

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, Feb. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 223 ~ 1 of 51

## Groton Area Schedule of Events

### Monday, February 18, 2019

GBB at Milbank (make-up game). Varsity only with game starting around 7:30 p.m.

No School at Groton Area School District (President's Day)

### Tuesday, February 19, 2019

4:00pm: Basketball: Boys 7th/8th Game vs. Leola-Fredrick @ Groton Area High School (7th Grade @ 4pm; 8th grade @ 5pm)

6:30pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Game (Rescheduled from 01-31-19) vs. Tiospa Zina @ Groton Area High School  
7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

### Wednesday, February 20, 2019

NAEP Testing at Groton Area School District

### Thursday, February 21, 2019

4:00pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Game vs. Deuel @ Groton Area High School (JV Girls game at 4pm, JV Boys game at 5pm, Varsity Girls game at 6:30pm, Varsity Boys game at 8pm)

### Friday, February 22, 2019

Wrestling: Boys Varsity State @ Rapid City (Combined State Tourney (Class A & B))

6:30pm: Basketball: Girls Varsity Game (Rescheduled from 02-12-19) vs. Webster Area High School @ Groton Area High School

### Saturday, February 23, 2019

Robotics at Harrisburg High School

Show Choir at Vermillion

Wrestling: Boys Varsity State @ Rapid City (Combined State Tourney (Class A & B))

- 1- Groton Care & Rehab Help Wanted Ad
- 1- Help Wanted
- 2- Lana's Annals
- 3- Glimpse from Greenfield
- 4- Morton's 80th Birthday Card Shower
- 5- EarthTalk
- 6- Small Group Music Contest Results
- 6- GDILIVE.COM tonight
- 7- Weekly Vikings Roundup
- 8- City Council Agenda
- 9- Today in Weather History
- 10- Weather Pages
- 12- Daily Devotional
- 13- 2019 Groton Events
- 14 - News from the Associated Press

## Help Wanted

Looking for a fun, part-time job? Groton Dairy Queen is now hiring. Stop in for an application. (0216.0316)

## 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  
605.397.2365

## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## 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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## Lana's Annals

**Lana  
Greenfield  
District 2  
State  
Representative**

Hello. As we head into the final week of presenting bills before crossover, I have been busy trying to schedule the final House bills in the education committee. I have left two of my bills until last. One changes attendance from 18 to 16. With the prior passage of juvenile justice reform (SB73), problems were created for some schools. There is the truancy issue when students do not attend daily, the chaos caused by those who, instead of being put into JDC, have become the school's problems, and of course, the overall diminishing learning atmosphere. Back in 2009, the Legislature mandated that all students must remain in school until age 18, and studies are now seeing that we have not decreased truancy, have not increased the graduation success

rates, and have not increased socio-economic goals the bill set out to do. I am "carrying the water" for those schools that wanted the matter re-visited. We will see the outcome this week. I have mixed feelings.

Another bill I am sponsoring is one that allows schools to have two student counts per year instead of only one. This will be championed by schools who increase in enrollment in late fall and winter of the following year and are not getting paid for those who enroll after the September count. It will be scrutinized by those who lose students after the September count and still get paid for phantom students. The student count in this new bill would be taken in September and again in January. I feel it is a fairness issue.

An interesting bill introduced on the floor was HB1082, which establishes requirements for scrap metal dealers to maintain a photocopy of the seller's drivers license or ID and to pay by check or electronic funds transfer any time a business issues a payment of more than one hundred dollars for the purchase of nonferrous metal property. This aims to identify potential copper and other metal thieves. It passed the House unanimously.

HB1066, an act to require every high school student be able to pass a Civics test of ten questions accurately before graduation, should have been an easy bill; however, some felt home schoolers should also have to take the test as a graduation requirement. Thus an amendment was presented to accomplish that. It was met much pushback and died. We voted then on the original bill, and it finally passed. I kept reflecting how our nursing homes and addicted people are in trouble, so I thought passing a Civics test bill should have flown through rather than to be met with such great consternation.

We also passed the industrial hemp bill with a vote of 65-2. I have great respect for the sponsor who seemingly had done his homework; however, questions remain. I voted for it but am not sure we have all of the answers to cover the bases as of yet, such as its spreading of unwanted hemp to lands of others, crop adjusting damage procedure, and more. We will await the Senate discussion on it after Crossover Day.

In local government we listened to a bill that would prohibit a county commissioner from also being a city council member. I voted in favor of the bill as it would seem to be a very strong conflict of interest bill. There is a man from a neighboring county who holds both positions, and I asked if he was willing to recuse himself if the two entities conflicted. He said he would, but such may not be the case at all times with all people. The bill died in committee, the main argument being that in small communities, it is hard to find people willing to run for those types of positions. I have strong reservations, though, about the overlap of decision making. We do have a Cracker Barrel in Aberdeen next week at NSU at 10 a.m. if you want to come and get an update or ask a question.

Until next week, stay warm and safe.

Rep. Lana Greenfield

lana.greenfield@sdlegislature.gov

lana.greenfield@gmail.com

House chamber-773-3011



## Glimpse From Greenfield

**Brock Greenfield**  
**State Senator**  
**District 2**

We had another busy week, both in committees and on the floor. In this article, I will focus primarily on the bills that were debated on the Senate floor.

The Senate passed SB 86 by a vote of 28-6. This bill seeks to readdress the "Partridge amendment" that was included in the 2016 bill that increased the sales tax for the purpose of providing

more dollars to education. That amendment stated that if the new dollars coming in due to sales taxes collected on internet transactions exceeded \$20 million, the tax rate would be ratcheted down by one-tenth of one percent and that such decreases would apply to the first \$100 million until the state sales tax rate was reduced back to 4%. Over the past three years, there has been much conjecture about this amendment. Now that we are able to actually levy tax on internet sales, we revisited the matter in order to make it effective more immediately than the previous language contemplated. Before, it would have essentially taken almost a year-and-a-half to recognize the lower tax rate once the dollars came in. This was because of how the previous law was worded. This new language would require a report from the Department of Revenue to the Appropriations Committee no later than the 21st legislative day each session. Upon hearing the report, the Approps Committee would decide whether revenues would be likely to come in above the \$20 million threshold. If so, they would bring legislation to lower the tax rate. In the past, the report would not have occurred until the interim, and legislation would not have been considered until the subsequent legislative session. SB 86 upholds the integrity of the legislative intent to provide tax relief, and it does so more immediately than the previous law would have allowed.

SB 4 calls for further scrutiny of our relatively new agricultural assessment system for purposes of determining property taxes. In 2010, we enacted the new process that takes into account soil ratings, rather than land sale prices. This has been a bit of a rocky transition in a number of counties. This bill directs the Department of Revenue to work with SDSU to study and report results to the legislature based upon a representative sampling of counties. The hope is to ensure that we have a fair and equitable system in place and to further guarantee that it is being properly enacted in the aggregate. The bill passed the Senate 31-2.

SB 93 narrowly passed the Senate by a vote of 19-15. This bill revises the process by which youth with an instruction or restricted driving permit can obtain an operator's license. This rewrite of the code will require youth to possess their restricted permits for a longer period of time and stipulates that they cannot have any traffic violations for at least six months before seeking to upgrade to their driver's licenses. It was supported by law enforcement and insurance interests, while being opposed by the SD Cattlemen's Assn and SD Farm Bureau. The opponents expressed concerns over making it more arduous for children of those in the Ag sector to obtain their licenses, as they are often called upon to drive in order to help out in their parents' farming and ranching activities. I voted against the bill, but it will head to the House for their consideration.

