

# Groton Daily Independent

Saturday, Feb. 09, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 215 ~ 1 of 57

## Groton Area Schedule of Events

### Saturday, February 9, 2019

Rushmore Challenge Debate at Harrisburg High School  
Robotics at Douglas High School  
10:00am: Wrestling: Boys Varsity Tournament @ Howard High School  
2:00pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Double Header vs. Mobridge-Pollock Schools @ Mobridge-Pollock High School (JV Girls & JV Boys games at 2pm (Both at same time) Varsity Girls at 3:30pm Varsity Boys at 5:30pm)

### Sunday, February 10, 2019

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena (Grades JK-8 2pm - 4pm; Grades 6-12 4pm - 6pm)

### Monday, February 11, 2019

5:00pm: School Board Meeting  
5:15pm: Basketball: Boys C Game vs. Aberdeen Roncalli @ Aberdeen Roncalli High School followed by JV and varsity

### Tuesday, February 12, 2019

6:30pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Game vs. Webster Area High School @ Groton Area High School

### Thursday, February 14, 2019

LifeTouch Pictures Groton Area Elementary School, Groton Area High School  
4:00pm: Basketball: Boys 7th/8th Game vs. Redfield-Doland @ Redfield Jr-Sr High School(7th Grade @ 4pm; 8th Grade @ 5pm)  
6:30pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Game @ Milbank  
6:30pm: Basketball: Boys Varsity Game @ Langford

2- DeHoet makes buzzer beater shot to upset Warner in overtime  
4- GDILIVE.COM - Mobridge-Pollock  
4- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ads  
5- Wolves open I Hate Winter weekend with 90-84 victory over USF  
6- Warner girls beat Groton Area  
7- Four dance teams perform  
9- Becky Diegel night  
10 - GET A REPLACEMENT SSA-1099 TAX FORM  
11-HOW SOCIAL SECURITY DECIDES IF YOU STILL HAVE A QUALIFYING DISABILITY  
11- Noem Approves Nine Bills  
12- Noem's Weekly Column  
13- Today in Weather History  
14 Weather Pages  
16- Daily Devotional  
17- 2019 Groton Events  
18- News from the Associated Press

## 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.

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## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

## DeHoet makes buzzer beater shot to upset Warner in overtime



**There is the game winning shot as the ball swishes through the hoop at the buzzer.** (Photo lifted from

GDILIVE.COM)

in the fourth quarter to capture the lead and took a 44-38 lead. The Monarchs rallied and recaptured the lead at 45-44. DeHoet made a basket with 39 seconds left to make it 47-45. Warner up to this point only had one foul. They fouled in trying to get the ball back, which they did. Ben Fischbach was fouled and he made two free throws to tie the game at 47, sending the game into overtime.

Warner scored first in the overtime with a three-pointer by Daylin Simon. Cade Guthmiller made a basket to make it a 50-49 Warner lead. DeHoet made a three-pointer to give the Tigers a 52-50 lead. Simon made a basket with eight seconds left to tie the game and was fouled, sending him to the free throw line. He missed the shot and Austin Jones grabbed the rebound. He handed off to Jonathan Doeden with time ticking. Doeden quickly brought the ball up court. He handed the ball to DeHoet and he launched a long shot. All eyes in the Arena were on the ball as it arched up high. The buzzer sounded and the ball swished through the net and the place went wild. The players rushed to DeHoet for the congratulations and they even pushed him out the side door in the excitement. It was a perfect ending for Becky Diegel night as the whole double header was dedicated to her as she is fighting cancer.



**Chelsea Hanson drops to her knees after DeHoet's shot at the buzzer.** (Photo

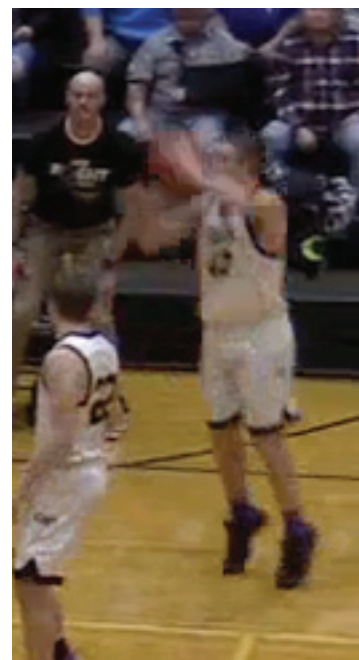
lifted from GDILIVE.

Brodyn DeHoet made a three-pointer from near center court at the buzzer to give Groton Area an 55-52 overtime upset win over the Warner Monarchs.

Warner came into the game with a 13-3 record, losing only to Corsica-Stickney which is currently 10-2, to Northwestern, which is currently 11-2, and to Aberdeen Christian which is 12-3. This will be Warner's fourth loss as Groton picks up its fifth win of the season, not at 5-10 overall.

It was nearly a repeat of last year's Groton shocking double overtime win over Warner in Warner.

The game went back and fourth. There were 10 lead changes and the game was tied four times. The Monarchs held a 13-11 lead after the first quarter and a 23-17 lead at halftime. Warner led, 36-35, at the end of the third quarter. The Tigers scored first



**DeHoet launches one right at the buzzer in overtime.** (Photo lifted from

GDILIVE.COM)

Warner led, 36-35, at the end of the third quarter. The Tigers scored first in the fourth quarter to capture the lead and took a 44-38 lead. The Monarchs rallied and recaptured the lead at 45-44. DeHoet made a basket with 39 seconds left to make it 47-45. Warner up to this point only had one foul. They fouled in trying to get the ball back, which they did. Ben Fischbach was fouled and he made two free throws to tie the game at 47, sending the game into overtime. Warner scored first in the overtime with a three-pointer by Daylin Simon. Cade Guthmiller made a basket to make it a 50-49 Warner lead. DeHoet made a three-pointer to give the Tigers a 52-50 lead. Simon made a basket with eight seconds left to tie the game and was fouled, sending him to the free throw line. He missed the shot and Austin Jones grabbed the rebound. He handed off to Jonathan Doeden with time ticking. Doeden quickly brought the ball up court. He handed the ball to DeHoet and he launched a long shot. All eyes in the Arena were on the ball as it arched up high. The buzzer sounded and the ball swished through the net and the place went wild. The players rushed to DeHoet for the congratulations and they even pushed him out the side door in the excitement. It was a perfect ending for Becky Diegel night as the whole double header was dedicated to her as she is fighting cancer.

The exciting 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 and Weber Landscaping.

DeHoet led all scorers, making five three-pointers and finished with 27 points. Treyton Diegel, Groton's lone senior and Becky's son, made four three-pointers for a dozen points. Kaden Kurtz had seven points, Cade Guthmiller five and Jonathan Doeden and Austin Jones each had two points.

Daylin Simon led the Monarchs with 19 points followed by Ben Fischbach with 13, Landon



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**Cade Guthmiller towers above the Warner defense for the rebound. He led the Tigers with 14 rebounds.** (Photo by Alexa Hickenbotham)



**Brodyn DeHoet forces his way inside for a basket.** (Photo by Alexa Hickenbotham)

Leidholt had 12 and Jackson O'Neill and Zack Jones each had four points.

The Monarchs were six of seven from the free throw line 86 percent off of Groton Area's 13 team fouls. Groton Area was four of 11 for 36 percent off of Warner's 12 team fouls.

Groton Area made 20 of 55 field goals for 36 percent and Warner was 19 of 57 for 33 percent. In three-pointers, Groton Area was 11 of 25 for 44 percent and Warner was eight of 24 for 33 percent. The Tigers had 11 turnovers, four of which were steals. Warner had eight turnovers, seven of which were steals with DeHoet having three and Diegel and Guthmiller each having two. Groton Area had 11 assists with DeHoet, Jones and Kurtz each having two. Both teams had eight offensive rebounds while Groton had the edge on the defensive boards, 26-25. Guthmiller had 14 rebounds for the Tigers.

Warner won the junior varsity game, 35-28. Chandler Larson led the Tigers with eight points followed by Jayden Zak with six, Jackson Cogley five, Cole Simon three and Lane Tietz, Abdimalik Mohamed and Tristan Traphagen with two each.

- Paul Kosel



**Brodyn DeHoet sets a screen for Treyton Diegel.** (Photo by Alexa Hickenbotham)

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It's Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Mobridge-  
Pollock Tigers**



**VS**

**Groton Area Tigers**

Saturday, Feb. 9, 2019

Girls Game at 3:30 p.m., Boys Game at 5:00 p.m.  
at the Mobridge-Pollock Arena

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)

## Cook/ Dietary Aide

Flexible schedule  
and new wage  
scale.

Contact Pam Rohrbach

**HELP  
WANTED**



**GROTON**  
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 North Second Street  
605.397.2365

## HELP WANTED

### Director of Nursing



Current RN licensure in SD  
BSN/MSN degree preferred  
Sign on bonus available  
Full benefits included.

Contact Brynn Pickrel



**GROTON**  
CARE & REHABILITATION CENTER

1106 North Second Street  
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## **Wolves open I Hate Winter weekend with 90-84 victory over USF**

Aberdeen, S.D. – The Northern State University men’s basketball team pulled out a gritty win over the University of Sioux Falls Friday evening, defeating the Cougars 90-84. The Wolves continued their win streak over the South Division, improving to 18-5 overall this season and 14-3 in the NSIC.

The Cougars were efficient in the first half, shooting 63.0 percent from the floor, and out-scoring the Wolves 44-40. Northern however was not that far behind with a 56.0 field goal percentage. The Wolves returned from the locker room and held the Cougars to 46.9 percent from the field and 3-of-10 from the 3-point line in the second. Offensively they knocked down 50 points and shot 56.7 percent from the floor and 66.7 percent from the 3-point line.

Neither team led by more than three points in the second half, until the final three minutes of action and a 10-2 run by the Wolves, which closed out the contest. In total, the final 20 minutes of regulation saw seven ties between the two squads.

As a team, the Wolves recorded 40 points in the paint, 22 points off the bench, 14 points off eight offensive rebounds, and 11 points off turnovers. They combined for a game high nine made 3-pointers and 21 assists, as well as four steals and three blocks. Sioux Fall did edge past Northern on the boards, 29-26, however NSU shot a game high 56.4 percent from the floor and 52.9 percent from the 3-point line.

Justin Decker and Ian Smith led the team with 22 points apiece. Smith dished out a team high seven assists, while shooting 70.0 percent from the field and adding five rebounds and one steal. Decker led the team with six rebounds, and hit 9-of-17 from the field.

Parker Fox was third on the team and led the Wolves off the bench with 15 points. The redshirt freshman shot a team high 85.7 percent from the floor, recording two blocks, one assist, and one rebound. Bo Fries was the final Wolf in double figures with 13 points. The senior added four rebounds, three assists, and a team leading three steals.

Andrew Kallman and Gabe King six and five points respectively as members of the starting five, while Mason Stark rounded out the team total with seven. King was second on the team with five assists, followed by Kallman with four.

The I Hate Winter festivities continue tomorrow evening versus Southwest Minnesota State. Tip-off is set for 6 p.m. between the Wolves and Mustangs. Fans are reminded to bring their smartphone to participate in the “Light up Wachs Arena Maroon” event.

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## Warner girls beat Groton Area

Warner's girls defeated Groton Area as part of a double header Friday in Groton, 47-26. The Monarchs led at the quarterstops at 12-4, 28-8 and 42-17.

Miranda Hanson and Maddie Bjerke each had five points, Gracie Traphagen and Kaycie Hawkins each had four and adding two points apiece were Payton Maine, Allyssa Locke, Hannah Gustafson and Jennie Doeden.

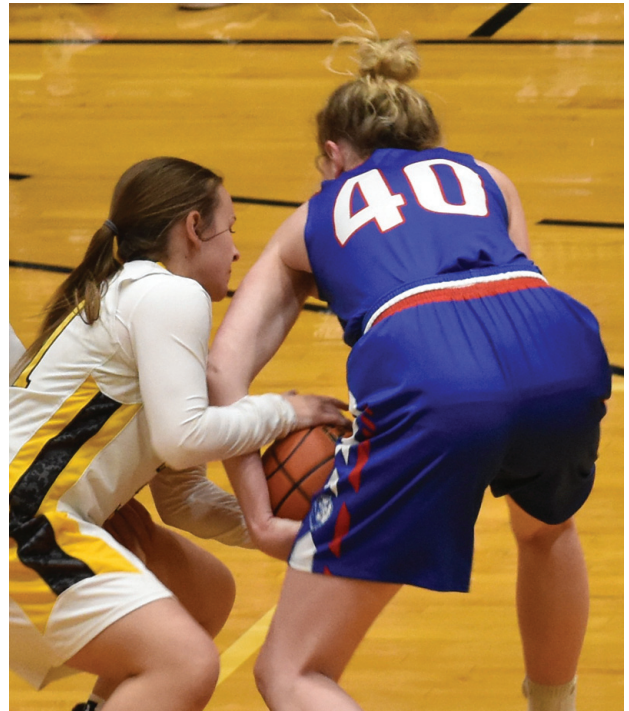
Laurie Rogers led the Monarchs with 12 points followed by Sydney Leidholt and Keeley Fischbach with nine each, Ashley Fischbach and Savannah Green each had five, Jennifer Aman had three and Laura Ochsner and Peyton Fisher each had two points.

Groton Area made 11 of 49 field goals for 22 percent, missed two free throw opportunities, had 22 rebounds with Warner having six, six steals with Traphagen having two, nine assists with Doeden, Warner and Brooke Gengerke each having two, 12 turnovers and eight team fouls.

Warner was 18 of 44 from the field for 41 percent, was seven of 10 from the line for 70 percent, had 36 rebounds with Rogers having 11, 12 turnovers, four team fouls, three steals and 13 assists.

Warner Area is now 16-2 on the season while Groton Area goes to 5-10.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Allied Climate Professionals, Bahr Spray Foam, Blocker



**Allyssa Locke ties up Warner's Laurie Rogers for a jump ball call.** (Photo by Alexa

Hickenbotham



C o n -  
struction, 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 and Weber Landscaping.

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 30-18. Gracie Traphagen led the Tigers with nine points followed by Allyssa Locke with six, Brooke Gengerke five, Maddie Bjerke and Kenzie McInerney with four each and Trista Keith added two points.

- Paul Kosel

**Laurie Rogers lost her balance on the way to the basket and fell upon Eliza Wanner with Kaycie Hawkins standing her ground.** (Photo by Alexa Hickenbotham



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Four dance teams performed Friday during the Warner doubleheader. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)





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Four dance teams performed Friday during the Warner doubleheader. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)





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Many T-shirts were worn Friday in support of Becky Diegel. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Coach Justin Hanson talked about the events going on for Becky Diegel and thanked the Warner School for their purchase of 150 shirts for their teams. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Becky Diegel hugs her son, Treyton, after her speech. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



Becky Diegel gave many thanks for the wonderful support she has received from so many people during her fight with cancer. (Photo lifted from GDILIVE.COM)

## GET A REPLACEMENT SSA-1099 TAX FORM

Now that it's tax season, you might be gathering all of your forms and documentation from the previous year. Sometimes getting all that material together — receipts for donations, business expenses, and travel — can be overwhelming. And losing one vital piece can take up time that you might not be able to spare.

The Social Security 1099 (SSA-1099) or Benefit Statement is a tax form Social Security mails each year in January. It shows the total amount of benefits you received from Social Security in the previous year, so you know how much Social Security income to report to the IRS on your tax return. Luckily, Social Security has you covered. If you live in the United States and you need a copy of your SSA-1099 or 1042S tax form, simply go online and get an instant, printable copy of your form with a my Social Security account.

A Social Security 1042S (SSA-1042S) is for a noncitizen who lives outside the United States and received or repaid Social Security benefits last year.

If you have a question, want help finding the information you need, or just can't figure out how to do something online, another way to get in touch with us is by calling our toll-free number at 1-800-772-1213. We provide an automated service option to handle some business, but you can also speak to a Social Security representative between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday. If you are deaf or hard of hearing, call our toll-free TTY number, 1-800-325-0778, between 7 a.m. and 7 p.m. local time, Monday through Friday.

Tax season can be a stressful time for some, but we've tried to make it easier for you. Remember to share this information with friends and family. If you need a copy of your SSA-1099 or 1042S, go online and get a replacement form with a my Social Security account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).



## HOW SOCIAL SECURITY DECIDES IF YOU STILL HAVE A QUALIFYING DISABILITY

Social Security is required by law to review, from time to time, the current medical condition of all people receiving disability benefits to make sure they continue to have a qualifying disability. Generally, if a person's health hasn't improved, or if their disability still keeps them from working, they will continue to receive their benefits.

These continuing disability reviews help us ensure that only eligible people receive disability benefits. It supports the integrity of the Social Security system while delivering fair services to wounded warriors, chronically ill children and adults, and other people with disabilities.

To help us make our decision, Social Security first gathers new information about an individual's medical condition. We'll ask their doctors, hospitals, and other medical sources for their medical records. We'll ask them how their medical condition limits their activities, what their medical tests show, and what medical treatments they've been given. If we need more information, we'll ask them to get a special examination or test, for which we'll pay.

If we decide their disability benefits will stop, and they disagree, they can appeal our decision. That means they can ask us to look at their case again. When they get a letter telling them about our decision, the letter will tell them how to appeal the decision.

You can read more about how we decide if you still have a qualifying disability at [www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10053.pdf](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/pubs/EN-05-10053.pdf).

People can check the status of their disability application with a personal my Social Security account at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount). This secure account gives people access to many tools that can save them time.

Find out how Social Security is securing today and tomorrow at [www.socialsecurity.gov](http://www.socialsecurity.gov).

## Noem Approves Nine Bills

PIERRE, S.D. – Governor Kristi Noem signed the following pieces of legislation this afternoon:

HB1013 – An act to require criminal background investigations for certain vital records employees

HB1025 – An act to revise certain provisions regarding voter registration

HB1026 – An act to revise certain provisions regarding petitions, notices, and statements of convention nominees and certifications of party officials

HB1036 – An act to revise provisions related to the Board of Technical Professions

HB1037 – An act to authorize the Board of Regents to contract for the construction of a regional sports complex at Northern State University and to make an appropriation therefor

SB12 – An act to revise certain provisions pertaining to the disqualification of commercial driver license holders for failure to consent to chemical analyses

SB23 – An act to revise certain references to repealed or obsolete provisions regarding the Department of Education

SB30 – An act to remove certain unnecessary federal references and dates from certain provisions relating to the Department of Social Services

SB31 – An act to revise certain provisions regarding criminal background checks for assistant behavior analysts and paraprofessionals

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## SOUTH DAKOTA GOVERNOR **KRISTI NOEM**



### **Advancing Agriculture**

Agriculture is the foundation of South Dakota's economy and our number one industry – by a significant margin. All in all, it contributes about \$25.6 billion to the economy, so when ag prospers, South Dakota prospers. Of course, when droughts hit or markets slide, everyone feels that too.

As a lifelong farmer and rancher, I know the challenges that come with the business. I know the stress that comes when you take out loans, bury that money in the ground in the form of seed and fertilizer, and hope not only for a good yield, but for the right market conditions at the right time. It's a tough business. But I understand why folks do it. It's a special job to feed the world – to know that the product of your labor brings families together around a dinner table, to know that your work makes a real difference.

As governor, I'm utilizing my experience as a lifelong producer to advance agriculture in our state. And as the first farmer and rancher team to serve as governor and lieutenant governor, I believe Larry and I have the unique knowledge and background to accomplish big things for ag. From protecting property rights to expanding markets, my administration is committed to developing the state's agricultural economy and give more young people the opportunity to thrive as farmers and ranchers in South Dakota.

This year, we are focusing on growth in the ag economy by transferring Ag Development Representatives from the Department of Agriculture to my office of economic development. This makes sense, because ag development is economic development.

