbus A380 "superjumbo" capable of flying up to 800 passengers, was unveiled in Toulouse, France.

Ten years ago: Israeli troops begin to withdraw from Gaza after their government and Hamas militants declared an end to a three-week war. A star-studded pre-inaugural concert took place on the National Mall, featuring Bruce Springsteen, Bono (BAH'-noh) and Beyonce, with President-elect Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, in attendance. The Arizona Cardinals of the NFC advanced to their first Super Bowl with a 32-25 win over the Philadelphia Eagles; the Pittsburgh Steelers beat the Baltimore Ravens 23-14 to win the AFC Championship and reach their seventh Super Bowl.

Five years ago: Results showed that nearly 20 million Egyptian voters backed the country's new constitution, almost double the number of those who'd voted for one drafted in 2012 under the government of toppled Islamist President Mohammed Morsi. "American Hustle" took the Screen Actors Guild Awards' top honor for outstanding cast; Matthew McConaughey was recognized for his lead performance in "Dallas Buyers Club" while Cate Blanchett won the actress award for "Blue Jasmine."

One year ago: At the end of a visit to Chile that was meant to heal the wounds of a sex abuse scandal, Pope Francis accused victims of Chile's most notorious pedophile of slandering another bishop; Francis said he would need to see proof that Bishop Juan Barros was complicit in covering up the sex crimes of the Rev. Fernando Karadima. Texas executed by lethal injection Anthony Allen Shore, who became known as Houston's "Tourniquet Killer" because of the murder technique used on four female victims. Temperatures peaked at 104 degrees during second-round matches at the Australian Open.

Today's Birthdays: Movie director John Boorman is 86. Former Sen. Paul Kirk, D-Mass., is 81. Singer-songwriter Bobby Goldsboro is 78. Comedian-singer-musician Brett Hudson is 66. Actor-director Kevin

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Costner is 64. Country singer-actor Mark Collie is 63. Actor Mark Rylance is 59. Actress Alison Arngrim (TV: "Little House on the Prairie") is 57. Former Maryland Gov. Martin O'Malley is 56. Actress Jane Horrocks is 55. Comedian Dave Attell (uh-TEHL) is 54. Actor Jesse L. Martin is 50. Rapper DJ Quik is 49. Rock singer Jonathan Davis (Korn) is 48. Former NAACP President and CEO Benjamin Todd Jealous is 46. Singer Christian Burns (BBMak) is 45. Actor Derek Richardson is 43. Actor Jason Segel is 39. Actress Samantha Mumba is 36. Country singer Kristy Lee Cook (TV: "American Idol") is 35. Actress Devin Kelley is 33. Actress Ashleigh Murray (TV: "Riverdale") is 31. Tennis player Angelique Kerber is 31. Actor Mateus Ward is 20.

Thought for Today: "Words are, of course, the most powerful drug used by mankind." — Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936).