SB 148 seeks to strengthen the protections afforded to off-duty state employees for communicating in good faith information they believe to be truthful and accurate relating to their employment situations to legislators, constitutional officers, or legislative auditors. This bill is consistent with other statutes but enhances the code insofar as this is not a whistleblower bill, rather one that allows people to share pertinent information related to working conditions or financing of local or state services provided by their

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divisions. I voted in favor of the bill, which passed the Senate 20-13. I feel it is important to guarantee there will be no retribution for an open and honest dialogue between those who work for the state and their elected representatives.

Finally, the Senate debated SB 71, which sought to prohibit capital punishment of a person with a severe mental illness at the time he or she committed murder. This issue has been brought each of the past several years in some form. A few years ago, the leading proponents were seeking a full prohibition on capital punishment. Now, they are attempting to address it differently. The key elements for me in deciding to vote against this bill came primarily from the Attorney General and the State's Attorney's Assn. First, our prosecutors are very discerning in determining whether to seek capital punishment, and they do so only in the most grotesque, heinous murder cases. Second, we already have a prohibition of the death penalty in many cases, including when individuals are not mentally capable of standing trial. Third, enacting this law would effectively render capital punishment an illegal procedure going forward because expert witnesses would be called forth by the defense to speak to factors in the alleged murderer's past that would prove he/she was mentally ill when he/she committed the crime. When one witness was asked in committee about what it would take to establish that a person was mentally ill at the time he/she perpetrated the crime, that witness admitted it was subjective and that "experts" could be found to try to establish that the person was severely mentally ill. Fourth, due to equal protection under the law, passage of this bill would have arguably vacated the death sentences of those currently on death row. At minimum, it would have given them additional grounds for appeals. This issue is very emotional, and I respect people's views one way or the other. I erred on the side of law enforcement/prosecutors, and I do feel they are very judicious in making a determination whether or not to seek the ultimate penalty. Further, the fact that the death penalty has very rarely been carried out in South Dakota shows that we exercise great discretion and understand the gravity of the matter. The bill failed 12-21.

I truly appreciate the many ways you choose to participate in the legislative process. I have had a number of constituents this year travel to Pierre to testify on bills I have introduced on their behalf. Others have attended events in Pierre and shared their positions on bills. Still others have called, emailed, attended cracker barrels, or have just read and provided feedback on my articles. For all you do to be involved, I thank you!



**Card Shower  
for  
Darlene Morton's  
80th Birthday  
on Feb. 24, 2019  
Send to:  
320 Grant Ave. NE  
Conde, SD 57434**

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From the Editors of E - The Environmental Magazine

Dear EarthTalk: There's a lot of talk about overfishing and pollution wreaking havoc in marine ecosystems, but

has anyone actually studied if there is less wildlife in the oceans these days?

-- Melissa Cassidy, Raleigh, NC

Environmental advocates do spend a lot of time harping about threats to our oceans, but sadly for all of us the facts bear out the concern. According to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF), population numbers for the majority of marine wildlife species have declined by half since 1970, with many species down as much as 75 percent. Furthermore, a third of all fish stocks are overfished and one in four species of cartilaginous fish (sharks, rays and skates) are living on the brink of extinction. "Driving all these trends are human actions: from overfishing and resource depletion, to coastal development and pollution, to the greenhouse gas emissions causing ocean acidification and warming," says WWF's Senior VP for Oceans Brad Ack.

Another recent study by University of British Columbia researchers corroborates WWF's findings, concluding that the biomass of predatory fish in the world's oceans has declined by some two-thirds over the last 100 years, and the decline is accelerating, with 54 percent of it occurring in the last 40 years.

No doubt these changes are happening partly as a result of overfishing. According to the United Nation's Food & Agriculture Organization (FAO), nearly 90 percent of the world's marine fish stocks are either fully exploited, overexploited or depleted.

Efforts to rein in the industry in the U.S. and elsewhere have led to more sustainable practices, but bad actors still ply deep sea waters with destructive trawlers and other gear which not only collect more fish than is sustainable but also inadvertently kill many other marine wildlife in the process.

There is some hope. Early results of efforts to essentially rope off certain parts of the ocean as "marine protected areas" (MPAs) to let marine wildlife recover are showing promise. A Center for Biological Diversity analysis of 31 marine wildlife populations found that habitat and other protections afforded them under the Endangered Species Act helped them rebound significantly, with three-quarters of endangered marine mammal and sea turtle species increasing population sizes accordingly.

"The Endangered Species Act not only saved whales, sea turtles, sea otters and manatees from extinction, it dramatically increased their population numbers, putting them solidly on the road to full recovery," says the Center for Biological Diversity's Shaye Wolf. "Humans often destroy marine ecosystems, but our study shows that with strong laws and careful stewardship, we can also restore them, causing wildlife numbers to surge."

Another way to stop or slow the overexploitation of marine resources would be to end the approximately \$20 billion in yearly subsidies for harmful fisheries that encourage destructive practices. The World Trade Organization has pledged to set new targets by mid-2019 that would require member nations to reroute any such subsidies toward investments in sustainable fisheries, aquaculture and coastal community development to reduce pressure on fish stocks. But even if such a drastic restructuring of the fisheries economy takes place, environmental leaders worry it may be too little too late.

CONTACTS: "A century of fish biomass decline in the ocean," [www.int-res.com/abstracts/meps/v512/p155-166/](http://www.int-res.com/abstracts/meps/v512/p155-166/); "Marine mammals and sea turtles listed under the U.S. Endangered Species Act are recovering," [journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0210164](http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0210164); FAO, [www.fao.org/fisheries/en/](http://www.fao.org/fisheries/en/).

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## Small Group Music Contest Results

CONGRATULATIONS to all HS students that attended Small Group Music Contest in Aberdeen! Out of 23 entries- 18 were Superior Ratings (7 of them were perfect scores), and 5 Excellent Ratings

### VOCAL RESULTS:

All 4 Vocal Ensembles received Superior Ratings (Deep River Ensemble receive a superior plus!)

Superior Plus Solos: Ashley Garduno, AnneMarie Smith

Superior Solos: Alexis Hanten, Alex Schwab, and Tylan Glover

Excellent Solos: Ashley Fliehs

### INSTRUMENTAL RESULTS:

Saxophone Ensemble received a Superior rating

Percussion Ensemble received an Excellent plus rating

Superior Plus Solos: Emily Thompson (Marimba), Ashley Garduno (French Horn & Piano), AnneMarie Smith (Piano)

Superior Solos: Emily Thompson (Timpani), Samantha Pappas (Bari Sax), Braden Freeman (Tuba), Stella Meier (Piano)

Excellent Plus Solos: Kylie Kassube (Clarinet)

Excellent Solos: Rease Jandel (Bass Clarinet), Stella Meier (Alto Sax)

It's Girls' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Milbank** VS **Bulldogs**



**Groton Area Tigers**

Thursday, Feb. 14, 2019

8:00 p.m.

at Milbank

**Makeup Game  
Tonight  
about  
7:30 p.m.  
at Milbank  
Varsity Game  
Only**

Broadcast of these games is sponsored by the

**Aberdeen**  
**Chrysler Center**

901 Auto Plaza Drive  
Aberdeen, SD

**800.874.9173**

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

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## Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

With the regular season behind us, we'll continue our look at the Vikings roster, breaking it down by position. We'll take a look at how those players did last season, as well as their contract situation heading into 2019. We have already covered the quarterback position, now we turn our attention to the running backs.