For years, these two departments have largely performed the same functions when it comes to ag development. This move will consolidate resources and brainpower, supply more tools for development, eliminate red tape, and create a better approach to developing our largest industry. I believe it will create a lasting infrastructure for the next generation.

Additionally, I am continuing to leverage my federal network to promote South Dakota ag. I might not be traveling to DC every week anymore, but I've continued conversations with President Trump, Secretary Sonny Perdue, and other ag leaders to keep South Dakota agriculture in the national spotlight – especially when it comes to trade. Farmers want trade, not aid. Producers don't want federal bailouts. We crave expanded market opportunities. We need level playing fields. This has been a frequent conversation I've had with President Trump.

I'm grateful for the outcomes we've seen as a result. Late last year, I was glad to see the president's support of farm country when he lifted restrictions on year-round E15, a move that will help consume another 2 billion bushels of corn, while potentially saving consumers up to 10 cents per gallon at the pump.

The state fleet is leading by example on prioritizing ethanol consumption. In my first few weeks as governor, I've launched the process of transitioning the state vehicle fleet to E30, further maximizing the use of homegrown fuels and revolutionizing the way we fuel both our vehicles and our economy. I strongly believe South Dakota can be an example to the nation on emphasizing ethanol as a means toward bolstered market opportunities and energy independence.

I'm proud of our agriculture tradition in South Dakota. Our ag industry is special – it's our legacy, our culture. We must do everything we can to ensure the ag economy is ready to support the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

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## Today in Weather History

February 8, 2000: A very warm airmass was over central and northeast South Dakota where record highs were set in Aberdeen, Pierre, and Sisseton. Aberdeen rose to 62 degrees, Sisseton rose to 53 degrees, and Pierre rose to a warm 69 degrees.

1956: From February 1-8, heavy snow fell over the Panhandle of Texas. Snowfall amounts include 43 inches in Vega, 24 inches in Hereford, and 14 inches in Amarillo. This storm caused 23 deaths and numerous injuries. It snowed continuously for 92 hours in some locations.

1968: The highest 1-day snow at the Savannah Airport in South Carolina occurs on this date when 3.6 inches of snow fell.

1989: Mammoth traffic jams in Los Angeles area as freak snow struck California. Snow was reported from the beaches of Malibu to the desert around Palm Springs.

2013: A nor'easter produced heavy snowfall over the New England states. Total snowfall in Boston, Massachusetts, reached 24.9 inches, the fifth-highest total ever recorded in the city. New York City officially recorded 11.4 inches of snow at Central Park, and Portland, Maine, set a record of 31.9 inches. Hamden, Connecticut recorded the highest snowfall of the storm at 40 inches. Many surrounding cities picked up at least 1 foot. In addition to the significant snowfall totals, hurricane-force wind gusts were recorded, reaching 102 mph in Nova Scotia, 89 mph at Mount Desert Rock, Maine, and 84 mph off the coast of Cattyhunk, Massachusetts. Boston experienced a storm surge of 4.2 ft. The storm affected Atlantic Canada after hitting the Northeastern United States.

1835 - A severe cold wave gripped the southeastern U.S. The mercury dipped to 8 above at Jacksonville FL, and to zero at Savannah GA. Orange trees were killed to the roots. (David Ludlum)

1936 - The temperature at Denver CO plunged to a record 30 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1985 - Blue Canyon, CA, set a 24-hour February snowfall record by receiving 42 inches of snow from February 7th-8th.

1987 - A powerful storm produced blizzard conditions in the Great Lakes Region. Winds gusted to 86 mph at Janesville WI and Cleveland OH received 12 inches of snow. North winds of 50 to 70 mph raised the water level of southern Lake Michigan two feet, and produced waves 12 to 18 feet high, causing seven million dollars damage along the Chicago area shoreline. It was the most damage caused by shoreline flooding and erosion in the history of the city of Chicago. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Arctic air invaded the north central U.S. Hibbing MN reported a morning low of 30 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - A winter storm over California produced snow from the beaches of Malibu to the desert canyons around Palm Springs, and the snow created mammoth traffic jams in the Los Angeles Basin. Sixteen cities in the western U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Marysville CA reported an all-time record low reading of 21 degrees above zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

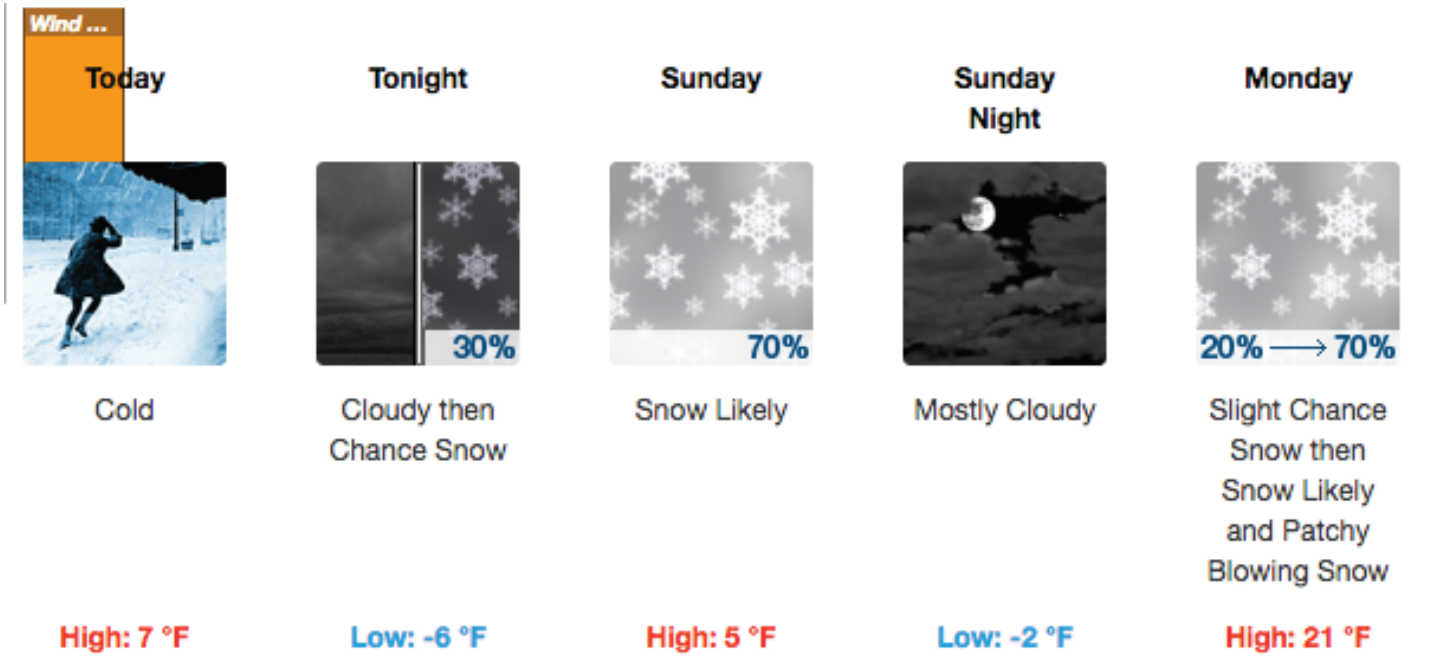
1990 - Unseasonably mild weather prevailed across the south central and eastern U.S. Twenty-two cities, including five in Michigan, reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 53 degrees at Flint MI surpassed their previous record by ten degrees, and the high of 66 degrees at Burlington IA exceeded their old record by eight degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2009 - Snow falls at levels above elevations of 11,000 feet on the Big Island's Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea in Hawaii. The Weather Doctor



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Today	Sunday	Monday
<u>Bitterly Cold Wind Chills</u> in the morning, & again tonight	Light Snow, mainly in the morning Snowfall 1-2"	Snow, mainly Monday afternoon & Monday night Snowfall 3-6"
		
Highs: 3 to 20° warmest over central SD	Highs: 3 to 9°	Highs: 19 to 25°

**Snow returning Sunday & again Monday**

**Cold Air remains. with more Snow in the forecast.** The next in a

Cold Air remains, with more Snow in the forecast! The next in a series of storm systems will move across the area on Sunday, with 1-2" of Snow. A much larger system will move in Monday and Monday night, with 3-6" of Snow, followed by gusty winds (blowing/drifting snow) that will linger through Tuesday.

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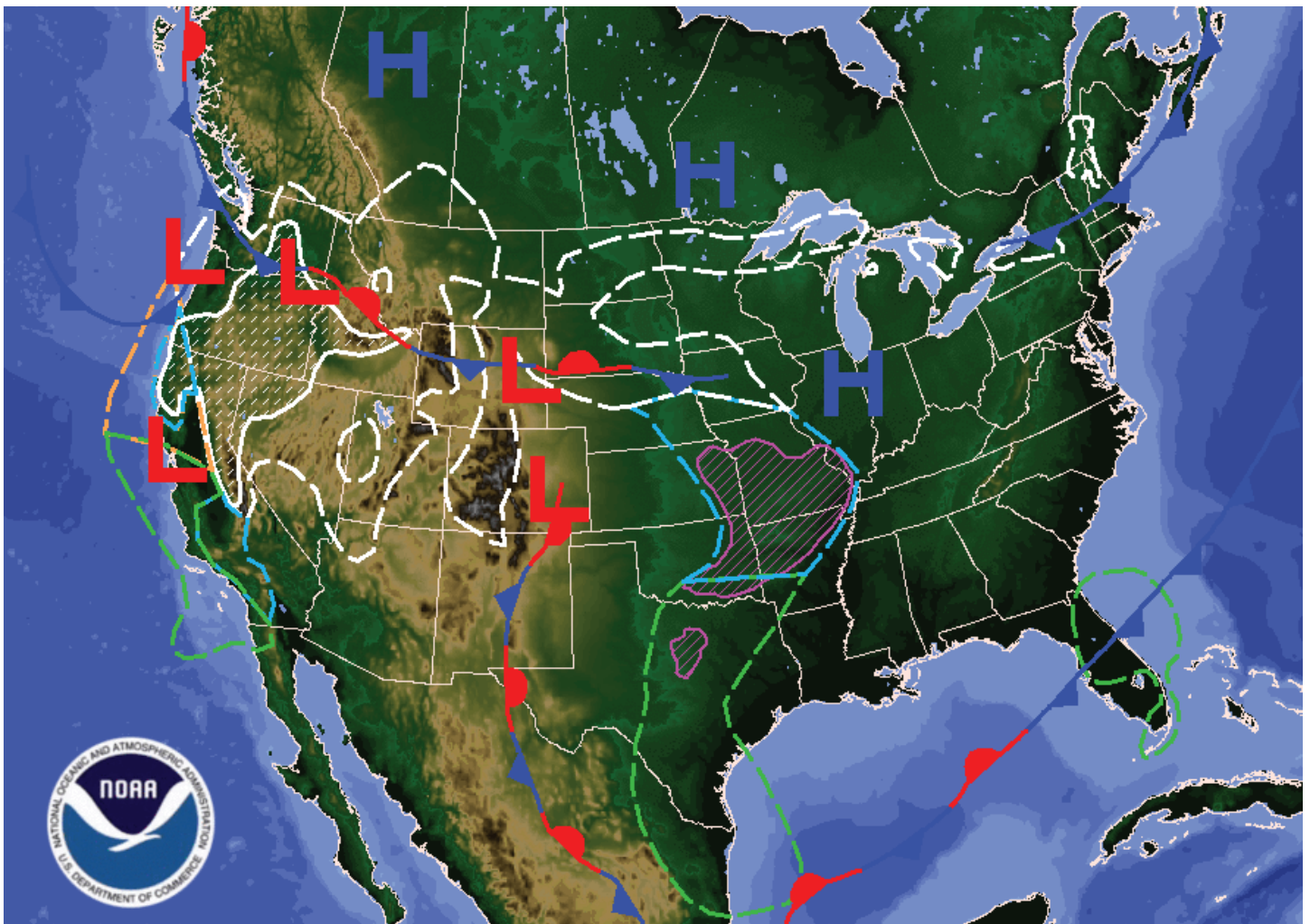
## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: -8 °F at 3:50 PM**  
**Low Outside Temp: -28 °F at 8:16 AM**  
**High Gust: 13 mph at 1:37 PM**

Precip:

## Today's Info

**Record High: 53 in 1987, 1977**  
**Record Low: -45 in 1994**  
**Average High: 26°F**  
**Average Low: 5°F**  
**Average Precip in Feb.: 0.15**  
**Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00**  
**Average Precip to date: 0.59**  
**Precip Year to Date: 0.09**  
**Sunset Tonight: 5:52 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:43 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Sat, Feb 09, 2019, issued 3:53 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Snell 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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## ALWAYS ROOM FOR MORE

Whenever I hear the word gain, I think it is related to weight, especially my weight. There are very few mornings that I do not step on the scale to get my daily report on what I ate yesterday. Most nutritionists do not recommend such a program. But, my hope to see the arrow pointing downward remains steadfast.

A gain or increase can be good or bad, exciting or depressing, encouraging or discouraging, depending on what the gain refers to. If we depend on the stock market, a gain can be a good thing. But, if we see a gain in our debt, it can be disturbing. Our gains or losses, for the most part, are usually in the physical or material realm.

Solomon speaks of a particular type of gain - of being able to achieve some things that will last as long as we live. These gains, these valuable lessons are available and offered to us in Proverbs. Our attaining more of Gods wisdom, or life gains is very important for all Christians because we are constantly challenged to grow throughout Scripture, and Proverbs provides this path for us if we want to grow.

The word used for wisdom in this verse also means skillfulness - applying knowledge that comes from God to our lives every day. If we do so, we will do the right things the right way.

When we go one step further, we come to the fact that it is possible to develop decision-making skills that are God-honoring and enable us to establish life-principals that will bring us success. Gods proverbs can guide us through life, help us in our relationships with others, lead to good practices in business, enrich our homes, and bless God and others.

Prayer: Lord, You've left us no excuses on how we are to live life if we are Christians. Thanks for the directions on how to live a successful life! Now, give us courage! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 1:2 For gaining wisdom and instruction; for understanding words of insight.

## 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
- 06/13/2019 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

### Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

#### **BOYS PREP BASKETBALL**

Alliance, Neb. 64, Rapid City Christian 43  
Baltic 68, Alcester-Hudson 36  
Bennett County 57, New Underwood 29  
Beresford 63, Elk Point-Jefferson 60  
Custer 58, Belle Fourche 47  
Dakota Valley 60, Dell Rapids 46  
Faith 62, Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. 38  
Faulkton 46, Langford 39  
Gayville-Volin 50, Centerville 37  
Gregory 61, Scotland 42  
Groton Area 55, Warner 52 (OT)  
Highmore-Harrold 47, Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 46  
Huron 71, Brandon Valley 69  
Irene-Wakonda 76, Canton 74  
Kimball/White Lake 73, Sunshine Bible Academy 42  
Lennox 63, West Central 48  
Lower Brule 67, Wessington Springs 34  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 69, Ethan 51  
Platte-Geddes 54, Bon Homme 37  
Rapid City Stevens 74, Sioux Falls Washington 64  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 59, Rapid City Central 51  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 79, Pierre 48  
Sisseton 70, Webster 52  
Sturgis Brown 55, Hot Springs 38  
Sully Buttes 55, Ipswich 30  
Tea Area 54, Western Christian, Iowa 52  
Vermillion 68, LeMars, Iowa 61  
Viborg-Hurley 55, Parker 48  
Wagner 61, Chamberlain 53  
Watertown 51, Yankton 44  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS  
Redfield/Doland vs. Hamlin, ppd.  
Winnebago, Neb. vs. Crow Creek, ccd.

#### **GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL**

Andes Central/Dakota Christian 44, Kimball/White Lake 38  
Baltic 32, Alcester-Hudson 31  
Belle Fourche 60, Custer 20  
Beresford 52, Elk Point-Jefferson 33  
Bon Homme 59, Platte-Geddes 34  
Brandon Valley 62, Huron 44  
Canistota 51, Chester 47  
Castlewood 41, Waverly-South Shore 38  
Dell Rapids 69, Dakota Valley 52

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Ethan 46, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 29  
Gayville-Volin 55, Centerville 41  
Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. 49, Faith 47  
Ipswich 46, Sully Buttes 29  
Irene-Wakonda 54, Canton 38  
Kadoka Area 80, Colome 45  
Langford 56, Faulkton 49  
LeMars, Iowa 49, Vermillion 41  
New Underwood 57, Bennett County 14  
Parker 44, Viborg-Hurley 43  
Parkston 44, Freeman 43  
Sanborn Central/Woonsocket 46, Highmore-Harrold 37  
Scotland 76, Gregory 62  
Sioux Falls Christian 70, Madison 40  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 45, Rapid City Central 28  
Sioux Falls Washington 62, Rapid City Stevens 50  
St. Thomas More 42, Red Cloud 40  
Sturgis Brown 61, Hot Springs 12  
Wagner 60, Chamberlain 37  
Warner 47, Groton Area 26  
West Central 52, Lennox 50, OT  
Wolsey-Wessington 52, Iroquois 29  
Yankton 54, Watertown 41  
Dakota Wesleyan University Culver Classic  
Avon 74, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 43  
Bridgewater-Emery 63, Burke/South Central 36  
Corsica/Stickney 75, Hanson 43  
DeSmet 59, Howard 23  
McCook Central/Montrose 71, Pine Ridge 66  
Mitchell 63, Harrisburg 51  
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS  
Crow Creek vs. Winnebago, Neb., ccd.

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

## South Dakota nurse advances career through Avera programs

By KATHERINE GRANDSTRAND, Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — It took a while for Sarah Siebert to figure out what she wanted to do with her life. But now the nurse practitioner at Avera St. Luke's Hospital feels like she's right where she belongs. With her dad being a U.S. Air Force nurse, Siebert, 33, decided to move to Aberdeen for college because she had some family in town.

"We moved around a lot — about every four years — so I never really put down roots anywhere," she told the Aberdeen American News. "That was kind of always one of my goals was to settle down eventually and put down roots."

She attended Northern State University, graduating in 2008 with a degree in English. She got a job working as a patient service representative at the Avera Fast Care Clinic at Shopko.

And that reignited a passion for living science. Siebert originally planned on majoring in biology at Northern, but didn't click with the faculty at the time.

While she was working at the Fast Care Clinic, she met her now-husband Joe Siebert. They would see



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each other around, but didn't know each other very well until a fateful day at the Aberdeen Family YMCA.

"We went running and were running next to each other on the treadmill, and I think we ran 4 miles or something like that and we talked the whole time," Joe Siebert, 33, said. "I had (run) the previous five days before that, so I was not going to run because I was ... my legs were shot. But then I started talking to her right beforehand, and she said she was going to go running."

They didn't date very long before getting engaged since Joe Siebert was about to leave and serve in Kuwait. But they were engaged for a while.

It was in 2011 that Sarah Siebert decided to go back to school. She enrolled in the licensed practical nurse program at Presentation College.

Because Avera has a tuition reimbursement plan, much of the cost of her college was covered.

"We look at tuition reimbursement as a great retention benefit for us," said Patty Kline, the Avera St. Luke's human resources representative in charge of the program. "It allows us to promote talent from within our organization."

The program has a few parameters — degrees employees are seeking need to benefit Avera, Kline said.

"Sarah's story is a prime example of that," she said. "Of having someone start out and she just kept improving her skills."

The tuition reimbursement program is one way to invest in employees, Kline said.

The Sieberts managed to avoid borrowing any money to pay for Sarah Siebert's schooling, Joe Siebert said.

Once she completed her associate degree in nursing in 2013, Sarah Siebert started working as a nurse at Avera and started the online associates-to-bachelor of science in nursing program at Presentation, all while working full time.