The Minnesota Vikings were not very productive on the ground in 2018, even though head coach Mike Zimmer consistently stated he wanted to run the ball more. The team finished 30th in the league with only 1,493 rushing yards. The Vikings only mustered 4.2 yards per carry, which was 21st in the NFL. Only three teams had fewer rushing touchdowns on the season than the Vikings' nine. All in all, it was a poor effort on the ground, mostly due to the Vikings horrible offensive line situation.

Second year running back Dalvin Cook led the team in rushing yards, even though he only played in 11 games. Cook finished with 615 yards on 133 carries (4.6 ypc) and two touchdowns. He was also fourth on the team in receiving yards, finishing with 305 yards and two touchdowns on 40 catches. Dalvin is entering the third year of his four-year rookie contract and will make \$1.73 million this upcoming season. He has shown he can be a dynamic player with the ball in his hands, but he needs to stay healthy. If he can play a full season, and the Vikings can improve the offensive line, Cook should emerge as one of the best running backs in the NFL this season.

Latavius Murray was the only Vikings' running back to play in all 16 games last season. He finished with 578 yards on 140 carries (4.1 ypc) and six touchdowns. Murray also added 141 receiving yards on 22 catches. The Vikings have voided the last year in Murray's contract, so he is now a free agent, but there is some hope he may return to the team as a backup to Cook.

The only other two running backs who carried the ball for the Vikings in 2018 were Mike Boone and Roc Thomas. Boone finished the season with 47 rushing yards on 11 carries (4.3 ypc) in the eight games he played in last season. Thomas played in only five games in 2018, ending with 30 yards on eight carries (3.8 ypc). Boone is entering the second year of the three-year contract he signed, and he will make \$572,500 this season. Thomas also has two years left on his contract and will make \$570,000 this season. Both players are capable running backs who should have no problem backing up Dalvin Cook if Latavius Murray doesn't re-sign this offseason.

The Vikings have some solid running backs on the roster, but none of that will matter unless the team upgrades the offensive line. Mike Zimmer is an old-school coach who would prefer the team to run the ball, control the clock, and win a low scoring game. Look for the team to follow his lead this season, and if Dalvin Cook can stay healthy, look for him to make his first pro bowl appearance.

Check back next week, as we break down the wide receivers from last season. And as always, if you have any questions or comments, reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL). Skol!

Groton City Council Meeting Agenda  
February 19, 2019 – 7:00pm  
Groton Community Center

1. Greg Heilman (call in)
2. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
3. Minutes
4. Bills
5. DGR Engineering Report
6. Award Street Project bid
7. January Finance Report
8. District meetings
9. Housing committee
10. Petitions must be submitted by February 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5:00pm
11. First Reading of the Summer Salary Ordinance #725
12. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
13. Adjournment



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## Today in Weather History

February 18, 1962: Rain started in the afternoon of the 18th, and by the late in the day, temperatures dropped to below freezing resulting in a glaze up to three-quarters of an inch on trees and power lines. Many utility lines were downed by the glaze or by falling trees and branches. Temperatures continued to drop during the night changing the rain to snow by the 19th. Strong winds accompanied this snow causing local blizzard conditions.

1965: A massive avalanche kills 26 men at the Granduc Copper Mine in British Columbia on this day. Click

1966: The temperature dropped to 49 degrees below zero at Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada, the city's all-time lowest recorded temperature.

1992: A thunderstorm spawned an unusually strong F4 tornado for so far north for the time of the year in southern Van Wert County in Ohio. The tornado touched down just west of US Route 127 and traveled northeastward for about 3 miles. One house was completely leveled, and nine others experienced severe damage. Six people were injured.

1899 - While much of the central and eastern U.S. was recovering from the most severe cold wave of modern history, the temperature at San Francisco soared to 80 degrees to establish a record for month of February. (David Ludlum)

1959 - Some of the higher elevations of California were in the midst of a five day storm which produced 189 inches of snow, a single storm record for North America. (13th-19th) (David Ludlum)

1987 - A small but intense low pressure system combined with northerly upslope winds to produce eight inches of snow in five hours at Meeteetsie WY, located southeast of Cody. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms soaked the Central Gulf Coast Region with heavy rain. Totals in southern Louisiana ranged up to 8.50 inches near the town of Ridge, with 6.55 inches at Plaquemine. Thunderstorms in northern Florida drenched Apalachicola with 5.41 inches of rain in 24 hours, and produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Mayo. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Low pressure off the coast of North Carolina brought freezing rain and heavy snow to Virginia and the Carolinas. Snowfall totals in Virginia ranged up to 18 inches at Franklin. Freezing rain reached a thickness of two inches around Charlotte NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - An intense but slow moving Pacific storm worked its way across Utah over a two day period. The storm blanketed the valleys with 4 to 12 inches of snow, and produced up to 42 inches of snow in the mountains. Heavy snow also fell across northern Arizona. Williams received 22 inches of snow, and 12 inches was reported along the south rim of the Grand Canyon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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Washington's  
Birthday



Cold

High: 6 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: -9 °F

Tuesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 12 °F

Tuesday  
Night



20% → 50%

Slight Chance  
Snow then  
Chance Snow

Low: 5 °F

Wednesday

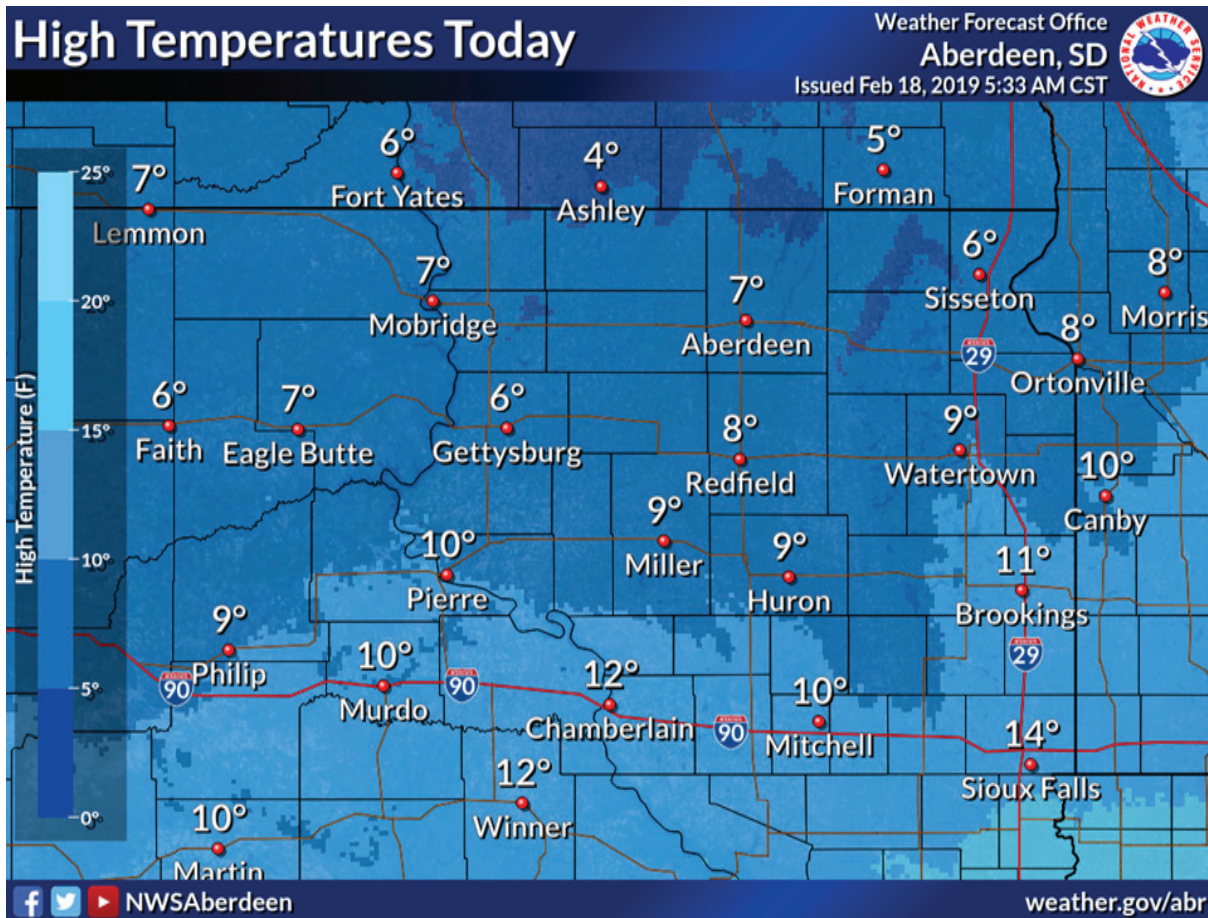


40%

Chance Snow

High: 19 °F

## High Temperatures Today



Published on: 02/18/2019 at 5:39AM

It's going to be well below climo normal cold again today. And, there could be some light snow showers or flurries today mainly throughout the Missouri River valley region of north central South Dakota.

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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 13 °F at 12:21 AM**

**Low Outside Temp: 3 °F at 10:27 PM**

**High Gust: 20 mph at 2:29 PM**

**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 67° in 1913**

**Record Low: -32° in 1903**

**Average High: 29°F**

**Average Low: 8°F**

**Average Precip in Feb.: 0.29**

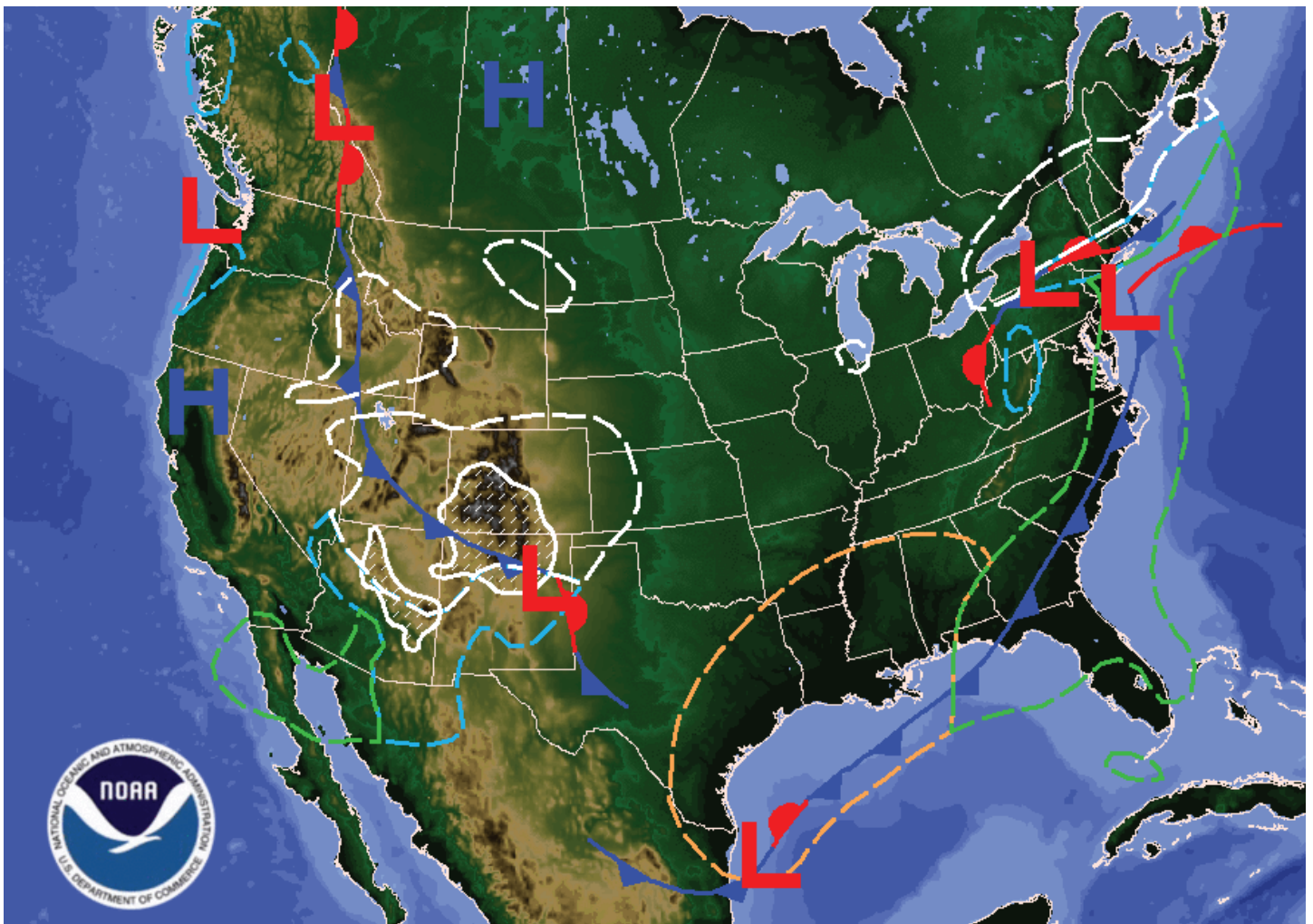
**Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00**

**Average Precip to date: 0.76**

**Precip Year to Date: 0.00**

**Sunset Tonight: 6:05 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:29 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Mon, Feb 18, 2019, issued 4:49 AM EST  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

**Rain**  
**Rain and T'Storms**  
**Rain and Snow**  
**Snow**

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

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## HELP, I'M A PARENT

Throughout the Bible, being obedient to parents is always connected to being submissive to and following the teachings of God. And, if we consider God's character to be important and the foundation of His role as our Father, parents will strive to imitate His characteristics if they want to be effective representatives of Him.

We often speak of the characteristics of God in high and lofty terms: He is omniscient, omnipotent, immortal, and omnipresent! But, Jesus presented the character of God in behaviors that could be seen, and, most of them imitated. Consider these important behaviors we constantly see in the life of Jesus: loving, kind, caring, compassionate, forgiving, accepting, helping, healing, encouraging, honest, thoughtful, sensitive, open, available, authentic, a disciplinarian, knowledgeable, wise, a craftsman, a caring Son, student of the Law and Prophets, a model to be followed, submissive to and respectful of the laws and a close obedient relationship to His Father.

Quite a list, indeed. And, when I review and think about this list, I wonder how often I failed my Heavenly Father as the father He wanted me to be to my children as they grew up - even now.