The Sieberts also got married around that time, and started trying for a family.

After dealing fertility issues for more than four years, they have welcomed two daughters, Genevieve, 3 1/2, and Hailey, 1 1/2.

And Siebert decided to go back to school again, this time to North Dakota State University in Fargo to earn a doctorate of nurse practice degree. While the program was mostly online, she had to attend class once a week in Fargo for three years.

While attending school full time and being a mom to two little girls, Siebert continued to work for Avera as a fill-in nurse — someone who would pick up a shift here and there when others were sick.

Her degree in English came in handy when she was writing a 100-plus page dissertation.

"I became a really grammatically correct nurse," Siebert joked.

In May, she graduated from NDSU, and began to work at Avera full time again. She sees patients at urgent care or the AveraQuick clinic at Kessler's.

"There's just so much opportunity for advancement," Siebert said. "The sky's really the limit for what you can do."

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

## SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

14-24-31-42-48, Mega Ball: 13, Megaplier: 3

(fourteen, twenty-four, thirty-one, forty-two, forty-eight; Mega Ball: thirteen; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$157 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$224 million

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## After weather delay, search resumes for South Dakota girl

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Recovery teams are searching for a 9-year-old girl who ran away from a residential youth home amid frigid weather last weekend in South Dakota.

The search for Serenity Dennard had been stalled for two days before resuming Friday because of a winter storm. The girl went missing Sunday in subfreezing temperatures from the Black Hills Children's Home near Rockerville.

The Pennington County Sheriff's Office said if the girl was outside, it's unlikely she survived because she wasn't dressed for the weather. Authorities said their efforts are now focused on finding her body.

On Friday, searchers headed outside with specially trained dogs to go over the area near the children's home. Additional dogs and handlers are expected to arrive from out-of-state for the weekend.

The home is operated by Children's Home Society.

The Rapid City Journal reported Friday that staff at the facility waited more than an hour and a half before calling 911 after Serenity ran away.

Bill Colson, executive director of the Children's Home Society, said that after Serenity left the sight of a staff member at about 10:45 a.m., "we immediately conducted a thorough search of our grounds and buildings. When we were unable to find Serenity we called law enforcement."

Helene Duhamel, spokeswoman with the Pennington County Sheriff's Office, said investigators believe someone heading to the Children's Home around 11 a.m. was probably the last person to see the girl.

## Protest highway shutdown lawsuit claims include extortion

By **BLAKE NICHOLSON, Associated Press**

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — Standing Rock Sioux tribal members and others who are suing over a five-month shutdown of a North Dakota highway during protests against the Dakota Access oil pipeline have broadened their claims to include allegations of extortion and media manipulation by state and county officials.

Plaintiffs allege the closure of a stretch of state Highway 1806 was aimed not only at protesters who had gathered in the thousands in camps near the two-lane road but also at influencing the tribe's position on the camps and reporters' coverage of the prolonged clash. It played out over six months in 2016 and 2017 and resulted in 761 arrests.

The new filing by plaintiff's attorney Noah Smith-Drelich references several alleged documents in support of the argument, including a government strategic plan he says detailed concessions authorities wanted from the tribe, such as a public decree to vacate the camps.

"Defendants' true purpose for discriminatorily closing the road in question ... (was) to extort political concessions from the Standing Rock Sioux tribe," Smith-Drelich wrote in an amended complaint filed earlier this month.

The lawsuit also alleges the highway closure made it "substantially more difficult for local press in particular to independently obtain firsthand evidence of what was happening in or around the camps," making reporters more reliant on government accounts of protesters as being "violent and criminal, and of the (protest) movement as defined by mayhem."

The state attorney general's office declined comment on the new claims and said it will be filing a formal response in federal court. Morton County lead attorney Randall Bakke said Friday that he will do the same and added, "We don't think there's any basis for the claims."

The \$3.8 billion pipeline has been moving North Dakota oil to Illinois since June 2017. Texas-based pipeline developer Energy Transfer Partners maintains it's safe, but opponents who fear environmental harm fought its construction for months.

State officials blocked off a stretch of 1806 just north of the camps in October 2016 after a bridge was damaged by fires during one clash between protesters and police. The bridge was deemed structurally sound in January 2017, but authorities didn't reopen it for two more months, after initial repairs were completed and the protest camps were shut down.

The lawsuit initially filed last October argues that the highway closure unduly restricted travel and com-

merce and violated free speech and religious rights. A reservation businesswoman, two pipeline opponents and a priest at a reservation church seek unspecified money damages from the state, county and TigerSwan, a North Carolina-based company that oversaw private security for ETP. They also seek class-action status.

Plaintiffs initially also asked a judge to force the implementation of stricter rules for road closures in such instances, but they have dropped that request. Government attorneys last month had argued that the request was improper because "plaintiffs merely speculate defendants may again restrict traffic at some unspecified time and under some unspecified conditions in the future."

They also argued that officials had not only the authority to shut down the highway but also an obligation to do it.

"Bottom line, we feel it was appropriate for the Highway Patrol and Sheriff (Kyle) Kirchmeier to close the road for public health, public safety and public welfare reasons," Bakke said Friday.

TigerSwan has asked to be dismissed as a defendant, arguing it had nothing to do with the shutdown. The plaintiffs allege the company "actively provided logistical support to law enforcement."

Follow Blake Nicholson on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/NicholsonBlake>

## Noem signals change ahead for 'intellectual diversity' bill

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem says officials will work on changes to a Republican-backed bill seeking to promote "intellectual diversity" on college campuses.

The GOP governor says she met Friday with Republican Rep. Sue Peterson, the sponsor, to discuss the proposal.

The wide-ranging bill would mandate requirements for students, including U.S. history and government courses and scoring at least 85 percent on the U.S. citizenship test. Noem says she's worried the measure could increase costs for students.

The bill would also designate outdoor university areas as public forums, prohibit officials from discriminating against student organizations based on their expression and require reporting to the governor, regents and legislators.

Noem says she believes the discussion has merit. She says the state should strive for intellectual diversity on its campuses.

The Board of Regents opposes the bill.

## South Dakota Senate panel advances indigenous language bill

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A state Senate panel endorsed a bill Friday that would recognize the official indigenous language of South Dakota as that of the Oceti Sakowin, or Great Sioux Nation.

The Senate State Affairs Committee voted unanimously to advance the bill to the chamber's floor after passionate backing from supporters of indigenous language revitalization. The language is made up of three dialects: Dakota, Lakota and Nakota.

Elyssa Sierra Concha, a teacher in the Lakota immersion program at Red Cloud Indian School, said supporters represent generations who have fought to keep their traditions, land, language and identity. She asked lawmakers to pass the bill for the American Indian children in the room.

"I want them to grow up knowing that their state is fully behind them and who they are as indigenous people," Concha said. "By passing this bill, you will let them know that who they are and the language they speak is not only recognized but celebrated."

Yankton Sioux Tribe member Faith Spotted Eagle said it would "open some doors for those little ones that are sitting out there all across South Dakota."

Senate Democratic leader Troy Heinert, the bill's sponsor, said before the hearing that the measure is one of the biggest bills he's brought during his time in the Legislature. Heinert, a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, has said it's important that South Dakota recognizes "part of our unique history."



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The bill didn't face opposition during the committee hearing. If it passes through the Senate, the measure would head to the House.

## Senate upholds Noem's veto of solar energy legislation

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota senators have upheld Gov. Kristi Noem's rejection of a bill to define solar energy facilities in state law.

The chamber voted 30-1 Friday to sustain the Republican governor's veto of the Public Utilities Commission bill. The panel supported Noem's move.

In her veto message, Noem said that a legal review shows "poor drafting" of the bill would have given the panel authority to mandate the locations of solar energy projects.

GOP Sen. Jim Stalzer says he has been in contact with the bill's authors at the commission and they agreed with the governor that there was a "fatal flaw" in the bill.

## National champion North Dakota State invited to White House

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — U.S. Sen. John Hoeven says President Donald Trump has invited the national champion North Dakota State football team to the White House.

Hoeven says Trump extended the invitation after the two of them talked about the Bison winning their seventh Football Championship Subdivision title in the last eight years. The Bison defeated Eastern Washington in January's title game in Frisco, Texas.

Hoeven says North Dakota State's winning history makes for a fitting visit and he will work with the president to coordinate details.

## South Dakota governor asks lawmakers to shelve hemp efforts

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem is asking lawmakers to shelve efforts this session to allow the cultivation of industrial hemp in South Dakota.

The Republican governor said in a Friday statement that South Dakota isn't ready for production of industrial hemp. Noem says questions remain about enforcement, taxpayer costs and effects on public safety.

Noem says officials need to see federal rules once they're issued and decide if hemp is as "promising as they say it will be." The governor's office says the crop isn't currently authorized for growth in South Dakota.

A House panel voted unanimously Thursday to advance a measure legalizing industrial hemp. Democratic Rep. Oren Lesmeister, the sponsor, says there's an industry ready in South Dakota to start processing hemp products.

The 2018 federal farm bill legalized the cultivation of industrial hemp.

## Indicted political operative popped up in unlikely places

By JAMES NORD and DAVE KOLPACK, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Paul Erickson, the boyfriend of admitted Russian covert agent Maria Butina accused this week of fraud, has turned up in the unlikeliest of places — from landing a top spot on Pat Buchanan's 1992 presidential campaign to representing a man involved in one of the most salacious trials of the 1990s.

From his youth in Vermillion, South Dakota, Erickson parlayed a network of contacts with the College Republicans into an odyssey of business and political adventures on the fringes of celebrity over more than two decades.

He was national political director for Buchanan's insurgent bid to topple President George H. W. Bush in the 1992 Republican primary. He was a media adviser to John Wayne Bobbitt, the Virginia man whose wife cut off his penis with a kitchen knife in 1993. He joined with Jack Abramoff, a Washington lobbyist later imprisoned for corruption, in producing an anti-communist action movie. And he represented the African dictator Mobutu Sese Seko when the president of then Zaire wanted to enter the United States.

Erickson has also said that he was in Israel in 1982 when its troops temporarily occupied southern

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Lebanon. The next year, he claimed that he helped supply tents, boots, camels and mules to fighters combatting the Soviet Union in Afghanistan.

Along the way, Erickson also left a trail of aggrieved associates from his business dealings back in the Dakotas.

Erickson, 57, pleaded not guilty this week to 11 counts of wire fraud and money laundering in business schemes that stretched from 1996 through August 2018, according to federal prosecutors in South Dakota. Butina pleaded guilty in December for trying to infiltrate conservative political groups as a Kremlin secret agent, a case that was separate from special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

"Paul is a very charismatic gentleman," said Daniel Bielfeldt, an aggrieved investor. "I just think the whole thing is sad because he is a very intelligent person and to use his talents to deceive people is wrong. He could have earned a lot more money doing the right thing."

The fraud indictment was filed after Erickson got caught up in the firestorm over Butina's work seeking to use contacts in the National Rifle Association to pursue back channels to American conservatives during the 2016 campaign.

Prosecutors now accuse Erickson of concocting schemes to carry out well over \$1 million in fraudulent transactions using company names such as Investing with Dignity, a business purportedly developing a wheelchair that allowed a person to use the bathroom from the chair and Compass Care, which he said developed assisted living homes for elderly people.

It's unclear why Erickson's indictment came Tuesday, after more than 20 years of alleged wrongdoing. The U.S. Attorney's Office in South Dakota declined to comment about the investigation. The charges carry a penalty of up to 20 years per count.

Erickson's Sioux Falls lawyer, Clint Sargent, said he is "anxious to let the criminal justice process play out and believes a story different from the government's will emerge." When Butina entered her plea in December, attorney William Hurd said Erickson "has done nothing to harm our country and never would." It's not clear if Erickson will face charges in that case.

Those who've met Erickson have been guarded in what they say about him since he popped up as a figure in Butina's case.

One of those who view him as an unsavory character is South Dakota Republican lawmaker Lee Schoenbeck, whose experience with Erickson goes back to their time in the College Republicans. Erickson landed a job on Jim Abdnor's 1980 campaign that ousted George McGovern from the U.S. Senate, but Erickson didn't ever show up for work, Schoenbeck said.

"I've just always known him as a fraud," Schoenbeck said.

Former South Dakota House Speaker Harvey Krautschun, who was a Republican candidate for lieutenant governor in 2002, said Erickson was an acquaintance who worked on the campaign. Krautschun said Erickson was "on fire" for politics, but he never felt there was anything unsavory about Erickson at the time.

"He ate and slept and breathed politics," Krautschun said. "If there was a thing known as political blood, he had it."

Erickson transferred from the University of South Dakota to Yale University, serving as national treasurer of the College Republicans while there. He graduated in 1984 and got a law degree in 1988 from the University of Virginia and was executive producer of Abramoff's movie brainchild, "Red Scorpion," starring Dolph Lundgren.

Erickson worked in 1992 for Buchanan's campaign at a time when many established Republican operatives shied away from trying to unseat the sitting president of the United States. As Bobbitt's media adviser, Erickson booked an international tour in which the man whose penis was lopped off and reattached sold shirts and steak knives, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Public records in South Dakota include at least seven court judgments for more than \$421,000 against Erickson or his companies since 2003, according to the Rapid City Journal. Several of the court cases that produced the judgments include evidence of Erickson writing bad checks to creditors.

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Bielfeldt and his son, Daniel, developers from Brookings, South Dakota, sued Erickson in 2015. They had been persuaded by Erickson in 2009 to invest a combined \$30,000 in a company called Dignity Medical Inc.

The Bielfeldts reached a \$30,000 settlement with Erickson and received their first check for \$10,000 but the other checks bounced, the Journal reported. The Bielfeldts eventually won a judgment against Erickson in January 2017 for about \$41,000.

Conservative syndicated writer L. Brent Bozell III sued Erickson in 2007. Bozell said in the lawsuit that he had been persuaded to invest \$200,000 in Compass Care, which Erickson founded in 1996. Bozell sued for breach of contract and won a \$190,000 judgment in 2008, but it's not clear if he received the money.

Court documents in the lawsuits by the Bielfeldts and Bozell show that Erickson predicted returns ranging from 25 to 100 percent.

In another lawsuit, Erickson was ordered in 2003 to pay more than \$115,417 to Bluestem Capital Partners, the venture capital firm of Steve Kirby, who is a Republican former lieutenant governor of South Dakota. Court documents show Bluestem had lent Erickson money for Compass Care that he failed to pay back in time, the Journal reported. Kirby did not return a phone message left Thursday by The Associated Press.

Casey Phillips, now a political strategist and consultant in Virginia, said he met Erickson in the early 2000s while he was a College Republican in South Dakota. Erickson was always "hanging around" and was quick to try to help or share a lesson. The two have kept in touch, Phillips said, but he never met Butina. Erickson sent him a birthday card in October.

"Paul Erickson is a great guy to have a beer with," Phillips said. "It looks like he charmed his way into trouble, and I feel terrible for him and for anyone he hurt along the way."

Kolpack reported from Fargo, North Dakota.

## Upper Midwest Guard soldiers being honored this weekend

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — National Guard soldiers from the Upper Midwest who served about a year of duty in Afghanistan will be honored this weekend.

A public "welcome home" event is scheduled at 1 p.m. Sunday at the Armed Forces Reserve Center in Fargo for members of the North Dakota Army National Guard's 191st Military Police Company.

Nearly 30 members of the company returned home late last year. The soldiers are from 20 communities in North Dakota, South Dakota and Minnesota.

## Sen. Warren's expected 2020 bid banking on populist appeal

By ELANA SCHOR, Associated Press

LAWRENCE, Mass. (AP) — Sen. Elizabeth Warren has picked this working-class city for the expected kickoff of her 2020 presidential campaign, banking on a populist call to fight economic inequality that she hopes will distinguish her in a crowded Democratic field and help her move past the controversy surrounding her past claims to Native American heritage.

The Massachusetts Democrat planned to announce her political plans Saturday at a mill site where largely immigrant factory workers went on strike about 100 years ago, providing the longtime consumer advocate a fitting forum to advance her platform. In a video released before the event, Warren cited Lawrence's "history of working people coming together to make change, where the fight was hard, the battle was uphill, and where a group of women led the charge for all of us."

The 69-year-old was scheduled to later visit New Hampshire, home to the nation's first primary, where Warren could have an advantage as a neighboring-state resident with high name recognition. She intended to spend Sunday in Iowa, where the leadoff caucuses will be the first test of candidates' viability.

Warren was the first high-profile Democrat to signal interest in running for the White House, forming an exploratory committee on New Year's Eve.

She was to be introduced by Rep. Joe Kennedy III, D-Mass., who intended to endorse her candidacy, according to an official familiar with his plans. The backing could prove valuable for Warren given his sta-



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tus as a rising young Democratic star and his friendship with her potential 2020 rival, former Rep. Beto O'Rourke, D-Texas.

The official was not authorized to publicly discuss details about the announcement before the event and spoke on the condition of anonymity.

Warren would enter the race as one of the party's most recognizable figures. Warren has spent the past decade in the national spotlight, first emerging as a consumer activist during the financial crisis. She later led the congressional panel that oversaw the 2008 financial industry bailout. After Republicans blocked her from running the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, an agency she helped create, she ran for the Senate in 2012 and unseated a GOP incumbent.

She has \$11 million left over from her commanding 2018 Senate re-election victory that can be used on her presidential run.

Still, Warren would compete against other popular Democrats who will be able to raise substantial money. A recent CNN poll found that fewer Democrats said they'd be very likely to support Warren if she runs than said the same of former Vice President Joe Biden or Sens. Kamala Harris of California and Bernie Sanders of Vermont. Still, about as many Democrats said they'd be at least somewhat likely to support Warren as said the same of Harris or Sanders.

That challenge is on display this weekend as Democratic presidential contenders — or those considering a run — fan out across the crucial early-voting states. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker is in Iowa while New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand is visiting South Carolina. Another possible presidential rival, Ohio Sen. Sherrod Brown, planned to be in New Hampshire on Saturday.

The campaign launch comes at a challenging moment for Warren. She's apologized twice over the past two weeks for claiming Native American identity on multiple occasions early in her career, an episode that has created fodder for Republicans and could overshadow her campaign.

The expected launch will test whether the controversy is simply a Washington obsession or a substantive threat to her candidacy. Doug Rubin, a Boston-based strategist who advised Warren during her first Senate run in 2012, said in an interview that most voters will respond to "the powerful message she's been talking about," in terms of battling social and economic injustices, rather than the back-and-forth over her personal identity.

Another threat could come from a fellow senator who has yet to announce his own plans for 2020: Sanders. They're both leaders of the Democrats' liberal vanguard, but some Sanders supporters are still upset she didn't support him during his 2016 primary challenge against Hillary Clinton. And as a senator from Vermont who won the New Hampshire primary, he would likely go into the Granite State as an early favorite if he decided to run again.

Despite their similarities, Warren and Sanders have taken somewhat divergent paths in recent months as they prepare for the primary. After proposing an "ultra-millionaire tax" that would hit the wealthiest 75,000 households in America, Warren told Bloomberg News last week that she continues to "believe in capitalism" but wants to see stricter rules to prevent gaming the system — a marked contrast with the self-described democratic socialism of Sanders.

## French yellow vest protester sustains hand injury in Paris

PARIS (AP) — A French yellow vest protester sustained what appeared to be a serious hand injury during violent clashes with police on the streets of Paris on Saturday in a 13th consecutive week of demonstrations.

Paramedics huddled around the injured protester near the gates of the National Assembly as they provided emergency treatment. Some of the paramedics served as a barrier to stop media and demonstrators from getting too close. Police confirmed that a protester had a hand injury, but provided no further details other than to say treatment was being provided.

Fire department spokesman Gildas Lecoeur told The Associated Press that the injured man had a bloodied hand and was taken to a hospital. He couldn't confirm the man's current condition.

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Police said that about 10 demonstrators have been arrested so far as scuffles broke out between protesters and police near the Champs-Elysees avenue and the National Assembly.

Police used batons and fired tear gas in Paris to disperse demonstrators, some of whom threw debris at riot police hunkered down in front of the National Assembly.

The protest in the French capital has passed the National Assembly and is due to end up near the Eiffel Tower.

The yellow vest activists, who have brought hundreds of thousands onto the streets over the past three months, are now trying to achieve electoral success but the movement is politically divided and has no appointed leader.

President Emmanuel Macron — the target of many demonstrators' anger — seems to be clawing back support as he tries to quell the movement with a national political debate. Recent polls show Macron's approval ratings rising.

## Trump's Year 3 aims for dramatic sequels to rival originals

By CATHERINE LUCEY and JONATHAN LEMIRE, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As President Donald Trump prepares to meet North Korea's Kim Jong Un for a second time, he's out to replicate the suspenseful buildup, make-or-break stakes and far-flung rendezvous of their first encounter. The reality star American president will soon learn if the sequel, on this matter and many others, can compete with the original.

In his third year in office, Trump is starting to air some reruns.

Trump is headed into fresh negotiations with North Korea, is still pushing for his long-promised U.S.-Mexico border wall and is considering a new round of tax cuts. The focus on his greatest hits in part reflects Trump's desire to fulfill campaign promises and energize voters for his 2020 re-election campaign. But it's not without risks.

"The danger is the public starts recognizing this is Groundhog Day," said presidential historian Douglas Brinkley. "You keep thinking there is a win and there is no win. It's not clear Trump is scoring durable history points."

With his reality TV background and instinctive sense of how to control a news cycle, Trump has long micromanaged the staging of his image, eager to project power and drama.

Those instincts were on full display during the recent scrap over his second State of the Union address. Trump rejected his aides' suggestions that he deliver the address from an alternate site after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., withdrew her invitation for him to speak at the Capitol during the government shutdown. Trump opted to wait for the real deal.

"There is no venue that can compete with the history, tradition and importance of the House Chamber," he tweeted.

In his dealings with North Korea, both past and future, Trump has been intent on ginning up excitement.

After months of trading escalating nuclear threats with the North, Trump memorably popped his head into the White House briefing room last March to hint at big news to come. Not long afterward, officials announced that a Trump-Kim meeting was in the offing.

From there, Trump teased dates and locations, threatened to cancel it — and did so at one point — before signing off on the plan for the historic meeting in Singapore last June.

Trump was delighted that the first summit received round-the-clock cable TV coverage for days, something he had hoped to repeat last summer when he met with Russia's Vladimir Putin in Helsinki, according to two Republicans close to the White House not authorized to speak publicly about private matters. But Trump saw the Putin coverage take a negative turn after he refused to side with U.S. intelligence agencies over the Russian president in a post-summit news conference.

This time, Trump has again tried to draw out the suspense, teasing the possibility of another meeting with Kim for months and waxing poetic about his relationship with the authoritarian leader. But Trump has glossed over the fact that the first meeting produced little in the way of tangible results toward denuclear-

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ization, instead stressing that North Korea's threats have fallen off and suggesting there is an opportunity for further progress.

Aides counseled the president that a second summit would probably not carry the same drama as the first, and needed more concrete results, but Trump urged them to push forward before deciding to announce it during this past week's State of the Union address. He insisted to advisers that the Vietnam summit would still be must-see TV, and told one confidant that the idea of "good vs. evil" would be irresistible.

Brinkley noted there is precedent for requiring more than one summit to make a deal, citing the repeated arms control meetings between the United States and the former Soviet Union during the Cold War. But he argued that those were a better investment, given that "Russia is a great power" while "North Korea is a rogue actor."

As for other White House sequels, Trump would be happy to produce Tax Cut 2.0. He oversaw a massive tax cut at the end of 2017 and teased the possibility of another in the runup to the 2018 midterm elections. Economic adviser Larry Kudlow pushed back on the suggestion that it was simply a pre-election ploy as he spoke to reporters at the White House this past week.

"We're kicking it around," said Kudlow. "We're looking at a couple of very interesting things that may wind up surprising folks."

You can also count on Trump to continue the tough immigration rhetoric that defined his campaign and became a central part of his midterm election push. He forced the government into a 35-day partial shut-down over his demand to fund a wall along the U.S.-Mexico border and views his immigration efforts as key to his re-election campaign.

Brinkley said of Trump's repeat performances: "He's a child of the 1970s with boxing matches. It's like the rematch with Muhammed Ali and Joe Frazier."

## Bundy's deadly charm still polarizes, 40 years later

By DAN SEWELL, Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — She kept her eyes on the dapper, wavy haired man who smiled, winked and exuded self-confidence as the courtroom proceedings moved along.

"I don't know what it is he has, but he's fascinating," the teenage spectator explained to me at the time. "He's impressive. He just has a kind of magnetism."

It was that beguiling magnetism that investigators said helped make the object of her interest — Ted Bundy — one of the nation's most prolific serial killers, with at least 30 women and girls' deaths linked to him in a multiple-state spree that spanned the late 1970s.

I reported the teenager's comments for The Associated Press' coverage of Bundy's 1979 murder trial in Miami, the first of two murder trials he would have in Florida. She was just one example of a regular courtroom backdrop of spellbound female spectators who were "attractive, young and single," as I wrote at the time, just like the women Bundy was on trial for bludgeoning and sexually assaulting.

"I haven't lost any sleep about the verdict," a relaxed, self-assured Bundy told me in a jail-cell interview a few days after the jury swiftly convicted him of murdering two Florida State University sorority sisters and assaulting three other young women in Tallahassee.

Nearly 40 years after that trial, and 30 years after his death in Florida's electric chair, Bundy's deadly charm continues to captivate and perplex.

Some reactions to a new Netflix documentary series, "Conversations with a Killer: The Ted Bundy Tapes," prompted a Twitter appeal to viewers asking them to chill out about his "alleged hotness," adding there are many other attractive men featured on the streaming service who aren't convicted serial killers. Nearly simultaneously, a movie starring heartthrob Zac Efron as Bundy recently made its debut at the Sundance Film Festival with some criticisms that the film, shot last year in the Cincinnati area, glamorizes the killer. A Vanity Fair reviewer wrote that "at its worse, the movie feels almost sympathetic to Bundy."

Filmmaker Joe Berlinger, who is the director for both projects, acknowledged in a Salt Lake Tribune interview he had tackled "a very polarizing subject" with Bundy, but insisted there's no glorification. His



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movie hasn't yet been scheduled for wider release. Efron, by the way, isn't the first hunky actor to play Bundy — Mark Harmon starred in the 1986 TV miniseries "The Deliberate Stranger."

The July 1979 trial I helped cover was for Bundy's rampage on Jan. 15, 1978 in Tallahassee, Florida. Armed with an oak limb, Bundy left two Chi Omega sorority sisters dead and three other women injured. Less than a month later, on Feb. 9, he abducted, sexually assaulted and killed a 12-year-old girl in Lake City, Florida. She was Bundy's final victim in a gruesome spree that claimed the lives of dozens of women in states from Washington to Florida.

During the trial, I interviewed other young women in Miami who talked about Bundy's handsome looks and expressive eyes, and also the chilling testimony about his crimes. A University of Washington psychiatry professor talked in a telephone interview about him giving women "Dracula shivers."

Jurors deliberated less than seven hours on July 24, 1979, before convicting Bundy, then 32, of the Chi Omega murders. Three days later, I was assigned to go to Dade County Jail and find out what I could about what he was doing, who was visiting him and whether he was causing problems for jailers as he had at times during the trial.

A sergeant noticed I had been waiting for a while and asked who I was there to see. "Ted Bundy," I replied quickly. He took me to a visiting cell where Bundy was meeting with one of his attorneys. The cell door closed behind me. I introduced myself, and it was clear by his grin that Bundy was amused by my audacity.

Despite the attorney's uneasiness about an unplanned interview, I sat while Bundy, unshaved and dressed in jail grays left open at the top, leaned back on his elbows on a bench, and went to work on me.

He told me he was innocent, of course. Repeatedly. So innocent, he explained with that same grin spreading across his face, he wasn't losing any sleep. "I'm not trying to sound callous. ... I'm very confident we have a good appeal."

He professed to be surprised and disappointed by the jury's relatively quick verdict after a five-week trial with complicated forensic evidence. He told me it would take a mind like "William S. Burroughs" to explain it. Not a fan of the Beat generation author he referenced, I didn't get what he meant, other than to show he was well-read.

Bundy expected the death penalty but said he'd be "kind of stupid" to predict what Judge Edward Cowart would decide. He then imitated the judge's drawl: "Ah can only hope that the judge will look at mah case with an open mind."

Bundy had me smiling, and he left me wondering about the contrast between this personable, engaging man across from me and the ruthless killer the jury found him to be.

The next week, Judge Cowart sentenced Bundy to die for "extremely wicked, shockingly evil and vile" crimes — a quote that became the title of the new movie. Yet, as he had throughout the trial, Cowart showed judicial firmness mixed with some homespun warmth toward the former law school student who sometimes insisted on questioning witnesses, raising objections, and disrupting his defense team.

Cowart called him "a bright young man" who could have been a good lawyer, one he would "have loved" to have practice before him. "But you went another way, partner," Cowart said. As deputies prepared to take Bundy away, Cowart added softly: "Take care of yourself," and Bundy thanked him.

Eight years later, I would write an obituary for Cowart, a former police officer turned judge who died at 62. A series of attorneys filed appeal after appeal for Bundy. One blamed the "Bundy mystique" for making it impossible for him to get a fair trial. Several argued he was insane.

Al Carlisle, a Utah State Prison psychologist who had interviewed Bundy extensively, understood the difficulty people had believing that the Bundy they saw could be such a calculating, remorseless killer. The courts ruled Bundy was competent.

He knew what he was doing, Carlisle explained to me years ago. Charm was one of his weapons.

"He believes he's smarter than everybody else and that he's going to play the pieces right, and win the chess game," Carlisle said.

It ended Jan. 24, 1989, in Florida's electric chair after he had ended his denials with sometimes-emotional

confessions in his final days.

Hundreds of people, women and men, were thronged outside the prison. But this time, most were there to cheer his death.

Sewell, now The AP's Cincinnati correspondent, wrote often in Florida about Bundy in the decade from the Chi Omega murders to the execution.

Follow Dan Sewell at <https://twitter.com/dansewell>

## **Pelosi shows pragmatic streak in pursuit of border deal**

**By ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Republicans have vilified Nancy Pelosi for years as a San Francisco liberal and now they're trying to portray her as a captive of resurgent left-wingers in her Democratic Party.

But in her early moves so far as House speaker, Pelosi is displaying her pragmatic streak. She's set to endorse a split-the-differences deal on government funding that appears on track to give President Donald Trump at least some barriers on the border, after she had said Trump's border wall idea was "immoral" and promised he wouldn't get a penny for it.

And as the Democratic Party's progressive wing pursues ideas such as "Medicare for all" and a "Green New Deal," Pelosi is keeping her distance.

"We are results-oriented, values-based, and for the boldest common denominator," Pelosi said in a brief interview on Friday. "Everybody has a path to make their case, to see what the options are. I'm wedded to the Affordable Care Act because I think it's a path to health care for all Americans."

Pelosi presides over a 235-member Democratic caucus that surged into power in last November's mid-term election, fueled by voters' anger against Trump. The new majority includes young, high-profile and defiantly liberal lawmakers such as Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., who's a darling among Democratic activists and a social media phenomenon.

"There's a new crop of Democrats that make Pelosi look moderate. I never thought I'd see that day," said Rep. Greg Walden, R-Ore. "You see this Green New Deal rollout, you see this Medicare for all rollout and you don't see her buying into those proposals."

While some on the left are demanding Trump's impeachment, Pelosi is urging Democrats to take it slow, saying there needs to be a full vetting of any evidence. She's against demanding Trump's tax returns immediately, to the dismay of impatient lawmakers such as Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-N.J.

There's no denying Pelosi's skills. She was a strong speaker when running the House in 2007-10, keeping Democrats unified and sometimes running roughshod over Republicans. But some in her caucus started to doubt her after punishing election cycles in 2010, 2014, and 2016.

Pelosi overpowered her doubters, however, in a leadership challenge last fall, emerging stronger than when she started. At age 78 she emerged from her shutdown victory over Trump as a hero in the party and is carrying greater leverage into the ongoing negotiations. So far, there's little grousing among Democrats.

Pelosi's more measured approach is playing out this weekend as talks grind on over border security money. Pelosi took a hard line during the recent 35-day partial federal shutdown, refusing to enter into negotiations while the government was shuttered, while dismissing Trump's dream of a border wall.

"We're not doing a wall. Does anybody have any doubt about that? We are not doing a wall. So that's that," Pelosi said last month. She called the idea "an immorality."

Those remarks led many Republicans to believe that Pelosi would become an obstacle in the talks, refusing to agree to enough concessions to win over Republicans controlling the Senate, much less Trump.

Instead, Pelosi is intent on pursuing a deal with Republicans on a \$350 billion-plus appropriations bill that has been hung up for weeks over Trump's border wall demands. She still opposes the idea of a wall but has signaled she's open to vehicle barriers and other steps. She says she's delegating most of the decision-making to allies on the House Appropriations Committee.

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"I trust the appropriators," Pelosi said, and she frequently reminds people that she was "forged" on that pragmatic committee. Predictions that she'd be hemmed in by her prior stance, or that she'd be unwilling to buck progressives, aren't coming to fruition.

"Nobody hems in the speaker, OK?" said Rep. Mike Doyle, D-Pa. "The speaker is quite secure in her position and is someone who doesn't have to worry about what anyone chatters about."

Part of that is the difference between making a political point and making a law. Must-pass legislation to fund the government, for example, which requires Trump's approval, gets treated differently than does upcoming messaging measures on climate change, taxes, and health care.

Issues where Democrats want an accomplishment this year, such as lowering prescription drug prices, probably require Democrats and Pelosi to cut deals that won't please lots of liberals. Pelosi knows the ropes of divided government, often citing her work with the Bush administration in 2007 to pass legislation boosting automobile mileage standards and production of renewable energy.

But Pelosi hints that issue areas where Democrats are developing proposals to run on in the 2020 elections are more wide open.

"Everything's on the table. Medicare for all is on the table," Pelosi said. "Everybody knows they have a path. There's no blocking of anything. Everybody has the path to make their case."

While high-profile liberals such as Ocasio-Cortez, who won a safe seat in New York City, capture the attention of the party's left wing, Pelosi is more focused on protecting the first-term members who really matter to holding the Democrats' majority: lawmakers who took over GOP seats won by Trump.

Republicans say Pelosi is still a stereotypical San Francisco liberal. It's just that she looks relatively measured when compared with left-wing insurgents.

"She's trying to hold them back from going over the cliff," said the House's top Republican, California Rep. Kevin McCarthy. "The party has moved beyond where she has philosophically been. So she is trying to rein that back."

## Leader of new climate panel talks of need for 'bold action'

By MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It does not yet have office space, staff or even Republican members, but Florida Rep. Kathy Castor is confident that a special House committee on climate change will play a leading role on one of the most daunting challenges facing the planet.

Castor, who chairs the new panel, says those early obstacles can be overcome as lawmakers move to reduce carbon pollution and create clean-energy jobs.

"The Democratic caucus is unified under the belief we have to take bold action on the climate crisis," Castor said in an interview.

While that can take many forms, the transition to renewable energy such as wind and solar power is "job one," she said.

Castor, who's in her seventh term representing the Tampa Bay area, said Congress has a "moral obligation" to protect future generations from the costly effects of climate change, including more severe hurricanes, a longer wildfire season and a dangerous sea-level rise.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi named Castor to lead the panel in December, saying she brings experience, energy and urgency to what Pelosi called "the existential threat of the climate crisis" facing the United States and the world.

The climate panel is similar to one Pelosi created when Democrats last controlled the House from 2007 to 2010. The panel was eliminated when Republicans took the majority in 2011.

While the previous panel played a key role in House approval of a landmark 2009 bill to address global warming, Castor said the new panel is likely to focus on a variety of actions rather than a single piece of legislation.

She and the eight other Democrats named to the panel "are ready to stand up to corporate polluters and special interests" as they press for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move toward a



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clean-energy economy, Castor said.

"Climate deniers, fossil fuel companies and other special interests have had an outsized influence" in Congress in recent years, she said, promising to "stand up" to those forces to protect the environment and create green jobs.

The climate panel is separate from an effort by Democrats to launch a Green New Deal to transform the U.S. economy and create thousands of jobs in renewable energy.

Castor dismissed the idea that the Green New Deal — put forth by freshman Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and veteran Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts — will conflict with the climate panel.

"My job and the committee's job is to take the general concepts (of the Green New Deal) and turn them into a real policy framework and legislative language and eventually law," she said.

Pelosi agreed, saying in a statement that the climate panel will "spearhead Democrats' work to develop innovative, effective solutions to prevent and reverse the climate crisis."

Pelosi invited Ocasio-Cortez, a social media star and the best-known member of the large class of freshman Democrats, to join the climate panel, but she declined, saying she wants to focus on the Green New Deal and other committee assignments.

Three freshmen — Sean Casten of Illinois, Mike Levin of California and Joe Neguse of Colorado — serve on the panel, along with veteran lawmakers such as Rep. Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico, the fourth-ranking House Democrat, and Californians Julia Brownley and Jared Huffman, both close Pelosi allies.

"We need their passion and energy, and we need support from all corners all across the country," Castor said of the freshmen members. "It's all hands on deck right now."

Republicans have not named anyone to the climate committee, but six GOP members are expected to join the panel this month.

While she would have preferred that the committee be given subpoena power and legislative authority to draft their own bills, the panel's more limited power "is not going to hamper us," Castor said. Most invited witnesses will be eager to testify, she said, and those who resist — including members of the Trump administration — can be compelled to appear by other committees such as Energy and Commerce or Natural Resources.

While the earlier climate panel focused on establishing the threat posed by climate change, Castor said the time to debate climate science is long past.

"People understand the problems," she said. "They see the effects of sea rise and more dangerous storms. They understand it. They look at Washington and kind of throw up their hands and say, 'Why don't you guys do something?'"

The committee's challenge, she added, will be "to restore the faith of people and show them Washington can do some things."

## UK scraps Brexit ferry deal with firm that has no ships

LONDON (AP) — The British government has canceled a contract to ship goods to the country after Brexit with a company that turned out to have no boats and no experience running a ferry service.

Authorities had been criticized for the 13.8 million pound (\$18 million) deal with Seaborne Freight, part of plans to keep trade flowing if Britain leaves the European Union without a divorce deal.

The Department for Transport said Saturday that it had ended the contract because an Irish firm that was backing Seaborne Freight, Arklow Shipping, had withdrawn its support.

The department said no taxpayer money had been transferred to the company. It said the government was "in advanced talks with a number of companies to secure additional freight capacity" if there is a no-deal Brexit.

Britain is due to leave the European Union on March 29 but has not yet agreed a divorce deal outlining departure rules and future trade terms. A withdrawal agreement between the U.K. and the EU was rejected last month by Britain's Parliament, and EU officials are resisting British attempts to renegotiate it.

U.K. businesses fear a "no-deal" Brexit will cause gridlock at ports by ripping up the trade rulebook and

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imposing tariffs, customs checks and other barriers between the U.K. and the EU, its biggest trading partner. Seaborne had been contracted to provide services between Ramsgate in southeast England and the Belgian port of Ostend to ease pressure on the busiest cross-Channel route between Dover, England, and Calais, France.