When we consider the important role that parents are called to fulfill, spiritual, moral, and ethical examples and authorities to our children, it is easy to cry out, This job is far beyond me! And, it is if we attempt to do it on our own. But, if we are humble and dependent on Him, we have His Word to guide us and guard us, His Son within us to empower us, and the Holy Spirit's presence to lead us.

We also have His Word, especially the Proverbs, when we want His wisdom.

Prayer: Father, we parents who love and believe in You are blest to have You and Your Word as a parents guide. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 1:8 Listen, my son, to your father's instruction and do not forsake your mother's teaching.

## 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

## News from the Associated Press

### **Apartment owner making changes following shooting**

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — The owner of an Aberdeen apartment building that was targeted by recent gunfire says he's doing all he can to make the property safer.

No one was injured when 16 gunshots were fired at Elmwood Manor Apartments during the early morning hours of Feb. 3. Three shots broke through a window. The tenant of that apartment was away at the time of the shooting.

Barry Schmiess says the incident is scary for everyone. Schmiess tells Aberdeen American News he and the buildings' manager are working with the police department to see what improvements can be made, including security doors or cameras.

Schmiess says he already does background checks on tenants and doesn't rent to felons.

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

### **School of Mines developing cutting-edge drone technology**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota School of Mines students are working on some drone technology that could potentially protect lives and impact the agriculture industry.

The students have developed 10-inch-wide drones that fly together like a flock or swarm of birds without any manual control. KOTA-TV reports each drone has a thermal camera and sensors that detect nitrogen levels in fertilizer. Farmers would use the drones as a unit to more evenly disperse nutrients on fields.

The School of Mines says the technology can also help protect the lives of cell tower workers. Instead of sending a person to climb several hundred feet up to fix a problem, the drones can fly up and analyze what needs to be repaired.

Information from: KOTA-TV, <http://www.kotatv.com>

### **South Dakota couple reflects on chocolate business**

**By GRACE RAMEY, Watertown Public Opinion**

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — Truffles, caramels, peanut butter cups, turtles, toffee and fudge — the Watertown Confectionery makes it all. Located Watertown, the Confectionery is owned and operated by Mike and Vickie Marotz.

The Marotzes began their journey into making chocolates while living in Red Wing, Minnesota. Their friends, Cyndy and Doug Smith, had previously owned a confectionery in Chicago and reopened the business in the basement of their Minnesota home under the name Red Wing Confectionery. During the busy seasons, the Marotzes would help the Smiths and instantly fell in love with it.

"The minute I put my hand in the warm chocolate, I was sunk," Vickie Marotz told the Watertown Public Opinion.

Burned out on each of their previous careers, the couple moved back to Watertown in 2005 and launched their own business in the basement of their home, making chocolates and roasting coffee. In 2010, they opened their downtown shop and expanded their services to homemade wine.

The Confectionery sells dozens of different handmade, hand-dipped chocolate candies, including dark chocolate caramels with sea salt, milk and dark chocolate mint truffles, chocolate-covered peanut butter cups, milk and dark chocolate turtles and much more.

SD Cowpies, which are made of crushed English toffee and coconut dipped in chocolate, are one of their best sellers.

"Anything with South Dakota in (the title) sells pretty well," Vickie Marotz said.

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The Moratzes will often create and sell new candies by listening to what the customers want, such as the chocolate-covered Oreos, potato chips and s'mores.

"We do listen to the customers," Vickie Marotz said. "We can't do it all, but we try our best."

While Valentine's Day is not the Watertown Confectionery's busiest holiday, Mike and Vickie Marotz offer several Valentine's-related chocolates, including milk chocolate rose suckers, assorted chocolate boxes, dark chocolate "Love Potions," raspberry truffles, heart-shaped chocolate suckers and more.

"We have such an array of chocolates, I'm never bored because there's always something to do," Vickie Marotz said.

Each day at the Confectionery, the Marotzes work through various steps to create their chocolate candies, including making the chocolates and their fillings, hand-dipping the treats and decorating and wrapping the chocolates.

First thing each morning and a few times throughout the day, they add blocks of milk and dark chocolate to separate temperers to melt down the chocolate for the coating to their candies. These tempering machines warm up the chocolate to specific temperatures, mixing the chocolate until alpha crystals form, which keep the cocoa butter mixed in and ensure the chocolate comes out smooth, crisp and glossy. Then, one by one, the shop's homemade chocolate candy cores — such as caramel, English toffee, coffee beans, coconut balls and more — are individually dipped into the tempered chocolate for the finishing touches. The treats then sit on a tray to cool overnight and get decorated and wrapped the next day before being sold in the store.

"There's no shortcuts when it comes to chocolate," Vickie Marotz said. "You have to follow all the steps."

Every piece of chocolate the confectionery sells is handmade and hand-dipped, so no two chocolates are the same, making each piece unique.

"At Watertown Confectionery, we make candy the old fashioned way," the shop's assorted chocolate box insert reads, "handling with care, taking the time necessary, using only the freshest ingredients and no preservatives ... Because our products are handmade and hand dipped you will find each and every piece delectably different."

"It's a lot of work, but it's also a lot of fun," added Confectionery employee HaVilah "Hal" Holdahl, who has worked at the shop for about a year and a half, learning the secrets of the trade.

Each of the Confectionery workers have their favorite treats to make. Mike Marotz said he enjoys making the milk chocolate-dipped toffee, while his wife enjoys the java white delight truffles. Holdahl agreed, saying truffles are her favorite to make because "it's challenging and it involved a bit of creativity."

Vickie Marotz said there has never been a day where they left work and regretted making this career change.

"Everything about this is a blessing to us," she said. "We're happy with this chosen profession. It's fulfilling. We make people happy."

"Chocolate can seem so trivial but it brings a lot of joy to a lot of people," Holdahl added.

The Marotzes said they enjoy seeing customers' faces light up when they come through the door.

"It is pretty special to see the smiles that we create," Mike Marotz said.

"Everyone has a smile on their faces and, if they are crabby when they come in, they always leave with a smile," Vickie Marotz added. "How can you not be happy when there's chocolate?"

Information from: Watertown Public Opinion, <http://www.thepublicopinion.com>

## South Dakota woman starts environmentally-friendly business

By JIM HOLLAND, Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Callee Ackland hopes her personal search for clearer, healthier skin ultimately leads to a cleaner, healthier planet for all.

What started as her quest for an effective skin treatment has grown into a Rapid City-based business, offering environmentally-friendly products for people and their homes.

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Her Bestowed Essentials line of personal and home-care products is sold mostly online, but is also available to the local public at a small storefront in east Rapid City.

Ackland, 25, was born in Northern California and raised in Oregon. She had battled acne for several years, had tried everything on the drug-store shelves and had been to a dermatologist, she said.

Then in the fall of 2016, she bought a simple handmade bar of soap while on vacation in New Orleans. It worked.

"That bar of soap is the first thing that helped calm my skin quite a bit," she told the Rapid City Journal.

Through research, Ackland said she discovered women put an average of 168 different chemicals, from skin-care products to makeup, on their skin each day.

"And a lot of them actually are not good for your skin. They can cause skin irritation and lung irritation," she said. "I decided I was going to make a lot of my own products."

In 2017, she started producing her own line of handmade soaps.

She first made gifts of them to friends, who encouraged her to open a business.

At the time, Ackland was active-duty military, stationed in Georgia and serving as a translator with the U.S. Navy. She began Bestowed Essentials as a side endeavor, selling her first products through local farmer's markets or through online sites, such as etsy.com.