Opposition Labour Party transport spokesman Andy McDonald accused Transport Secretary Chris Grayling of "heaping humiliation after humiliation on our country" and said he should resign.

## Snow storm wallops Seattle, people rescued in Sierra Nevada

By LISA BAUMANN, Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — A winter storm pounded Washington state Friday, forcing the cancellation of 200 flights in Seattle as officials worked to get people off the streets and into shelters during the nation's latest bout with winter weather.

Snow began falling north of Seattle with some areas recording 8 inches (20 centimeters) of snow before it made its way south and enveloped the city.

Many businesses closed early so workers could get home.

Gov. Jay Inslee declared a state of emergency, saying everyone in the state should focus on staying safe.

"Forecasters predict this may be a storm unlike one we've seen in many years," he said.

In California, more than 120 visitors and staff members were rescued after being snowbound in a Sierra Nevada resort for five days.

Up to 7 feet (2 meters) of snow had trapped the guests and staff beginning Sunday at Montecito Sequoia Lodge in Kings Canyon National Park, U.S. Forest Service spokesman Alicia Embrey said.

Crews had to travel by snowmobile to get to the lodge in mountains east of Fresno. Heavy equipment and crews then cleared more than 20 fallen trees and 8 miles (13 kilometers) of deep snow on the road leading to the lodge to allow guests and staff to leave the property Thursday night.

Another winter storm was on the way to the region.

In Yosemite National Park, as many as 50 housing structures near Half Dome Village were damaged by trees toppled during a snowstorm earlier this week, displacing more than 160 employees who provide food, lodging and other services for visitors.

Elsewhere, more than 148,000 customers were without electricity in Michigan following days of freezing rain. The Consumers Energy utility said power would be restored by late Sunday.

In Seattle, officials urged people to stay off the roads as traffic slowed to a standstill in some places because of the snow.

"Doesn't matter where you're going, expect it to take a very long time," the Washington Department of Transportation said on Twitter.

Schools and colleges had canceled classes ahead of the storm expected to bring 6 to 8 inches (15 to 20 centimeters) of snow. Scores of flights were cancelled or delayed at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport.

Snowfall from Sunday and Monday lingered into the week as below-freezing temperatures gripped the area. A 59-year-old man died Thursday from exposure at a Seattle light rail station.

Additional shelter space opened by city and county officials was filling up. The city was focused on people who are willing to come inside, Will Lemke, spokesman for the Seattle Human Services Department, told the Seattle Times.

"This is an extreme weather event, and offering shelter is the most important thing we can do right now," he said.

Forecasters said Portland, Oregon, could get up to 4 inches (10 centimeters) of snow later in the day, with two more snowstorms expected to hit the city next week.

Residents in Portland and Seattle, two cities where rain is more common than snow in the winter, emptied grocery store shelves and waited in long lines to buy shovels and de-icer.

Autumn Sang was at a mobbed grocery store in Tualatin, Oregon, on Friday stocking up for the coming storm for herself and her neighbor, who is disabled and doesn't have a car.

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Sang said she had never seen the store so crowded. She grew up in southern Oregon, where snow is more common, and wasn't fazed by the forecast.

"I love it. I'm excited about it," she said of the snow. "I think that Portlanders, most of them are city people and they come from a lot of different places, so they're not so used to it. It's like, 'Use your brain! If you don't have to go out, don't go out.'"

AP journalists Amanda Lee Myers in Los Angeles and Gillian Flaccus in Portland, Oregon, contributed to this report.

## US refiner Citgo emerges as key to Venezuela's power battle

By ALEXANDRA OLSON, Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The U.S. and dozens of other countries may have declared that Nicolas Maduro is no longer the legitimate president of Venezuela, but that has not loosened his grip on power. Maduro still controls the military, despite scattered defections. He has the loyalty of the Supreme Court. And he has rendered the opposition-controlled National Assembly powerless by setting up a rival constitutional assembly.

But Maduro stands to lose one crucial lever of power: Houston-based refining company Citgo, a wholly owned subsidiary of Venezuelan state-owned oil company Petroleos de Venezuela SA, known by its acronym PDVSA.

Americans know Citgo for its familiar red triangle logo at its more than 5,000 branded gas stations and the iconic sign visible from Fenway Park in Boston. Venezuelans know it as one of their collapsing economy's last lifelines.

The Trump administration is moving to help transfer its control to Juan Guaido, the National Assembly leader recognized by the U.S. and other countries as Venezuela's legitimate president.

Such a feat would give Guaido a slice of de facto power.

"It's more than symbolic," said William Burke-White, a professor of international law at the University of Pennsylvania who served in the State Department under the Obama Administration. "An alternative power is starting to emerge. This is about creating a world where there is another entity contesting every point of authority that Maduro has."

Here's a look Citgo's critical role in Venezuela's power struggle.

### WHY IS CITGO SUCH A VALUABLE ASSET FOR VENEZUELA?

U.S. refiners like Citgo are among the few customers paying cash for Venezuelan crude. Oil shipments to Venezuela's other big customers, China and Russia, are usually taken as repayment for billions of dollars in debt. So the cash from Citgo has become a lifeline over the past two years as Venezuela's oil output has plummeted amid chronic underinvestment in PDVSA and oil prices have dropped from historic highs.

Until U.S. sanctions prohibited, Citgo also repatriated profits to PDVSA. It also sent back fuel that Venezuela needs because of its deteriorating refining capabilities, as well as diluents that PDVSA needs to mix with Venezuela's heaviest crude oil before it can be exported. But sanctions have prohibited those exports. Like other refiners, Citgo can now only import Venezuelan crude oil if it makes payments into blocked bank accounts, which almost certainly means the PDVSA will halt shipments to the U.S.

Maduro's government also mortgaged Citgo to raise cash. Almost 50 percent of the company's shares were put up as collateral for a \$1.5 billion loan from the Russian state-controlled oil company Rosneft. The rest of the shares are collateral for PDVSA's 2020 bond, the only bond Venezuela has continued to make payments on in a desperate effort to hang on to Citgo.

### HOW DO U.S. SANCTIONS AFFECT CITGO?

Citgo itself has become a little less dependent on PDVSA in one crucial way. Like other PDVSA customers, the refiner has been forced in recent months to look for alternative sources of crude because of Venezuela's dramatic production decline, said Jennifer Rowland, an equity research analyst for Edward



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Jones who focuses on the energy sector.

Still, the company faces a scramble to replace a complete loss of Venezuelan supply. Citgo had been processing up to 200,000 barrels a day of Venezuelan crude before the sanctions, or about 26 percent of the company's total 749,000-barrel-a-day capacity. Most of the Venezuelan oil was processed at its Lake Charles refinery in Louisiana, which is specially equipped to handle the high-density, high-sulfur crude that Venezuela exports. That type of crude oil is in short supply because of production cuts in other countries like Mexico and Saudi Arabia.

Citgo itself is not a target of the sanctions. The Trump administration carved out an exemption for the PDVSA subsidiary so Americans can continue doing business with it.

## CAN GUAIDO PULL OFF A LEADERSHIP CHANGE AT CITGO?

Guaido has said he will soon name a new board of directors for Citgo. Legally, there may be little stopping him from doing so. There is some precedent, as when the U.S. and other countries recognized a coalition of rebel groups in Libya as the official government in 2011 when Moammar Gadhafi still controlled Tripoli. The decision gave the rebel group the right to take control of Libyan assets overseas.

"International law allows this to happen," Burke-White said.

Implementing the change, however, involves logistical hurdles. Pedro Burelli, a U.S.-based consultant who was a PDVSA executive board member until 1998, said Guaido must first appoint new PDVSA leaders, who would then oversee the shareholder-voting process of selecting a Citgo board. But that new PDVSA leadership would not have real access to the bureaucracy and operations of the parent company, which Maduro controls.

## WHAT DOES CITGO HAVE TO SAY ABOUT THIS?

As a company, Citgo has offered limited insight about how it is coping with the power struggle. What little is known reflects the company's uneasy identity as a Venezuelan-owned entity with deep American roots.

Citgo's current chief executive, Asdrubal Chavez, is a Maduro ally and cousin of his late predecessor, Hugo Chavez. He works out of the Bahamas because the U.S. has denied him a visa.

Other members of Citgo's executive teams are U.S. citizens who have worked at the company for decades. White House national security adviser John Bolton met with some of them last month and tweeted that it was "very productive" meeting. Later, Citgo released a statement saying it was aware of a possible change in board members and "will follow the laws of the United States."

## WHAT IS CITGO'S HISTORY?

The company was founded in 1910 as City Services by American oilman Henry Doherty. Now a refining and marketing operation, Citgo employs 3,400 people and runs three refineries, in Louisiana, Texas and Illinois.

The company changed ownership several times before PDVSA fully bought it in 1990. At the time, relations between Venezuela and the U.S. were strong, and PDVSA was a well-regarded state oil corporation.

Chavez, the firebrand socialist who died in 2013, often complained that Citgo contributed little to Venezuela's coffers and at one point tried to sell the company. Instead, his government put loyalists in key positions, some of them with little oil industry experience. Corporate upheaval became a way of life at the company.

An oil industry purge in 2017 included the arrest of former Citgo CEO Nelson Martinez, who died in prison last year. Six other Citgo executives were also arrested including five who hold U.S. passports. Maduro's government says the purge was intended to root out corruption. Critics say it was politically motivated.

## WHAT ABOUT THE CREDITORS TARGETING CITGO?

It's unclear how much financial value Citgo would be to Guaido. For one thing, the most immediate task will be keeping Citgo from falling into the hands of creditors owed billions of dollars by Venezuela and PDVSA.

Economists expect Maduro to stop paying to protect Citgo, including defaulting on the 2020 PDVSA

bond. He also could stop honoring settlements with companies whose Venezuelan assets were expropriated under Chavez, including the Canadian mining company Crystallex, which won a court ruling last year allowing it to go after Citgo to recover its losses.

Russ Dallen, managing partner of brokerage firm Caracas Capital, said the Trump administration may seek to impose a "debt shield" for Venezuela similar to a measure the U.N. implemented for Iraq during the 2003 U.S.-led invasion. But he said the measure would have to go through the Organization of American States because Maduro allies Russia and China have veto power on the U.N. Security Council.

There is also the risk that Maduro will stop paying off the Rosneft loan collateralized by Citgo shares. The Trump administration has said it is exploring legal options to keep Citgo from falling into Russian hands.

## 2nd woman accuses Virginia official of sexual assault

By **MICHAEL BIESECKER, MICHAEL KUNZELMAN and ALAN SUDERMAN, Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — A second woman accused Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax of sexual assault Friday, saying the Democrat raped her 19 years ago while they were both students at Duke University.

Calls for his resignation grew steadily as the day wore on.

A lawyer for Meredith Watson, 39, said in a statement that Fairfax had attacked Watson in 2000. The statement described the assault as "premeditated and aggressive," and noted that while Watson and Fairfax had been social friends, they were never involved romantically.

The lawyer, Nancy E. Smith, said her team had statements from former classmates who said Watson had "immediately" told friends that Fairfax had raped her. A New Jersey public relations firm representing Watson provided The Associated Press with a 2016 email exchange with a female friend and 2017 text exchanges in which Watson said Fairfax had raped her. She also expressed dismay about his run for political office.

Watson's representatives declined to provide further documentation and said their client would not be talking to journalists.

Fairfax shot back at his accusers quickly: he said in a statement that he would not resign from office, and vowed to clear his name against what he described as a "vicious and coordinated smear campaign" being orchestrated against him.

"I deny this latest unsubstantiated allegation," the embattled Democrat said. "It is demonstrably false. I have never forced myself on anyone ever. I demand a full investigation into these unsubstantiated and false allegations. Such an investigation will confirm my account because I am telling the truth."

Duke spokesman Michael Schoenfeld said the university's police department has no criminal reports naming or involving Fairfax. Any accusation made through the student disciplinary process would be protected by student privacy laws, and Schoenfeld said the university couldn't comment or release further information.

Police officials in Durham, North Carolina, where Duke is, said they had no records of an accusation against Fairfax in 2000.

This is not the first time Watson has accused someone of assault. Following inquiries from AP and other media, Watson's lawyer confirmed that while in college she accused another man, a basketball player at Duke, of raping her when she was a sophomore. Smith said Watson reported it to a top-level university administrator but received no help and was discouraged from taking the claim any further. The lawyer said Watson also told friends — including Fairfax — about the earlier incident.

Duke officials told AP on Friday they had no immediate knowledge of the accusation against the basketball player but were researching the matter.

The latest accusation against Fairfax comes two days after Vanessa Tyson, a 42-year-old political science professor, said publicly that Fairfax sexually assaulted her in a Boston hotel room during the 2004 Democratic National Convention. Tyson says Fairfax, then a law student working as an aide to Democratic vice-presidential nominee John Edwards, forced her to perform oral sex.

Fairfax says his sexual encounter with Tyson was consensual.

At the time, Tyson was working as a student adviser at Harvard University and was a frequent speaker

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to Boston-area support groups for rape survivors. Tyson has said she was sexually molested by a family member as a child.

A man who was romantically involved with Tyson in the late 1990s said Thursday that she disclosed the childhood abuse to him during a conversation about why she found certain kinds of physical intimacy difficult. The man spoke to AP on condition of anonymity out of concern publication of his name would damage his career.

He said Tyson told him oral sex in particular brought back painful memories of her childhood trauma. The man said he finds it nearly impossible to believe that Tyson would have performed oral sex without being forced.

Though the man also knows Fairfax and considered him a friend, he said he believes Tyson is telling the truth.

The Associated Press typically does not identify those who say they were sexually assaulted, but both Tyson and Watson issued public statements using their names.

Tyson said Wednesday the 2004 incident left her feeling deeply humiliated and ashamed. She only began to tell friends about the alleged assault in October 2017, after seeing a photo of Fairfax next to an article about his campaign.

Watson also confided in a friend after seeing that Fairfax was running for office. Watson, who now lives in Maryland, did so after she received an email from a college friend in 2016 urging former Duke students to support the campaign of "our good friend Justin."

Watson replied: "Justin raped me in college and I don't want to hear anything about him. Please, please remove me from any future emails about him please. Thank you!"

Watson's lawyer said the circumstances of the alleged assault in 2000 were similar to what Tyson had described happening four years later, but declined to provide further details.

"At this time, Ms. Watson is reluctantly coming forward out of a strong sense of civic duty and her belief that those seeking or serving in public office should be of the highest character," Smith said, according to the written statement. "She has no interest in becoming a media personality or reliving the trauma that has greatly affected her life. Similarly, she is not seeking any financial damages."

Smith added that Watson also hopes Fairfax will resign his elected position.

Carliss Chatman, a Washington & Lee Law School professor who graduated from Duke in 2001, said she has remained friends with Fairfax and hosted a political fundraiser for him. She remembers Watson from parties but didn't think Watson and Fairfax ran in the same social circles and was surprised that the statement from Watson's attorneys had described them as friends.

"It doesn't feel plausible at all," she said of Watson's allegations.

The accusations against Fairfax have rocked an administration that was already struggling amid calls for the resignation of Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam over a racist photo that appeared on his 1984 medical school yearbook page. Fairfax would be in line to become governor if Northam resigned.

Following news of a second accuser against Fairfax, Democratic state lawmakers in Virginia issued a call for Fairfax to resign, as did the Virginia Black Legislative Caucus. Several members of the state's congressional delegation, both black and white, also said Fairfax, who is black, can no longer serve in the office.

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Associated Press Washington Bureau Chief Julie Pace and reporter Jonathan Drew in Durham, North Carolina, contributed to this report. Kunzelman reported from College Park, Maryland, and Suderman from Richmond, Virginia.

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## Likely deal would give Trump fraction of desired wall money

By ALAN FRAM and ANDREW TAYLOR, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Congressional bargainers are working toward a border security deal amid indications that the White House is preparing to accept a bipartisan agreement that would give President Donald Trump a fraction of the money he's demanded for his proposed southern border wall.

Participants said they expect money for physical barriers to end up well below the \$5.7 billion that Trump has sought to begin construction of the wall, which has attained iconic significance for him and his conservative supporters. Underscoring the clout he's lost during a battle that's dominated the opening weeks of divided government, the amount seems sure to fall much closer to \$1.6 billion, the participants said, a figure that was in a bipartisan Senate bill last year.

"That's what we're working toward," said Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, D-Calif., one bargainer.

An agreement would also avert a new partial federal shutdown next weekend. Trump has warned he might trigger a new closure of agencies if he doesn't get his way, but that threat has become toothless because of solid opposition from GOP lawmakers burned by the record 35-day closure that he initiated in December.

One White House aide said Trump was expected to back whatever compromise emerges and acknowledged there is no will among congressional Republicans for another shutdown. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity to describe internal discussions.

Coupled with a widespread expectation that the agreement would not use the term "wall," the pact would represent a significant retreat for Trump, for whom "Build the wall!" has been a battle cry since his presidential campaign.

Democrats seemed to draw a firm line on spending.

"Throughout the talks, Democrats have insisted that a border security compromise not be overly reliant on physical barriers," said Evan Hollander, spokesman for Democrats who control the House Appropriations Committee. "We will not agree to \$2 billion in funding for barriers."

In another signal that Trump was reluctantly preparing to give ground, the White House has been considering accepting the deal but also using executive action to secure additional barrier funding without lawmakers' approval. That plan was described by two people familiar with White House thinking who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly. Depending on what Trump does, such an action could spark lawsuits or congressional votes of disapproval.

Trump supporters have said there are other executive powers Trump could use to divert money from the budget to wall construction, though it was unclear if they would face challenges in Congress or the courts. One provision of the law lets the Defense Department provide support for counter-drug activities.

Besides the dollar figure, talks were focusing on the type and location of barriers, participants said. Also in play were the number of beds the federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency could have for detained migrants and the amount of aid included for natural disaster relief.

Money for high-tech surveillance equipment and more personnel was also expected to be included.

No one ruled out last-minute problems, especially with Trump's penchant for head-snapping turnabouts. But the momentum was clearly toward clinching an agreement that Congress could pass by next Friday. The next day, many government agencies would run out of money and have to close again without a deal.

Rep. Mark Meadows, R-N.C., who leads the hard-right House Freedom Caucus, said he spoke Thursday night to Trump, who he said was in "wait and see" mode. Meadows said he expects an agreement to provide an amount closer to \$1.6 billion.

"I'm not optimistic it'll be something the president can support," Meadows said.

A conservative House GOP aide said Freedom Caucus members wanted at least \$2 billion for barriers and no restrictions on new construction, land acquisition or new types of barriers that could be built.

The aide also said the agreement need not contain the term "wall," a word that Trump has lately alternated between embracing and abandoning. The aide spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private talks.

If there is a bipartisan deal, there would likely be enough votes to pass it without the most conservative

Republicans or the most liberal Democrats.

AP Congressional Correspondent Lisa Mascaro and Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Catherine Lucey and Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

## **Manfred: No DH or draft changes likely for 2019**

**By RONALD BLUM, AP Baseball Writer**

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Don't look for a National League designated hitter this year or for new anti-tanking rules in June's amateur draft.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred said Friday that management is focused on pace-of-game changes for 2019 and bolder ideas proposed by the players' association are too complex to be put in place for this season.

Speaking Friday after an owners' meeting, Manfred felt encouraged the union responded to management's proposal for a pitch clock and a three-batter minimum for a relief pitcher unless an inning ends.

"Some of these items need to be part of broader discussions that certainly will continue after opening day, and I hope we can focus on some of the issues that need to get resolved quickly in the interim," Manfred said.

Baseball is in its third year of a five-year labor deal, one in which the free-agent market has slowed considerably — even with premier players available such as Bryce Harper and Manny Machado. Management would discuss larger changes as part of a deal for a new collective bargaining agreement extending beyond December 2021.