When she left the military, she traveled the country in a camper van, hoping to settle somewhere and open a full-time production studio for her growing business.

She had never been to South Dakota, but was attracted to the state because of tax advantages offered to small businesses and entrepreneurs, she said.

The proximity to the Black Hills ultimately swayed her decision to pick Rapid City.

"I just absolutely fell in love with the area as soon as I got here," Ackland said.

Ackland, whose given name is Christianna, said her father came up with the business name.

To bestow, she said, is to present someone with a great honor. The earth, she said, provides the plant-based materials she uses in her products.

"It was like Mother Earth's bestowments to us," she said.

As a "zero-waste" business, Bestowed Essentials also uses completely or mostly recycled products — and no plastics — for production and shipping.

The business's central location in South Dakota cuts down on the distance to receive incoming shipments she uses to make her products and to ship them to buyers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and internationally.

Her plans include moving closer to downtown Rapid City, perhaps as early as next year. Long range, Ackland hopes to expand well beyond South Dakota.

"The 10-year plan is having multiple stores around the country," she said.

Increasing reports of climate change and plastic pollution has boosted environmental awareness, she said.

"People are becoming more conscious of it and looking for eco-friendly alternatives all over the country," she said.

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

## No. 25 South Dakota women win 10th straight, top W Illinois

MACOMB, Ill. (AP) — Hannah Sjerven scored 20 points and No. 25 South Dakota celebrated its first appearance in the Top 25 on Saturday with an 83-61 win over Western Illinois for the Coyotes' second 10-game winning streak of the season.

Ciara Duffy and Chloe Lamb combined for 35 points, going 7 of 12 from 3-point range for South Dakota (23-3, 11-1 Summit League).

Olivia Kaufmann and Annabel Graettinger had 15 points apiece for Western Illinois (12-14, 8-5), which entered the game having won four straight and 7 out of 8. The lone loss was 92-49 at South Dakota.

The Leathernecks took a 16-15 lead after one quarter on the strength of going 8 of 9 from the foul line.



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The Coyotes responded by making 4 of 7 3-pointers and shooting 74 percent in outscoring Western Illinois 24-12 to lead 39-28 at halftime. They closed the half on a 17-4 run with Duffy scoring eight points.

South Dakota steadily pulled away in the second half, making 16 of 27 shots (59 percent) to finish the game at 53 percent.

Duffy finished 4 of 7 from 3-point range and scored 18 points; Lamb was 3 of 5 from distance and scored 17.

## Lawmakers to talk presumptive probation, campus free speech

By JAMES NORD, Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota lawmakers plan to take up bills this week to end presumptive probation, promote “intellectual diversity” on college campuses and target an activities association policy for transgender student athletes.

Here’s a look at the agenda after lawmakers return Tuesday to the Capitol:

### PRESUMPTIVE PROBATION

A bill to reverse South Dakota’s presumptive probation policy for some lower-level felonies is set for debate Tuesday in the Senate Judiciary Committee. The proposal is a top priority for new Attorney General Jason Ravensborg.

Presumptive probation is credited with helping avert expensive prison population growth, but critics say it ties judges’ hands. It was part of a 2013 Republican-led justice overhaul.

The package former Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard and other officials championed included presumptive probation for some nonviolent crimes — including drug possession and ingestion — in the two lowest classes of felonies.

A 2016 report from the Urban Institute found presumptive probation and other changes played a major role in avoiding growth in the state prison population, and the latest state analysis credits the overhaul with saving taxpayers more than \$30 million.

Ravensborg has said ending the practice would give a “formidable and necessary tool back to our prosecutors and our courts.” Opponents of his bill include local chapters of the ACLU and Americans for Prosperity.

GOP Gov. Kristi Noem said last month that she hadn’t decided if she would sign the measure into law. Noem said then that presumptive probation has been described to her as frustrating, but she doesn’t want to be in the “business of building new prisons and jails.”

### TRANSGENDER STUDENT ATHLETES

A House panel is set to hear a bill taking aim again at the South Dakota High School Activities Association’s policy that lets transgender students play on the athletic team that matches their gender identity. A Senate panel killed a similar bill last month.

The measure before the House Health and Human Services Committee on Tuesday would require a student’s sex to be determined by their birth certificate or an association physical exam form.

Association Executive Director Dan Swartos has said a “very small number” of transgender students participate with the exemption. Supporters in the Senate argued the bill was necessary to ensure fair competition. Critics contended it would harm transgender students.

### INTELLECTUAL DIVERSITY

House lawmakers are scheduled to debate a pared-down measure seeking to promote “intellectual diversity” on college campuses.

The bill set for floor discussion would designate publicly accessible outdoor areas of state universities as available for expressive activity, prohibit officials from discriminating against student organizations based on their expression, and require reporting to the governor, regents and legislators.

The public reports would require information including instances in which free expression is disrupted, attempts to block a speaker and investigations into students based on their speech.

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Significant changes to the bill come after Noem said she met with the sponsor to discuss it. The new version doesn't contain previously proposed requirements for students, including U.S. history and government courses and scoring at least 85 percent on the U.S. citizenship test.

The Board of Regents, university presidents and student representatives opposed the bill in its earlier form.

## YANKTON GAMBLING

A measure to put a proposed casino complex in Yankton to a statewide vote is set to be debated on the Senate floor this week.

Kasi Haberman, Convention and Visitor's Bureau director in Yankton, told a Senate panel last week that the Port Yankton casino and entertainment project is an effort to drive tourism for the city and state.

But Native American tribes in Nebraska and South Dakota object to the plan. Yankton Sioux Tribe Vice Chairman Jason Cooke told the committee that the tribe's casino employs people and helps support programming including education.

Thelma Thomas is general manager of the Santee Sioux Nation's Ohiya Casino and Resort in Nebraska. She said the casino market in the area is already saturated with many casinos very close to Yankton.

If passed, the measure would direct revenues after expenses to helping South Dakota veterans and economic development and historic restoration in Yankton.

A similar measure failed in the chamber last year. Supporters could gather signatures to put the plan on the ballot.

## EARLY LEARNING

A new early learning advisory council would collect data from early childhood education programs in South Dakota under a bill scheduled for debate Wednesday in the House State Affairs Committee.

The panel established by Democratic Rep. Erin Healy's bill would conduct a statewide assessment on the quality and availability of early childhood education and development programs, identify opportunities and barriers to collaboration and make recommendations to boost participation in early childhood education programs. The group would also identify potential new funding sources that could be used to expand the early learning opportunities available in South Dakota.

"This is something that we must focus on in our state. We haven't done enough in the state of South Dakota to make sure that all children have access to Pre-K," Healy said.

A priority for Democrats, such legislation has failed in past sessions.

## CAMPUS CARRY

The full Senate is to debate a bill this week that would bar public universities and technical schools from restricting people's ability to carry guns on campus. The measure faces opposition from student officials, the Board of Regents and the Board of Technical Education.

Jordan Mason, political director at South Dakota Gun Owners, recently told a Senate panel that the bill would give students a "fighting chance to defend themselves."

But University of South Dakota President Sheila Gestring said allowing guns at the university could make students, staff and faculty fearful of coming to campus and may result in injuries and deaths.

Regents' policy prohibits firearms on campus with some exceptions. Such legislation has failed previously at the Capitol.

## Trump lashes out at officials involved in Russia probe

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump is lashing out at key officials involved in the Russia probe, namely former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe and the current deputy attorney general, Rod Rosenstein.

In an interview with CBS's "60 Minutes," McCabe, who was fired last year by the FBI, described Rosenstein as having raised the prospect of invoking the 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office. Trump

says McCabe and Rosenstein "look like they were planning a very illegal act, and got caught."

Trump tweets: "This was the illegal and treasonous 'insurance policy' in full action!"

Rosenstein issued a denial of McCabe's account last year. He said any suggestion that he had ever advocated for the removal of the president "is absolutely false."

## **Brex-split: 7 lawmakers quit Labour over EU, anti-Semitism**

**By JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press**

LONDON (AP) — Seven British lawmakers quit the main opposition Labour Party on Monday over its approach to issues including Brexit and anti-Semitism — the biggest shake-up in years for one of Britain's major political parties.

The announcement ripped open a long-simmering rift between socialists and centrists in the party, which sees itself as the representative of Britain's working class. It's also the latest fallout from Britain's decision to leave the European Union, which has split both of the country's two main parties — Conservatives and Labour — into pro-Brexit and pro-EU camps.

Many Labour lawmakers have been unhappy with the party's direction under leader Jeremy Corbyn, a veteran socialist who took charge in 2015 with strong grass-roots backing. They accuse Corbyn of mounting a weak opposition to Conservative Prime Minister Theresa May's plans for leaving the EU, and of failing to stamp out a vein of anti-Semitism in the party.

The splitters — who have between nine and 27 years' experience in Parliament and represent constituencies across England — make up a small fraction of Labour's 256 lawmakers, or of the 650 total members of Parliament. But this is the biggest split in the Labour party since four senior members quit in 1981 to form the Social Democratic Party.

Luciana Berger, one of those who quit Monday, said Labour had become "institutionally anti-Semitic."

"I am leaving behind a culture of bullying, bigotry and intimidation," she said at a news conference alongside six colleagues.

Labour leaders have admitted that Berger, who is Jewish, has been bullied by some members of her local party in northwest England.

Labour has been riven by allegations that the party has become hostile to Jews under Corbyn, a longtime supporter of the Palestinians. Corbyn's supporters accuse political opponents and right-wing media outlets of misrepresenting his views.

There have long been signs that British voters' 2016 decision to leave the EU could spark a major overhaul of British politics. May's Conservatives are in the throes of a civil war between the party's pro-Brexit and pro-EU wings. Labour is also split.

Many Labour members oppose Brexit — which is due in less than six weeks, on March 29 — and want the party to fight to hold a new referendum that could keep Britain in the 28-nation bloc.

But Corbyn, who spent decades criticizing the EU before becoming a lukewarm convert to the "remain" cause in the 2016 referendum, is reluctant to do anything that could be seen as defying voters' decision to leave.

"I am furious that the leadership is complicit in facilitating Brexit, which will cause great economic, social and political damage to our country," said Mike Gapes, one of the departing lawmakers.

The seven members of Parliament leaving Labour said they will continue to sit in the House of Commons as the newly formed Independent Group.

Corbyn said he was "disappointed that these MPs have felt unable to continue to work together for the Labour policies that inspired millions at the last election and saw us increase our vote by the largest share since 1945."

The Labour lawmakers who quit in 1981 eventually became today's Liberal Democrats, a centrist party that has failed to topple the dominance of the two bigger parties.

The new group of seven stopped short of forming a new political party, but the seeds have been sown. The new group has a name, a website and a statement of principles, which argues for a mix of pro-busi-

nesses and social-welfare measures and a pro-Western foreign policy that is closer to the "New Labour" of former Prime Minister Tony Blair than to Corbyn's old-school socialism.

Their statement said the Labour Party "now pursues policies that would weaken our national security; accepts the narratives of states hostile to our country; has failed to take a lead in addressing the challenge of Brexit and to provide a strong and coherent alternative to the Conservatives' approach."

The departing lawmakers said they would not be joining the Liberal Democrats, and urged members of other parties to help them create a new centrist force in British politics.

"We do not think any of the major parties is fit for power," said lawmaker Angela Smith. "People feel politically homeless and they are asking and begging for an alternative."

Victoria Honeyman, a lecturer in politics at the University of Leeds, said history suggests the breakaway group will struggle to gain traction in British politics.

"It's very cold out there as an independent," she said. "It's all well and good leaving because you believe the party has moved away from you, but you can often achieve more from being inside the tent."

## Nigeria's female candidates seek victory despite harassment

By CARA ANNA, Associated Press

KANO, Nigeria (AP) — Nervous ahead of Nigeria's delayed election, a group of young women picked up their cellphones and wished each other well.

"Honestly I'm so tensed and scared," one typed.

"I feel like crying. This is so touching," another wrote.

"What we are about to do is the beginning of an era," texted a third.

They are among dozens of first-time female candidates in a country where the percentage of women in parliament is one of the lowest in the world, under 7 percent, and the idea of a woman as president brings a belly laugh from many men.

While Ethiopia and Rwanda in recent months drew global praise for announcing two of the world's few "gender-balanced" Cabinets, Africa's most populous nation and largest democracy has been largely stuck in a political culture heavy on cash and brawn.

"You know how women are," explained Abdulaziz Maidubji, a 41-year-old businessman in the conservative northern city of Kano, in an interview with The Associated Press as others gathered and agreed. "They are very weak. They cannot endure these challenges."

The nearly 50 female candidates for state and local seats who ping each other with emoji-speckled messages of support in a WhatsApp group are eager to prove a country of 190 million people wrong. When the election was delayed at the last minute until Feb. 23, they urged each other to stay focused.

"God please let it come and pass because I'm so exhausted," one typed, echoing many Nigerians.

The group including activists, entrepreneurs, a fashion designer and a lab technician was created as part of a youth electoral movement to break the grip of Nigeria's two main political parties, which traditionally have been less about issues and more about seizing power at all costs.

Their chats on how to parse electoral data and polish talking points also created a safe space for venting frustrations about discrimination familiar to many Nigerian women, candidate or no, while a wide-ranging gender and equal opportunities bill has languished in the National Assembly for years.

One candidate from Zamfara state in the north was told her photo couldn't be on the same campaign poster as the governor because she is not his wife, though they share a political party. Another candidate was asked by a journalist, "Who is your husband?"

"Look, no one asks men this!" said Chioma Agwuegbo, a 32-year-old communications specialist who allowed the AP to join the group for the final push to election day.

She believes Nigeria can become more progressive once its legislative body sees new faces: "It's not a retirement home."

Some female candidates have been asked, or ordered, to step aside for a man. Some have been booed out of events. Some have seen embarrassed family members distance themselves, though many have

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received warm support and even been told, "What took you so long?" Many struggle with the high costs of running.

Still, the number of female candidates in certain cases is growing. Among this year's 73 presidential contenders, six are women, though former minister Oby Ezekwesili surprised many by dropping out in the final month after becoming the highest-profile female candidate in Nigeria's history.

Of the more than 1,800 senatorial candidates, however, only 12 percent are women — down from 17 percent four years ago.

Stay strong, one candidate in the WhatsApp group urged in a rousing post that ended with the exhortation, "Joy comes in the morning."

Among those checking in with good wishes was 26-year-old Zainab Sulaiman Umar, who is among Nigeria's youngest candidates. Her goal is especially groundbreaking: If she wins a seat in Kano state's house of assembly she would become its first woman.

At one campaign rally, she was attacked by thugs and her brother was almost stabbed. "It's something we just have to get used to as women to run for office," she told the AP, adding that it gave her more confidence to push on.