"I hope and I really do believe that there is a common interest between the players' association, the players, the owners and the commissioner's office in changes, whether they're midterm or otherwise, that make our entertainment product the best it could possibly be," Manfred said.

After the 2016 and 2017 seasons, players rebuffed management's proposal for a pitch clock designed to speed the pace of play. Management has the right to implement a clock, but Manfred has been reluctant to make on-field changes without players' agreement.

Management presented its latest proposal Jan. 14, one that included a requirement that pitchers face at least three batters or finish an inning. Players responded Feb. 1 with a broader plan, renewing their push for the DH in all games, an earlier trade deadline aimed at discouraging teams with losing records from trading stars, increasing service time for top young stars called up early in the season and rewarding and penalizing teams in the draft based on their records.

"Those are significant economic issues. They are different in kind than the type of playing-rule changes that we have out there," Manfred said. "I think that there are pieces of their response on the on-field proposal that were very encouraging. I think what needs to be sorted out is how closely the two agendas are tied, in other words, the on-field stuff and the economic stuff."

Last offseason, negotiations were hampered by player anger over the slow free-agent market. This offseason's pace of signings has been faster but remains far slower than most previous years.

"We want players signed, particularly star players. I wish they were signed and ready to go," Manfred said. "We got another week before they have to report. I'm really hopeful that it's going to get resolved during that period of time."

MLB's proposal that pitchers face a minimum of three batters in an inning unless it ends was designed both for pace and to slow or reverse the increased use of relievers. The union wants its use at the big league level delayed until 2020.

"Repeated pitching changes obviously take a lot of time," he said. "The idea of relievers having to go longer is appealing in terms of promoting the role of the starting pitcher, encouraging pitchers to pitch a little longer at the beginning of the game. ... I think historically some of our biggest stars (are) starting pitchers and we want to make sure those big stars are out there long enough that that they are marketed."

ATTENDANCE

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After three straight years of drops that left attendance at its lowest since 2003, Manfred said it is too early to speculate about 2019.

"We're hopeful that we see a rebound from last year but, again, difficult to predict at this point," he said.

He said he doesn't think the operation of the free-agent market was a big issue affecting ticket sales.

"I do think that negative commentary surrounding the game that is not factually supported can have an impact on attendance — assertions about clubs not trying to win and the like, I think that's not helpful," he said.

## GAMBLING

MLB has talked to the union about expanding the anti-gambling provision section of the Major League Rules to prohibit the disclosure of confidential information that could be used in betting.

## REVENUE SHARING GRIEVANCE

Manfred said the union is still in the fact-gathering stage of its grievance filed last winter accusing Miami, Oakland, Pittsburgh and Tampa Bay of not properly spending money they received in revenue sharing.

On other matters:

## SOCIAL MEDIA

MLB will make game highlights available to players for use on social media.

## 150TH ANNIVERSARY OF PRO BALL

Teams will wear a special patch to mark the 150th anniversary of professional baseball, and there will be special hats on opening day. The Cincinnati Reds, the first pro team in 1869, will be at the forefront of the celebration.

## REGIONAL SPORTS NETWORKS

MLB received a second round of data in its effort to purchase 14 team regional sports networks from The Walt Disney Co., which is selling them after acquiring the networks from 21st Century Fox. If successful, MLB could resell rights to streaming services or cable providers. "I think that we recognize that the media landscape is changing quickly and if somebody is going to be managing that changing landscape, we just as soon that it be us," Manfred said.

## RAWLINGS

MLB extended its agreement with Rawlings to supply baseballs, a deal that also includes helmets and gloves.

## EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Boston's John Henry and Colorado's Dick Monfort were elected to the executive council, replacing Atlanta's Terry McGuirk and the New York Yankees' Hal Steinbrenner. The council also includes the Chicago Cubs' Tom Ricketts and Tampa Bay's Stu Sternberg (whose terms expire in 2020); San Diego's Ron Fowler and Houston's Jim Crane (2021); and Milwaukee's Mark Attanasio and Jerry Reinsdorf of the Chicago White Sox (2022).

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## Scandals drive calls for top Virginia leadership to resign

By ALAN SUDERMAN, Associated Press

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Virginia's state government seemed to come unglued Friday as an embattled Gov. Ralph Northam made it clear he won't resign and the man in line to succeed him was hit with another sexual assault accusation and barraged with demands that he step down, too.

Top Democrats, including a number of presidential hopefuls and most of Virginia's congressional delegation, swiftly and decisively turned against Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax, who stands to become the state's second black governor if Northam quits.

U.S. Sen. Tim Kaine called the allegations against the lieutenant governor "atrocious" and added, "he



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can no longer effectively serve the Commonwealth.”

The developments came near the end of an astonishing week that saw all three of Virginia’s top elected officials — all Democrats — embroiled in potentially career-ending scandals fraught with questions of race, sex and power.

Northam, now a year into his four-year term, announced his intention to stay at an afternoon Cabinet meeting, according to a senior official who was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

In so doing, Northam defied practically the entire Democratic Party, which rose up against him after a racist photo on his 1984 medical school yearbook surfaced and he acknowledged wearing blackface in the 1980s.

Moments after Northam told his Cabinet he was staying put, a second woman went public with accusations that Fairfax raped her 19 years ago while they were students at Duke University. A lawyer for Meredith Watson, 39, said in a statement that Fairfax attacked Watson in 2000.

The statement said it was a “premeditated and aggressive” assault and that while Watson and Fairfax had been social friends, they were never involved romantically.

The lawyer, Nancy Erika Smith, said her team had statements from ex-classmates who said Watson “immediately” told friends Fairfax raped her. A public relations firm representing Watson provided The Associated Press with a 2016 email exchange with a female friend and 2017 text exchanges in which Watson said Fairfax had raped her.

Watson’s representatives declined to provide further documentation and said their client would not be talking to journalists.

Fairfax emphatically denied the new allegation, as he did the first leveled earlier by Vanessa Tyson, a California college professor who said Fairfax forced her to perform oral sex on him at a Boston hotel in 2004.

“It is obvious that a vicious and coordinated smear campaign is being orchestrated against me,” Fairfax said. “I will not resign.”

Duke campus police have no criminal reports naming Fairfax, university spokesman Michael Schoenfeld said. Durham police spokesman Wil Glenn also said he couldn’t find a report in the department’s system on the 2000 allegation.

Many Democrats who had carefully withheld judgment after the first accusation against Fairfax, saying the matter needed to be investigated, immediately condemned him. A cascade of calls for Fairfax to resign began Friday evening, mirroring the exact timing of last week’s calls for Northam to resign.

Top Democrats running for president in 2020 called for Fairfax’s resignation, including Sens. Cory Booker of New Jersey, Kirsten Gillibrand of New York and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. Booker cited “multiple detailed allegations” that he found “deeply troubling.” Gillibrand called the details “sickening and horrendous.”

Virginia’s Democratic congressional delegation was split.

Party elders Sen. Mark Warner and Rep. Bobby Scott said Fairfax should resign if the allegations against him were true.

Other congressional Democrats made unqualified calls for Fairfax to resign.

The Virginia Black Legislative Caucus joined calls for Fairfax’s departure. And a Democratic member of the state House, Del. Patrick Hope, said he intends to introduce articles of impeachment against Fairfax on Monday if Fairfax hasn’t left by then.

If Fairfax were to leave, there’s no consensus on who could replace him. Northam may try to appoint a Democrat, while Republicans could mount a legal challenge with the goal of having Sen. Steve Newman, the Senate’s pro tem, serve as both a voting senator and temporary lieutenant governor.

The tumult in Virginia began late last week, with the discovery of the photo on Northam’s yearbook profile page that showed someone in blackface standing beside another person in a Ku Klux Klan hood and robe.

Northam at first admitted he was in the picture, then denied it a day later, but acknowledged he once put shoe polish on his face to look like Michael Jackson for a dance contest in 1984.

Virginia slid deeper into crisis on Wednesday, when Attorney General Mark Herring acknowledged wearing blackface at a college party in 1980, and Fairfax was publicly accused of sexual assault for the first time.

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Although the Democratic Party has taken almost a zero-tolerance approach to misconduct among its members in this #MeToo era, a housecleaning in Virginia could be costly to them: If all three Democrats resigned, Republican House Speaker Kirk Cox would become governor.

As the crisis widened by midweek, Democratic leaders and black members of the Virginia legislature appeared willing to give both Fairfax and Herring the benefit of the doubt for the time being — in Herring's case, because he apologized personally for wearing blackface.

At the start of the week, Cox said there was little appetite among lawmakers to remove Northam through impeachment, saying resignation "would obviously be less pain for everyone."

Associated Press Washington Bureau Chief Julie Pace and reporter Michael Biesecker in Washington, Jonathan Drew in Durham, North Carolina, Michael Kunzelman in College Park, Maryland, Alanna Durkin Richer in Boston and Thomas Beaumont in Mason City, Iowa, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that Fairfax would be Virginia's second black governor, not first.

## Abortion case shows Roberts firmly at Supreme Court's center

By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press

Chief Justice John Roberts broke with the Supreme Court's other conservative justices and his own voting record on abortion to block a Louisiana law requiring abortion providers to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital.

Roberts didn't explain his decision late Thursday to join the court's four liberal justices. But it was the clearest sign yet of the role Roberts intends to play as he guides a more conservative court with two new members appointed by President Donald Trump.

Since the retirement of Justice Anthony Kennedy last summer, Roberts has become the court's new swing vote. He is, by most measures, a very conservative justice, but he seems determined to keep the court from moving too far right too fast and being perceived as just another forum for partisan politics in Washington.

"People need to know that we're not doing politics. They need to know that we're doing something different, that we're applying the law," Roberts said during an appearance this week at Tennessee's Belmont University.

Roberts' vote in the Louisiana case was the fourth time in recent weeks that he has held the decisive vote on 5-4 outcomes that otherwise split the court's conservative and liberal justices.

In late December, Roberts joined the liberals to keep Trump's new asylum policy from taking effect. It would have prevented immigrants from making asylum claims if they didn't enter the United States at a border crossing. Then, in January, Roberts voted with the conservatives to allow restrictions on military service by transgender individuals to be put in place.

On Thursday, a half hour before the court acted on the Louisiana law, Roberts voted with the conservatives to deny a Muslim death row inmate's plea to have his imam with him for his execution in Alabama. The federal appeals court in Atlanta had ordered the execution halted, but the Supreme Court lifted the hold and allowed it to proceed.

The final vote was the order to keep Louisiana's admitting privileges law on hold while the court decides whether to add the case to its calendar for the term that begins in October. Louisiana's law is strikingly similar to a Texas measure the justices struck down in 2016.

A district court judge had struck down the Louisiana law because he found it would have resulted in the closure of at least one, and perhaps two, of the state's three abortion clinics, and left the state with no more than two doctors who could meet the law's requirements. But the federal appeals court in New Orleans upheld the law, concluding it was not certain that any clinic would have to close.

So much of what the court has done in recent weeks has been through emergency appeals, cases that call for temporary, yet often revealing, votes. Unlike in cases that are argued and decided, the votes come

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with little explanation. When there is an opinion, it usually is a dissent.

Justice Brett Kavanaugh wrote the only dissent in the Louisiana case, arguing that the court should have allowed the law to take effect because it is not clear that doctors would have been unable to obtain hospital privileges during a 45-day transition period.

After the ruling, some Democrats seized on Kavanaugh's vote as proof that he was not following through on his assurances at his confirmation hearing to respect past Supreme Court decisions on abortion. But in his dissent he said otherwise. Kavanaugh acknowledged that the court's decision in the Texas case is the guiding precedent and seemed to suggest he might be willing to vote the other way if it turned out that hospitals were unwilling to afford the doctors admitting privileges.

The Louisiana clinics had argued that they would have been forced to stop performing abortions immediately and that clinics, once closed, are difficult to reopen.

Kavanaugh and Justice Neil Gorsuch, Trump's two high-court appointees, are among six Trump-nominated judges who voted to let the law take effect, a sign that the president is carrying through on a campaign pledge to put abortion-rights opponents on the bench. The other four judges are members of the New Orleans-based 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, which had refused to put the law on hold.

The execution aside, the recent votes are not likely to be the court's last word on asylum, military service by transgender people or the abortion clinic legislation. A decision on whether the high court will take on the abortion clinic legislation could come this spring. If it does, as seems likely, a ruling on the constitutionality of the Louisiana law would likely come next year. There's no guarantee that Roberts will be with his liberal colleagues then.

In 2007, Roberts voted to uphold a federal ban on an abortion method its opponents call partial-birth abortion. Three years ago, Roberts was in dissent when the court struck down a Texas law that is strikingly similar to the blocked Louisiana measure.

Justices often feel bound by a prior decision of the court, even one they disagree with, at least until the court formally takes on a case to consider overruling the earlier decision.

If he ends up voting to invalidate the Louisiana law, Roberts wouldn't be the first chief justice to put institutional concerns above his own views. Chief Justice William Rehnquist had been a fierce critic of the Supreme Court decision that requires police officers to advise arrestees of their Miranda rights to remain silent and have a lawyer represent them. Yet, in 2000, he was the author of a 7-2 decision that reaffirmed the Miranda case.

There are few high-profile cases on the court's docket this year, seemingly by design, after Kavanaugh's tumultuous confirmation hearings. In March, the justices will consider whether to impose limits on drawing electoral districts for partisan political gain. They also could hear arguments this spring on another controversial Trump administration initiative, to add a question on citizenship to the 2020 census.

Already on the calendar for next term is the court's first examination of gun rights in nine years. That decision, as well as the Louisiana case, could come in the spring of 2020, fodder for a presidential campaign in which the court could play an outsized role.

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Associated Press writer Jessica Gresko contributed to this report.

## For Amazon, it's business as usual despite CEO drama

By JOSEPH PISANI, AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — First it was a heart-wrenching tweet that he and his wife were getting a divorce after 25 years. Then a tabloid revealed that he'd been having an affair, releasing texts and photos of him and his mistress.

As if either of those weren't distracting enough, now Jeff Bezos — the world's richest man and CEO of Amazon — is accusing The National Enquirer in a blog post of trying to blackmail him by threatening to release more intimate photos of him unless he calls off an investigation into how that information was obtained in the first place.



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But despite the all-consuming personal drama, analysts and experts don't expect it to make much difference to Amazon itself, the company Bezos has steered from an online bookstore two decades ago to a worldwide juggernaut.

Michael Pachter, an analyst at Wedbush Securities, estimates the impact on the company to be "0.000 percent."

"I'm certain investors won't care," he said.

Others point out that Bezos has been able to balance his responsibilities at the helm of the world's largest online retailer while also juggling his other pursuits: running a space exploration company and owning the Washington Post, one of the nation's most influential newspapers.

"He's extraordinarily driven," says Chris McCabe, who used to work at Amazon and now runs e-commerceChris, a consultancy for Amazon sellers. "He knows how to delegate."

Amazon has a steady line of longtime executives who are running each of its businesses, likely keeping investors calm.

Jeffrey Wilke, oversees the retail business, and Andrew Jassy runs the company's fast-growing cloud computing business Amazon Web Services. Both of them have been at the company since the 1990s. And unlike other CEOs, Bezos doesn't speak at conference calls with analysts and investors after the company releases its financial reports, leaving that to Chief Financial Officer Brian Olsavsky, who has been at the company since 2002.

Still, that hasn't stopped the Enquirer from casting doubts over whether Bezos can effectively oversee his company.

"All of these (text) messages raise serious questions about Bezos' judgment as the CEO of the most valuable company in the world," the tabloid said in a Jan. 24 article.

Seattle-based Amazon.com Inc. declined to comment on Bezos. The company's stock did not take a big hit, slipping 1.6 percent at Friday's close.

Meanwhile, the Enquirer's publisher, American Media Inc., is disputing Bezos' claims that it used "extortion and blackmail" in reporting its story, saying that it "acted lawfully."

In his blog post Thursday, Bezos defended his ability to lead Amazon: "I founded Amazon in my garage 24 years ago, and drove all the packages to the post office myself. Today, Amazon employs more than 600,000 people, just finished its most profitable year ever, even while investing heavily in new initiatives, and it's usually somewhere between the #1 and #5 most valuable company in the world. I will let those results speak for themselves."

He also said he wants to focus on work, noting that the person he hired to handle the investigation into how his texts were leaked to the Enquirer will also be tasked with "protecting" his time.

"I have other things I prefer to work on," Bezos wrote.

Bezos' indiscretions are seen more as a personal matter rather than one to do with the company, unlike Tesla's CEO Elon Musk, for example, whose behavior has caused the electric automaker's stock to rise and fall. Musk was recently stripped of his chairman title and forced to pay a \$20 million penalty to the Securities and Exchange Commission for allegedly duping investors with tweets about a plan to take the company private.

"This is very much a matter of Jeff Bezos," says Neil Saunders, the managing director at GlobalData Retail, of Bezos' affair. "It's not really anything to do with running with the company."

David Larcker, a professor at the Stanford Graduate School of Business, says it's up to shareholders and the board of directors to decide just how engaged a CEO is in their work, and whether they should go. Bezos is both chairman of the board and the largest shareholder, owning a 16 percent stake in the company.

Amazon's shoppers, meanwhile, are not likely to take notice.

"I think as long as people can get their Nespresso pods within 48 hours, they don't care," says Scott Galloway, a marketing professor at NYU Stern School of Business.

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Rachel Lerman in San Francisco contributed to this report.

## New Hampshire court upholds women's topless conviction

By MICHAEL CASEY, Associated Press

New Hampshire's highest court upheld Friday the conviction of three women who were arrested for going topless on a beach, finding their constitutional rights were not violated.

In a 3-2 ruling, the court decided that Laconia's ordinance does not discriminate on the basis of gender or violate the women's right to free speech.

Citing rulings by several other courts, Associate Justice Anna Barbara Hantz Marconi wrote that courts "generally upheld laws that prohibit women but not men from exposing their breasts against equal protection challenges."

"We have found that the ordinance does not violate the defendants' constitutional rights to equal protection or freedom of speech under the State and Federal Constitutions," Marconi wrote. "As such, it does not unduly restrict the defendants' fundamental rights. Accordingly, we agree with the trial court that the City had the authority to enact the ordinance."

In a dissenting opinion, Associate Justice James P. Bassett with Senior Associate Justice Gary E. Hicks concluded the ordinance was unconstitutional because it treats men and women differently.

Heidi Lilley, Kia Sinclair and Ginger Pierro are part of the Free the Nipple campaign — a global campaign advocating for the rights of women to go topless. They were arrested in 2016 after removing their tops at a beach in Laconia and refusing to put them on when beachgoers complained. Pierro was doing yoga, while the two others were sunbathing.

The Laconia law on indecent exposure bans sex and nudity in public but singles out women by prohibiting the "showing of female breast with less than a fully opaque covering of any part of the nipple." A lower court judge refused to dismiss the case, and the women appealed to the state Supreme Court.

"We are extremely disappointed in the Court's ruling that treating women differently than men does not amount to sex discrimination. The court has effectively condoned making it a crime to be female," the women's lawyer, Dan Hynes, said in a statement. "Since the N.H. Constitution, which prohibits sex discrimination, was not enough to prevent this unequal, and unfair treatment, we are hopeful the New Hampshire legislature steps up to correct this injustice by outlawing Laconia's ordinance."

Hynes said he would have to talk to the women about their next step, including possibly appealing the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Gilles Bissonnette, the legal director at the ACLU of New Hampshire, which filed an amicus brief in the case, said he was disappointed with the ruling.

"Unlike the Federal Constitution and the cases interpreting its equal protection provision cited by the majority, the New Hampshire Constitution provides even broader protections against gender discrimination," Bissonnette said in a statement. "What is deeply concerning about this decision is that it undermines these broader, unique constitutional protections and, in so doing, minimizes the importance of the New Hampshire Constitution."

The attorney general's office, which defended the ordinance in court, said it would have no comment beyond the brief it submitted. It had argued the city was trying to avoid public disturbances and that it narrowly tailored the law to requiring only the covering of nipples — not requiring women to wear shirts. It questioned the First Amendment argument.

The ruling is the latest setback for the movement, which has had mixed success fighting similar ordinances in other parts of the country.

A federal judge ruled in October 2017 that a public indecency law in Missouri didn't violate the state constitution by allowing men, but not women, to show their nipples. In 2013, a public nudity ban in San Francisco was also upheld by a federal court. But in February 2017, a federal judge blocked the city of Fort Collins, Colorado, from enforcing a law against women going topless, arguing it was based on gender discrimination.

## Reckoning time: Trump checks in for another medical checkup

By KEVIN FREKING, Associated Press

BETHESDA, Md. (AP) — It's reckoning time: President Donald Trump had his annual medical exam Friday, a year after his doctor advised him to up the exercise and cut the calories.

Trump spent more than four hours at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center for a checkup supervised by Dr. Sean P. Conley, his physician, and involving a panel of 11 specialists.

"I am happy to announce the President of the United States is in very good health and I anticipate he will remain so for the duration of his Presidency, and beyond," Conley wrote afterward.

He did not go into detail except to say Trump did not undergo any procedures requiring sedation or anesthesia. He said reports and recommendations stemming from the exam were still being finalized. It's unclear how much more detail will be released in the coming days.

Last year, Trump clocked in at 6-foot-3 and 239 pounds. He had a body mass index, or BMI, of 29.9, putting him in the category of being overweight for his height. A BMI of 30 or more is considered obese.

His doctor then said the president was in "excellent health" but would do well to drop 10 to 15 pounds and shift to a low-fat, low-carb diet and take up a more defined exercise routine.

One of the big questions Friday was how well Trump heeded that advice.

Trump, 72, doesn't drink alcohol or smoke, but he's not a big fan of the gym either. His primary form of exercise is golf. And he says he gets plenty of walking in around the White House complex.

As for his diet, Trump's love of fast food remains. Last month, he invited the college football champion Clemson Tigers to the White House during the partial government shutdown. With the White House kitchen too understaffed to cater a meal, Trump stepped in: He ordered burgers, french fries and pizza.

Modern-day presidents have undergone regular exams to catch any potential problems but also to assure the public that they are fit for office, something Trump's doctor last year took to an extraordinary level.

After Trump's first exam as president, Dr. Ronny Jackson, a Navy rear admiral, declared Trump to be in "excellent health." He also said of Trump: "He has incredibly good genes, and it's just the way God made him."

Conley replaced Jackson after Trump nominated the latter to lead the Veterans Affairs Department. The nomination ran into trouble early as lawmakers questioned his qualifications to run the government's second-largest department. Also, current and former colleagues accused Jackson of professional misconduct, including loosely dispensing medications and on-the-job drunkenness. Jackson denied the allegations but eventually withdrew his nomination.

Trump recently promoted Jackson to be an assistant to the president and chief medical adviser. He will advise the president on topics including veterans' issues, the opioid crisis and health issues at the U.S.-Mexico border. Jackson, who is still under investigation, will also travel and work closely with White House staff.

Last year, doctors checked the president's eyes; ears, nose and throat; heart; lungs; gastrointestinal tract; skin; and teeth. Neurological, cognitive and stress tests were also performed. Trump's hearing was not tested; Jackson said he ran out of time. The exam stretched past four hours.

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Associated Press writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report.

## High court takes abortion vote, but key tests still to come

By DAVID CRARY, AP National Writer

Activists on both sides of the abortion debate are reacting cautiously to a 5-4 Supreme Court vote blocking Louisiana from enforcing new abortion regulations. They agree that the crucial tests of the court's stance are still to come.

Depending on the viewpoint, the vote represented a temporary victory or setback — but not proof as to how the court might deal with a slew of tough anti-abortion laws working their way through state legislatures and federal courts.



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"We're elated — but not in the sense of uncorking the champagne," said Center for Reproductive Rights attorney Travis Tu, who has helped lead the fight against the Louisiana law. "We're elated in the sense of we just dodged a bullet."

NARAL Pro-Choice America President Ilyse Hogue, while relieved by the court's vote, said it "illustrates a sobering reminder: The thread that women's rights hang by is dangerously thin."

The law in question would require Louisiana abortion providers to have admitting privileges at nearby hospitals. Chief Justice John Roberts joined the Supreme Court's four liberals Thursday in putting the law on hold pending a full review of the case. President Donald Trump's two appointees, Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, were among the four conservative justices who would have let the law take effect.

Activists on opposing sides voiced hope that the case will eventually return to the Supreme Court for a definitive ruling on the substance of the law.

"We will continue to do all that we legally can to protect Louisiana women and the unborn," said Louisiana Attorney General Jeff Landry.

Benjamin Clapper of Louisiana Right to Life said he was not concerned by Roberts' break with the other conservative justices, suggesting the chief justice might eventually vote to let the law take effect.

"We don't see last night's decision necessarily as a setback," Clapper said. "It sets the stage for a full review that could go either way."

Beyond the Louisiana law — which resembles a Texas law struck down by the Supreme Court in 2016 — many other anti-abortion measures are being litigated in the courts or being considered in this year's legislative sessions. Many were designed to present a direct challenge to *Roe v Wade*, the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that established a nationwide right to abortion.

In at least six states — Florida, Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio, South Carolina and Tennessee — efforts are underway to enact bills to outlaw abortions after a fetal heartbeat is detected, as early as six weeks into a pregnancy. Backers of these bills said they were undeterred by the Supreme Court's latest action.

"I'm not really concerned at this point what the court does," said Mississippi state Sen. Angela Hill. "I'm concerned about doing what Mississippi wants us to do."

Asked if the Supreme Court vote would have an impact on the "heartbeat" bill debate in Ohio, anti-abortion activist Janet Porter said, "None whatsoever."

Porter, author of the original legislation that's now spread to other states, noted the health challenges facing liberal Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg and suggested that conservatives will have "yet another judge on the court by the time we get there."

She also questioned the notion that Roberts' vote with the court's liberal wing in the Louisiana case signaled that he'd side with them in future abortion cases.

Ohio Right to Life President Mike Gonidakis agreed.

"What Justice Roberts' action says to us is that he wants the whole thing briefed, he wants the opportunity to grill both sides," Gonidakis said.

Abortion rights supporters also expect Roberts to cast the critical swing vote in future abortion rulings.

"We know there are four justices who were willing to allow a law to take effect even though the Supreme Court struck down an identical law less than three years ago" said Jennifer Dalven, who heads the American Civil Liberties Union's Reproductive Freedom Project. "We don't know how that will play out with other laws. ... It's really a question of Chief Justice Roberts."

In addition to the "heartbeat" bills, several other anti-abortion measures have surfaced in multiple states, including two that National Right to Life executive director David O'Steen views as strong candidates to pass muster with the Roberts-led Supreme Court.

One type of measure would ban most abortions after 20 weeks of pregnancy on the disputed premise that a fetus can feel pain at that stage. Another set of bills seeks to ban a commonly used second trimester abortion procedure known as dilation and evacuation, and referred to by abortion opponents as "dismemberment abortion."

O'Steen said Roberts "would have every reason" to support both of these measures if they came before

the Supreme Court.

At the lone abortion clinic operating in New Orleans, nurse Vanessa Shields-Haas, who helps escort patients into the facility, said she was pleasantly surprised at the 5-4 vote to block the state law's implementation.

"The new makeup of the Supreme Court indicated that it was likely it would have gone through, which would have had devastating consequences," she said. "It's clear that this law is about ideology. It's not about safety."

Associated Press writers Kevin McGill and Stacey Plaisance in New Orleans; Emily Wagster Pettus in Jackson, Mississippi; and Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

## Acting AG overseeing Mueller probe says he's not interfered

By ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Attorney General Matthew Whitaker said on Friday that he has "not interfered in any way" in the special counsel's Russia investigation as he faced a contentious and partisan congressional hearing in his waning days on the job.

The hearing before the House Judiciary Committee was the first, and likely only, chance for newly empowered Democrats in the majority to grill an attorney general they perceive as a Donald Trump loyalist and whose appointment they suspect was aimed at suppressing investigations of the Republican president. They confronted Whitaker on his past criticism of special counsel Robert Mueller's work and his refusal to recuse himself from overseeing it, attacked him over his prior business dealings and sneeringly challenged his credentials as the country's chief law enforcement officer.

"We're all trying to figure out: Who are you, where did you come from and how the heck did you become the head of the Department of Justice," said Rep. Hakeem Jeffries. When Whitaker tried to respond, the New York Democrat interrupted, "Mr. Whitaker, that was a statement, not a question. I assume you know the difference."

Yet Democrats yielded no new information about the status of the Mueller probe as Whitaker repeatedly refused to discuss conversations with the president or answer questions that he thought might reveal details. Though clearly exasperated — he drew gasps and chuckles when he told the committee chairman that his five-minute time limit for questions was up — Whitaker nonetheless sought to assuage Democratic concerns by insisting he had never discussed the Mueller probe with Trump or other White House officials, and that there'd been no change in its "overall management."

"We have followed the special counsel's regulations to a T," Whitaker said. "There has been no event, no decision, that has required me to take any action, and I have not interfered in any way with the special counsel's investigation."

Republicans made clear they viewed the hearing as pointless political grandstanding, especially since Whitaker may have less than a week left in the job, and some respected his wishes by asking questions about topics other than Mueller's probe into potential coordination between Russia and the Trump campaign. The Senate is expected to vote as soon as next week on confirming William Barr, Trump's pick for attorney general.

"I'm thinking about maybe we just set up a popcorn machine in the back because that's what this is becoming. It's becoming a show," said Republican Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, who accused his Democratic colleagues of "character assassination."

But Rep. Jerrold Nadler, the committee chairman who a day earlier had threatened to subpoena Whitaker to ensure his appearance, left no doubt about his party's focus.

"You decided that your private interest in overseeing this particular investigation, and perhaps others from which you should have been recused, was more important than the integrity of the department," said Nadler, of New York. "The question that this committee must now ask is: Why?"

Whitaker toggled between defending his role in the special counsel's investigation and echoing the

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president's talking points, conceding for instance that while foreign interference in U.S. elections was a problem, so too was voter fraud — a key issue for Republicans, but one that Democrats say is overstated. He said he had no reason to doubt Mueller's honesty or to believe that he was conflicted in his leadership of the investigation.

But he also declined to say if he still agreed with sharply critical comments about the Mueller probe that he made as a television commentator before arriving at the Justice Department in the fall of 2017 as chief of staff to then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions. And he passed up a chance to break from the president's characterization of the Mueller investigation as a "witch hunt," saying simply, "I think it would be inappropriate for me to comment about an ongoing investigation."

FBI Director Christopher Wray, Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein and Barr have all maintained that they do not believe the investigation to be a witch hunt.

Whitaker also denied a news report that Trump had lashed out at him after the guilty plea of Michael Cohen, the president's former lawyer. But he did not answer directly about whether he had discussed that investigation, run by prosecutors in New York, with Trump, insisting only that the president had never instructed him to take particular actions.

He said his comment at an unrelated news conference last week that the Mueller investigation was close to wrapping up — a remark that generated significant attention and speculation — reflected only "my position as acting attorney general." He said Mueller would finish on his own schedule.

White House officials kept an eye on Whitaker's performance and, while they appreciated his combative tone and aggressive defense of the administration, there was a sense from aides that his performance, at times, appeared halting and ill-prepared. The president himself kept an eye on the proceedings before leaving the White House for his annual physical.

Democrats also inquired about Whitaker's past business dealings. Nadler and three other House committee chairmen released documents that they said show Whitaker failed to return thousands of dollars that were supposed to be distributed to victims of a company's alleged fraud. Whitaker has come under scrutiny for his involvement with the invention promotion company, which was accused of misleading consumers.

Whitaker, a former U.S. attorney from Iowa, took over when Sessions was forced from the Cabinet last November as Trump seethed over Sessions' decision to step aside from overseeing the Russia investigation. Trump insists there was "no collusion" between his campaign and Russia.

Nadler said Friday that he wanted Whitaker to return for a deposition in the coming weeks.

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Associated Press writers Chad Day and Jonathan Lemire contributed to this report.

## Blackface scandal doesn't surprise people of color

By COREY WILLIAMS, Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — In the brightly lit Vintage Barbershop in northwest Detroit, Thomas Carter carefully trimmed the graying hair of a customer as he was asked about photos that depict whites wearing blackface.

He paused and slowly scanned the shop where about a half-dozen black men of various ages awaited their turn. "It's not funny to me. It's not funny to me at all," he said.

From police shootings of black men, to white supremacy rallies, to efforts to remove Confederate Civil War monuments, the nation has lurched from one racial controversy to another in recent years. The latest is blackface — in which someone darkens their face and adds bright red lipstick to create stereotypes and caricatures. The disclosures have angered and frustrated many black people, who say it is mocking and demeaning.

The practice took hold in New York City in the 1830s and became immensely popular among post-Civil War whites. In fact, the Jim Crow laws that enforced racial segregation in the South took their name from a character played by blackface performer Thomas Dartmouth Rice. He said his act "Jump, Jim Crow" (or "Jumping Jim Crow") was inspired by a slave he saw.

On the first day of Black History Month a week ago, a photo emerged from Virginia Democratic Gov. Ralph



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Northam's 1984 medical school yearbook page that showed someone in blackface and another person in a Ku Klux Klan hood and robe.

Northam at first admitted he was in the picture, then denied it a day later, but acknowledged he once blackened his face with shoe polish to imitate Michael Jackson for a dance contest in 1984. The disclosure roiled Virginia politics and prompted widespread calls for Northam to resign. He has so far refused.

Days later, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring — who is second in line to succeed Northam if he resigns — admitted to wearing blackface to look like a rapper during a party when he was a 19-year-old at the University of Virginia in 1980.

The Virginia disclosures drew intense attention but are hardly unusual. Just in recent months, Florida's Republican secretary of state resigned in disgrace after a 2005 photo showed him wearing blackface and dressing as a "Hurricane Katrina victim."

Clothing label Gucci said it was pulling a blackface-themed sweater from stores. A Snapchat video shows two Connecticut high school students wearing what seems like blackface. A similar incident was reported last month at the University of Oklahoma, when a man walked around campus in blackface. An old photo has popped up of "The View" co-host Joy Behar wearing makeup to darken her skin for a Halloween costume in the 1970s.

Carter said white people wearing blackface is a painful reminder of America's history of racism, hate and exploitation.

"It's just a huge form of disrespect. I'm kind of upset with a lot of people allowing it to be done. It's acceptable in a lot of circles, even with our own people," he said.

Education consultant and travel writer Fernanda Meier took to Twitter Wednesday to express her disgust.

"Dear white people," she wrote, then retweeted: "Don't wear blackface. Don't think about wearing blackface. To be safe, don't even say the word blackface, except to say 'don't wear blackface.'"

"My skin, hair, lips are a costume to non-black people," Meier told The Associated Press from Bogota, Colombia, where she currently resides. "There is nothing flattering about using shoe polish or dark makeup to paint one's skin like mine, when the very same thing is the source of my oppression."

The Northam yearbook photo was even worse because the person in blackface was standing next to another person dressed in a white robe and mask like the Ku Klux Klan, said Korey Garibaldi, an assistant professor in American Studies at the University of Notre Dame.

"With that, you have a literal reference to racial terrorism," Garibaldi said. "It's never just blackface. There's always something that makes this just that much more frightening — the Klan, exclusion from school, a job. It's a whole kind of comprehensive white supremacy, not just a particular sort of image or remark. It's a structure that needs to be challenged."

Carter said the person in Klan garb in Northam's yearbook photo angered him as a black man.

"When you see the Klan ... these people took pictures next to bodies, hanging out of a tree," he said in reference to lynchings. "The brutality that we face on a mental, physical and spiritual level is a lot. Hate is taught. You're not born a racist. So, you have households teaching ... kids. It's inbred. How are you going to stop that?"

Taj Muhammad, a black man from Detroit, said the incidents show there is still racial hatred.

"I'm disappointed that more black people don't know the history (of blackface) and know it's very insulting," Muhammad said. "I'm not disappointed in people of European descent. Historically, most Europeans never have been embracing of people of African descent."

The number of hate crimes reported in the United States has risen in recent years to more than 4,100 motivated by race or ethnicity in 2017 compared to just under 3,500 the year before, according to Justice Department data.

Chicago-area pastor Eric Dorsey said it springs from systemic cultural bias.

"It's kind of funny in a way where stuff like this comes out and the public has this outrage and this outcry of, 'Oh my God! I can't believe this happened,'" Dorsey said. "When if you really study the history of this nation, why are you surprised?"

He said the publicity around the incidents could be a good thing.

"I look at that as an opportunity to discuss issues that this country has swept under the rug," he said. "We as a society have a chance to address them and heal from these wounds."

Associated Press writer Alina Hartounian in Phoenix contributed to this report.

## **Volunteers ready US aid set for Venezuela as Maduro digs in** **By CHRISTINE ARMARIO and SCOTT SMITH, Associated Press**

CUCUTA, Colombia (AP) — Dozens of volunteers prepared sacks of rice, canned tuna and protein-rich biscuits for malnourished children at a warehouse on the Colombian border on Friday as Venezuela's opposition vowed to deliver the U.S. humanitarian aid to their troubled nation, even if it means mounting a mass mobilization of their countrymen to carry it in.

As the food and hygiene kits were packed into individual white bags in the city of Cucuta, just across the river from Venezuela, U.S. officials and Venezuelan opposition leaders appealed to the military to let the aid through.

Lester Toledo, who is representing opposition leader Juan Guaido in the aid mission, issued a message to troops, telling them the aid contains food and medicine their own families need. He recalled how in 2016, a large group of Venezuelan women dressed in white and intent on crossing the closed border with Colombia made their way through a line of national guardsmen in order to buy food on the other side.

"I am convinced that the way we are going to pass this aid is with the Venezuelan people," Toledo said at a press event unveiling the aid. "People, people and more people bringing in humanitarian aid."

The emergency supplies have become the focus of Venezuela's political struggle between President Nicolas Maduro and Guaido, who declared interim presidential powers in late January, accusing Maduro of being illegitimate following an election last year widely viewed as a sham. The Venezuelan military has blocked the bridge where the aid is stationed and Maduro is refusing to allow it in.

The embattled Venezuelan leader dug in further Friday, contending the aid is part of a coup being orchestrated by the U.S. government.

"There's an attempt to violate our national sovereignty with this 'show' of a humanitarian operation by the government of Donald Trump," he said.

The goods, including packaged corn flour, lentils and pasta, arrived Thursday in what the opposition is hoping will be the first of many shipments of humanitarian aid from countries around the world. Opposition leaders said three countries in the region will become aid hubs and that some nations, like Colombia, will likely have more than one collection site. The first shipment includes food kits for 5,000 Venezuelans and high-protein nutritional supplements that can treat an estimated 6,700 young children with moderate malnutrition.

Additional aid is being stored in Miami and Houston and "ready to be deployed to the region immediately," the U.S. said in a statement.

"We expect more to come," U.S. Ambassador to Colombia Kevin Whitaker said. "This is a down payment."

Asked what would happen if the Venezuelan military blocks the aid from going in, Whitaker said any obstacles would be dealt with as they arise and reiterated that Trump has made clear nothing is off the table — though, he added, the priority is to arrange a broad international mission.

Whitaker said the U.S. involvement stops at the Colombian border, where the Guaido-led opposition will be charged with distributing the aid inside Venezuela, a seemingly tall task as Maduro shows no signs of conceding.

Opposition leader Jose Manuel Olivares, who is in Cucuta helping coordinate the aid mission, said the idea floated by Toledo to use a mass mobilization of people to get the aid across the border is one of the strategies being considered.

"The aid is going to be backed by popular support, by hundreds and thousands of people who need it," he said.

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A growing list of nearly 50 countries has thrown their support behind Guaido. On Friday, Romania's president became the latest world leader to recognize Guaido as interim president almost a week after other European Union countries did so. President Klaus Iohannis said Romania decided to join other EU countries in recognizing Guaido partly because Bucharest currently holds the EU's rotating presidency.

Speaking at the Central University of Venezuela Friday, Guaido called on Venezuelans to hold popular assemblies in their towns this weekend to organize volunteers to receive the aid and called on the military to let the supplies through.

"If they dare to continue blocking the way, all these volunteers will go open a humanitarian channel," he said.

Guaido declared himself Venezuela's interim president Jan. 23, maintaining that the constitution gives him that right as head of the opposition-controlled National Assembly because Maduro's re-election should be considered legitimate.

On Friday, Supreme Court Justice Juan Mendoza challenged that assertion, saying the constitution does not include language for forming a transitional government as Guaido claims. Steps the lawmaker has taken are therefore void and he is usurping presidential powers, Mendoza said.

The pro-Maduro Supreme Court has already barred Guaido from leaving the country and frozen his bank accounts while prosecutors investigate what they call his anti-government activities.

Smith reported from Caracas, Venezuela. Associated Press writer Jorge Rueda in Caracas contributed to this report.

## Oil workers flee Venezuela's crisis for a better life

By SCOTT SMITH, Associated Press

PUNTO FIJO, Venezuela (AP) — Nieves Ribullen, a Venezuelan oil worker sick of struggling to get by as his country falls apart, is betting it all on Iraq's far-away Kurdish region to give his family a better life.

Over the years he's watched dozens of co-workers abandon poverty wages and dangerous working conditions at the rundown complex of refineries in Punto Fijo on Venezuela's Caribbean coast for jobs in far-flung places like Kuwait, Angola and Chile.

Now it's his turn. Leaving his wife and three children behind, he'll soon ship out to Iraq's semi-autonomous northern Kurdish region, where he expects to earn more than \$3,500 a month — a fortune compared to the less than \$20 he brings home monthly in increasingly unstable Venezuela.

"I only earn enough to buy a kilo (2 pounds) of meat and one chicken each month," Ribullen said. "We're in chaos."

Opposition leader Juan Guaido has rallied support from distraught Venezuelans and roughly 40 countries that now recognize him as Venezuela's rightful president.

But the accelerating exodus of oil workers means that Venezuela's crude production — already at a seven-decade low — is unlikely to rebound anytime soon, even if recently-imposed U.S. sanctions are lifted and a business-friendly government replaces the increasingly wobbly President Nicolas Maduro.

Venezuela was once one of the world's top five oil exporters, pumping 3.5 million barrels a day in 1998 when President Hugo Chavez was elected and launched Venezuela's Bolivarian revolution. Today, the state-run oil company PDVSA produces less than a third of that. Critics blame corruption and years of mismanagement by the socialist government.

Even worse, production is about to sink even further due to fresh sanctions by the Trump administration targeting PDVSA that have essentially cut off Venezuela from its Houston-based cash-cow, Citgo, with the aim of depriving Maduro of more than \$11 billion in exports this year.

Despite the short-term pain they will bring Venezuela, Guaido said the sanctions are a critical part of stopping Maduro from consolidating power in what he calls a "dictatorship."

Venezuela's oil workers began flooding out in 2003, shortly after Chavez fired thousands of them — many by name on national television — for launching a strike that paralyzed output. The oil workers accused



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Chavez of riding roughshod over the nation's democratic institutions, while Chavez said the picketers were plotting a coup.

Tomas Paez, a professor at Central University of Venezuela who studies the Venezuelan exile community, estimates that 30,000 oil workers fled in the initial wave, many banned from working in the country's oil industry.

He said it's difficult to gauge how many more have left as Venezuela's economic problems have worsened under Maduro, but from the tar sands of northern Canada to the deserts of Kuwait, Venezuelan roughnecks now live in more than 90 oil-producing countries.

"Let's say, where there is oil, there is a Venezuelan," Paez said.

Many have made new lives in their adopted countries with no plans to return to a gutted Venezuela. And with each new departure, fewer remain behind with the know-how to pump the world's most abundant oil reserves, once the economic backbone of a thriving country.

"We are losing man hours, hours of training, millions and millions of hours that we can't calculate," said union leader Ivan Freites, secretary of the Federation of Professionals and Technicians of Oil Workers of Venezuela. "It's impossible to recover our trained personnel working abroad."

In a recent speech laying out the economic plan for his second six-year term, Maduro vowed to catapult Venezuela's production to 5 million barrels a day. But he provided few details other than promising to take charge personally and root out corruption.

The embattled president retains support from powerful allies, including Russia and China, which are both heavily invested in Venezuela's oilfields. Maduro's hand-picked head of the PDVSA, Maj. Gen. Manuel Quevedo, did not respond to requests for comment by The Associated Press.

While the most-talented engineers left long ago — many contributing to a production boom in neighboring Colombia — there's still demand for labor throughout the industry.

"We're still in a talent-short market, especially with people willing to go into hardship locations — like Kurdistan," said Dane Groeneveld, CEO at California-based PTS Advance, an oil industry recruiter, referring to Iraq's Kurdish region.

"It's those people who are now getting picked up by national oil companies around the world," Groeneveld added.

The 43-year-old Ribullen said he was thinking of his family when he made the decision to go to Iraq's oil-rich Kurdish region — which is semi-autonomous from the central government in Baghdad — and leave his wife and children behind until he's saved enough to send them to Chile or the United States.

As he spoke, his youngest, 9-year-old Isaak, cuddled up next to him on the couch of their living room. "He doesn't want me to go," Ribullen said. "It's difficult for us."

He recalled starting work at PDVSA 16 years ago, when he made enough money to buy a Toyota and take his family to the Caribbean island of Aruba on vacation every year. Now, the car is long gone and it's been seven years since the last family vacation.

Sometimes after his night shift he's forced to stand in line for hours at the market to buy food for his family. He blames Chavez and Maduro for destroying his country.

Conditions are dangerous at the refinery, where Ribullen says workers clock in every day with memories of a massive explosion that killed dozens of workers in 2012. Workers don't have company-issued hardhats, boots or gloves.

Once in Iraq's Kurdish region, he'll join dozens of other Venezuelan roughnecks who live and work on a remote compound.

"The situation forces me to look for opportunities somewhere else," he said. "We're leaving this in God's hands, asking that he'll protect us."

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Follow Scott Smith on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/ScottSmithAP> .

## Leader of new climate panel talks of need for 'bold action'

By MATTHEW DALY, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It does not yet have office space, staff or even Republican members, but Florida Rep. Kathy Castor is confident that a special House committee on climate change will play a leading role on one of the most daunting challenges facing the planet.

Castor, who chairs the new panel, says those early obstacles can be overcome as lawmakers move to reduce carbon pollution and create clean-energy jobs.

"The Democratic caucus is unified under the belief we have to take bold action on the climate crisis," Castor said in an interview.

While that can take many forms, the transition to renewable energy such as wind and solar power is "job one," she said.

Castor, who's in her seventh term representing the Tampa Bay area, said Congress has a "moral obligation" to protect future generations from the costly effects of climate change, including more severe hurricanes, a longer wildfire season and a dangerous sea-level rise.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi named Castor to lead the panel in December, saying she brings experience, energy and urgency to what Pelosi called "the existential threat of the climate crisis" facing the United States and the world.

The climate panel is similar to one Pelosi created when Democrats last controlled the House from 2007 to 2010. The panel was eliminated when Republicans took the majority in 2011.

While the previous panel played a key role in House approval of a landmark 2009 bill to address global warming, Castor said the new panel is likely to focus on a variety of actions rather than a single piece of legislation.

She and the eight other Democrats named to the panel "are ready to stand up to corporate polluters and special interests" as they press for action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and move toward a clean-energy economy, Castor said.

"Climate deniers, fossil fuel companies and other special interests have had an outsized influence" in Congress in recent years, she said, promising to "stand up" to those forces to protect the environment and create green jobs.

The climate panel is separate from an effort by Democrats to launch a Green New Deal to transform the U.S. economy and create thousands of jobs in renewable energy.

Castor dismissed the idea that the Green New Deal — put forth by freshman Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York and veteran Sen. Ed Markey of Massachusetts — will conflict with the climate panel.

"My job and the committee's job is to take the general concepts (of the Green New Deal) and turn them into a real policy framework and legislative language and eventually law," she said.

Pelosi agreed, saying in a statement that the climate panel will "spearhead Democrats' work to develop innovative, effective solutions to prevent and reverse the climate crisis."

Pelosi invited Ocasio-Cortez, a social media star and the best-known member of the large class of freshman Democrats, to join the climate panel, but she declined, saying she wants to focus on the Green New Deal and other committee assignments.

Three freshmen — Sean Casten of Illinois, Mike Levin of California and Joe Neguse of Colorado — serve on the panel, along with veteran lawmakers such as Rep. Ben Ray Lujan of New Mexico, the fourth-ranking House Democrat, and Californians Julia Brownley and Jared Huffman, both close Pelosi allies.

"We need their passion and energy, and we need support from all corners all across the country," Castor said of the freshmen members. "It's all hands on deck right now."

Republicans have not named anyone to the climate committee, but six GOP members are expected to join the panel this month.

While she would have preferred that the committee be given subpoena power and legislative authority to draft their own bills, the panel's more limited power "is not going to hamper us," Castor said. Most invited witnesses will be eager to testify, she said, and those who resist — including members of the

Trump administration — can be compelled to appear by other committees such as Energy and Commerce or Natural Resources.

While the earlier climate panel focused on establishing the threat posed by climate change, Castor said the time to debate climate science is long past.

“People understand the problems,” she said. “They see the effects of sea rise and more dangerous storms. They understand it. They look at Washington and kind of throw up their hands and say, ‘Why don’t you guys do something?’ ”

The committee’s challenge, she added, will be “to restore the faith of people and show them Washington can do some things.”

## Retailers are shopping for ways to get rid of checkout lines

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE and JOSEPH PISANI, AP Business Writers

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Get ready to say good riddance to the checkout line.

A year after Amazon opened its first cashier-less store, startups and retailers are racing to get similar technology in stores throughout the world, letting shoppers buy groceries without waiting in line.

If they work, cashier-less stores will not only save time but maybe money too, for both cost-cutting merchants and customers whose shopping habits are dissected.

From cameras and sensors, the stores will know when shoppers pick up a product and put it down, and can send them a discount to tempt them to buy it. Merchants will be able to create more space for merchandise, better track when shelves need replenishing and draw more business from the hordes of customers who detest long lines.

But the monitoring system underlying cashier-less technology is bound to raise new privacy issues and worries about customer data falling into the wrong hands, especially if stores deploy facial recognition software in the omnipresent cameras watching shoppers.

“It could be scary, and it could be creepy,” says Peter Trepp, CEO of FaceFirst, a Los Angeles company that so far has only sold its facial recognition tools to retailers trying to identify shoplifters and other criminals. “But if it’s used to give people a 30 percent coupon on something they want that is going to be a nice benefit. That kind of experience will help people embrace the technology.”

Amazon has a head start in the U.S., opening 10 convenience stores in three cities: Chicago, San Francisco and Seattle. The stores sell salads and sandwiches for lunch, everyday items like toilet paper and Advil, and groceries such as Cheerios and raw ground beef.

Shoppers scan an app to enter the Amazon Go store, grab what they want and walk out. Cameras and sensors on the ceiling track what’s taken so their credit or debit cards are automatically charged when they leave. Shoppers will know how long it took to shop, since Amazon sends an alert with their shopping time.

“It was just a phenomenal experience,” said Tom Hadfield, who bought a Coke Zero in a minute and five seconds at one of the Go stores in San Francisco while visiting the city recently.

Hadfield, who runs a technology startup in Austin, Texas, said it reminded him of the first time he rode an Uber.

“You just know it’s going to be the future,” he said.

Amazon doesn’t say how much money its cashier-less stores make. But analysts from RBC Capital Markets recently visited Amazon Go’s two San Francisco stores to come up with a number. Based on their observations of traffic patterns, they estimated about 400 to 700 customers per day will visit each of the roughly 2,000-square-foot Amazon Go stores, generating sales of \$1.1 million to \$2 million annually, assuming an average purchase of \$10. At the high end of that range, it works out to twice the sales of a typical U.S. convenience store, RBC calculated.

Several startups are pitching technology to retailers who want to create Amazon Go-like stores of their own. One of the companies, called AiFi, says it has signed deals with the Carrefour chain in France and Zabka convenience stores in Poland. Others, including Zippin, Grabandgo, Trigo Vision and Inokyo, say they are negotiating deals with retailers in the U.S. and other parts of the world, although none are ready



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to identify them yet.

"Once a few big retail chains begin to deploy this technology, it's going to snowball and we will see more and more of them doing it," says Michael Suswal, co-founder of Standard Cognition, another cashier-less technology startup.

So far, companies working on the technology are finding ways to do without facial recognition. Their systems rely on cameras for identifying objects rather than people. Like Amazon, they rely on tailored smartphone apps to identify who is entering the store and to process the sale for whatever products are taken.

Both Standard Cognition and Zippin opened small stores in San Francisco last year that have held invitation-only demonstrations or been open for limited hours with a scant selection of merchandise.

"I like the idea of being able to come into a store, grab what you want and just walk out," says Tomonori Nishimura, a 30-year-old researcher for Fujitsu Laboratories after getting a bag of Funyuns at Standard's small store in San Francisco recently.

Amazon appears the most likely to make cashier-less stores a more common sight, partly because it can afford to open stores with the technology already built into them, given its current market value of about \$800 billion — ranking among the most valuable companies in the world.

But the country's biggest retailers are also trying to speed up the shopping process. Sam's Club, the warehouse-style club owned by Walmart, opened a test store in Dallas that has no cashiers. Instead, shoppers use their smartphones to scan products and pay. 7-Eleven is testing something similar at 14 stores in Dallas.

"Waiting in line is torture," says 7-Eleven's Gurmeet Singh, the company's chief digital officer and chief information officer.

Though, he added, there are no plans to get rid of cashiers. He wants people to have a choice on how they pay.

As cashier-less stores become more common, there will likely be more political pressure to ensure they still offer an option to pay by cash to avoid discriminating against lower-income consumers without bank accounts and credit cards. In anticipation of that likelihood, Standard Cognition already has set up a separate kiosk for all-cash purchases in its test store.

RBC believes Amazon eventually will also introduce its cashier-less technology in its Whole Foods supermarkets, though Amazon says it has no plans to do so. For now, Amazon seems to have its eye on smaller stores: Late last year it introduced a 450-square-foot version of Amazon Go that can be plopped into office buildings or hospitals, like a walk-in vending machine.

"Within five years, I think just about everyone will have experienced what autonomous checkout is like," says Suswal of Standard Cognition. "And within 10 years, regular checkout stands will be very rare."

Pisani reported from New York.

\_\_\_\_\_ This story has been revised to correct the spelling of the last name of Standard Cognition's co-founder to Suswal from Suswai.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Feb. 16, the 47th day of 2019. There are 318 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 16, 1959, Fidel Castro became premier of Cuba a month and a-half after the overthrow of Fulgencio Batista.

On this date:

In 1804, Lt. Stephen Decatur led a successful raid into Tripoli Harbor to burn the U.S. Navy frigate Philadelphia, which had fallen into the hands of pirates during the First Barbary War.

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In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Fort Donelson in Tennessee ended as some 12,000 Confederate soldiers surrendered; Union Gen. Ulysses S. Grant's victory earned him the moniker "Unconditional Surrender Grant."

In 1868, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks was organized in New York City.

In 1945, American troops landed on the island of Corregidor in the Philippines during World War II.

In 1948, N-B-C T-V began airing its first nightly newscast, "The Camel Newsreel Theatre," which consisted of Fox Movietone newsreels.

In 1961, the United States launched the Explorer 9 satellite.

In 1968, the nation's first 911 emergency telephone system was inaugurated in Haleyville, Alabama, as the speaker of the Alabama House, Rankin Fite, placed a call from the mayor's office in City Hall to a red telephone at the police station (also located in City Hall) that was answered by U.S. Rep. Tom Beville.

In 1988, seven people were shot to death during an office rampage in Sunnyvale, California, by a man obsessed with a co-worker who was wounded in the attack. (The gunman is on death row.)

In 1996, eleven people were killed in a fiery collision between an Amtrak passenger train and a Maryland commuter train in Silver Spring, Md.

In 1998, a China Airlines Airbus A300 trying to land in fog near Taipei, Taiwan, crashed, killing all 196 people on board, plus seven on the ground.

In 2001, The United States and Britain staged air strikes against radar stations and air defense command centers in Iraq. President George W. Bush met with Mexican President Vicente Fox on the first foreign trip of Bush's presidency. Dr. William H. Masters, who with his partner and later wife Virginia Johnson, pioneered research in the field of human sexuality, died in Tucson, Ariz., at age 85.

In 2003, more than 100,000 people demonstrated in the streets of San Francisco to protest a possible U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Ten years ago: Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton arrived in Tokyo to begin her first trip abroad as President Barack Obama's chief diplomat. The government of Pakistan agreed to implement Islamic law in the northwestern region of Malakand in an attempt to pacify a spreading Taliban insurgency. In Stamford, Conn., a 200-pound chimpanzee named Travis went berserk, severely mauling its owner's friend, Charla Nash; Travis was shot dead by police.

Five years ago: U.S. Secretary of State John Kerry, during a visit to Indonesia, called climate change perhaps the "most fearsome" destructive weapon and mocked those who denied its existence or questioned its causes, comparing them to people who insist the earth is flat.

One year ago: In an indictment, special counsel Robert Mueller accused 13 Russians of an elaborate plot to disrupt the 2016 U.S. presidential election with a huge but hidden social media trolling campaign aimed in part at helping Donald Trump. The FBI said it had received a tip in January that the suspect in the Florida school shooting had a "desire to kill" and access to guns, but agents failed to investigate. President Donald Trump visited Florida, where he saw two survivors of the school shooting that left 17 people dead and thanked doctors and nurses who helped the wounded. Stocks closed out their strongest week in five years, and had recovered more than half of the losses from a plunge at the beginning of the month. Former presidential hopeful Mitt Romney officially launched his political comeback attempt, announcing that he was running for the Utah Senate seat that had been held by Republican Orrin Hatch, who chose not to seek re-election. (Romney would be elected in November, handily defeating Democrat Jenny Wilson.)

Today's Birthdays: Jazz/pop singer-actress Peggy King is 89. Actor Jeremy Bulloch is 74. Actor William Katt is 68. Actor LeVar Burton is 62. Actor-rapper Ice-T is 61. Actress Lisa Loring is 61. International Tennis Hall of Famer John McEnroe is 60. Rock musician Andy Taylor is 58. Rock musician Dave Lombardo (Slayer) is 54. Actress Sarah Clarke is 48. Olympic gold medal runner Cathy Freeman is 46. Actor Mahershala Ali is 45. Singer Sam Salter is 44. Electronic dance music artist Bassnectar is 41. Rapper Lupe Fiasco is 37. Actress Chloe Wepper is 33. Pop-rock singer Ryan Folllese (FAHL'-eh-say) (Hot Chelle (SHEL) Rae) is 32. Rock musician Danielle Haim (HYM) is 30. Actress Elizabeth Olsen is 30. Actor Mike Weinberg is 26.

Thought for Today: "There are two kinds of man: the ones who make history and the ones who endure it." — Camilo Jose Cela, Nobel Prize-winning Spanish author (1916-2002).