She left Nigeria's ruling party for a smaller one when it became clear that without a "godfather" she would have no chance.

"People talk negatively, but I answer them with positive answers," she said, although she hears "Are you married?" far too often.

As she goes door-to-door in her largely Muslim community, profiting from her access to female voters in their homes, she explains that she seeks to represent others, which religious leaders say is allowed for women, and not lead, which some see as taboo.

To her surprise, some local Muslim leaders have preached that women should be given a chance in office. She's ready to seize it.

"Of course I'm going to win," she said with a smile. She plans to provide primary health care centers while combating domestic violence and "empowering my people."

The spirit seemed to be catching. Across town at the electoral commission offices, a young woman boxed up polling materials for the vote.

Zainab Aliyu, 24, called this her first election and was excited, volunteering to help with preparations. She spoke glowingly of female candidate Hauwa Ibrahim al-Yacoub, a senatorial hopeful whose campaign poster had been spotted at a street roundabout, pink headscarf blazing amid a thicket of male candidates. "I trust her," Aliyu said.

And where many Nigerians, even women, hesitate to predict a female president any time soon, she responded immediately.

"2023," she said. "Inshallah!" If God wills.

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## Israel-Central Europe summit canceled after Polish pullout

By VANESSA GERA and ARON HELLER, Associated Press

WARSAW, Poland (AP) — Poland on Monday pulled out of a summit in Jerusalem, triggering the collapse of the entire meeting, after the acting Israeli foreign minister said that Poles "collaborated with the Nazis" and "sucked anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk."

The developments mark a new low in a bitter conflict between Poland and Israel over how to remember and characterize Polish actions toward Jews during the German occupation of Poland in World War II.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had been due to meet with the leaders of four Central European nations known as the Visegrad group. With the Hungarian and Slovak prime ministers already in Israel and the Czech leader still planning to go, bilateral meetings were to go ahead instead.

Netanyahu had touted the meeting as an important step in his outreach to the countries of Central Eu-

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rope, which have pro-Israeli governments that he is counting on to counter the criticism Israel typically faces in international forums.

Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki had already announced Sunday that he was pulling out of the meeting after a comment by Netanyahu last week about Polish cooperation with Nazis.

Morawiecki cancelled Polish participation altogether after the comments made by Israel's acting foreign minister, Israel Katz, which Morawiecki denounced as "racist" and "absolutely unacceptable."

Poland's Foreign Ministry also summoned the Israeli ambassador, Anna Azari, to demand a second set of clarifications in recent days.

Katz made his remarks Sunday in an interview on Reshet 13 TV.

"Poles collaborated with the Nazis, definitely. Collaborated with the Nazis. As (former Israeli Prime Minister) Yitzhak Shamir said — his father was murdered by Poles — he said that from his point of view they sucked anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk. You can't sugarcoat this history," he said.

Jewish leaders in Poland issued a statement saying that Shamir's words were "unjust already when they were first said, in 1989, when Polish-Israeli relations were just beginning to be rebuilt, after the long night of communism."

"They are even more unjust today, 30 years later, when so much has been done on both sides for a mutual understanding of our very difficult, but shared history," the statement added.

Poland was the first country invaded and occupied by Adolf Hitler's regime and never had a collaborationist government. Members of Poland's resistance and government-in-exile struggled to warn the world about the mass killing of Jews, and thousands of Poles risked their lives to help Jews.

However, Holocaust researchers have collected ample evidence of Polish villagers who murdered Jews fleeing the Nazis, or Polish blackmailers who preyed on helpless Jews for financial gain.

The head of the American Jewish Committee, David Harris, noted that that Poland and Israel, while otherwise friends, have clashed over the "varying assessments of the magnitude of anti-Semitism in Poland, especially before and during World War II, and often competing historical narratives."

He issued a statement acknowledging that "there are certainly pockets of anti-Semitism in Poland" but largely stressing the fact that Poles suffered and put up massive resistance to the Nazis during the war, also helping Jews. He also noted the Polish contributions in recent years to the renewal of Jewish life.

"As friends, we need to be able to manage our inevitable differences. That begins with choosing our words carefully — knowing when to speak, how to speak, and where to speak," Harris said. "It means not allowing individual incidents to escalate out of control. And it means not ceding all the progress achieved to date to those who might wish to destroy it."

Heller reported from Jerusalem. Karel Janicek in Prague contributed.

## Border wall a complex issue for 2020 prospect Beto O'Rourke

By WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — When President Donald Trump visited Beto O'Rourke's hometown to argue that walling off the southern border would make the U.S. safer, the former Democratic congressman and possible 2020 presidential hopeful was ready.

As the president filled an El Paso arena with supporters, O'Rourke helped lead thousands of his own on a protest march past the barrier of barbed-wire topped fencing and towering metal slats that separates El Paso from Ciudad Juarez, Mexico.

O'Rourke clearly hopes to make his personal experience with the border a strength if he runs for president — and the battle over billions of dollars in new fortifications may well shape the 2020 campaign.

But O'Rourke's history with the barriers that have lined the Rio Grande since he was a child actually could be a bit of vulnerability, too.

As the 2020 campaign is joined, other top Democrats can oppose Trump's call for more and larger walls

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as a straightforward wedge issue — something they say shows anti-immigrant feeling, intolerance and even racism.

But O'Rourke's record on border walls is complicated. In March, he supported a spending package that other leading Democratic contenders opposed and included \$1.6 billion for border wall construction in Texas' Rio Grande Valley. Buried in that was \$44.5 million for repairs of existing fencing elsewhere — including El Paso.

O'Rourke later explained the vote as a compromise to win approval of another proposal he backed, expanding access to mental health care for military veterans who had received other-than-honorable discharges. But his action attracted criticism from people who know the border best. Scott Nicol, co-chairman of the Sierra Club's Borderlands team, called it "very disappointing."

"The things that he has said have been dead on," Nicol said. "The next step becomes what do you do."

O'Rourke's nuanced position on border barriers, sometimes willing to use them as a bargaining chip, could be politically awkward in a national campaign but it's shared in El Paso. Here, many people accept dozens of miles of existing walls as a fact of life, objecting mostly to structures so intrusive they suggest a war zone.

"People in El Paso live with the border and the ambiguities and contradictions of the border," said Josiah Heyman, director of the University of Texas at El Paso's Center for Interamerican and Border Studies.

In an interview Thursday night on MSNBC, O'Rourke said he would "absolutely" tear down El Paso's existing walls and that he believed a majority of residents would back doing so. That somewhat contradicts his past statements about opposing entirely open borders, but O'Rourke has previously backed having them porous enough to promote trade and immigrant culture. In an interview in 2006, he decried President George W. Bush's proposal for bolstering the existing walls with more surveillance technology.

Bush's barrier "didn't seem like a meaningful suggestion at all, but maybe that's because we already have it and it doesn't seem to be working," he said.

City Council member Peter Svarzbein said El Paso's character isn't based on keeping people out, but rather on tens of thousands who legally cross every day for work, school, shopping or to see bi-national relatives.

Democratic analyst Colin Strother noted, "There are places that physical barriers make sense, but it does not make sense everywhere and that seems to be the big disconnect."

O'Rourke's attempts to explain his record could be difficult in a hotly contested primary campaign. His 2020 rivals could run into their own complications on the issue soon, however, after Congress approved \$1.4 billion in new border wall money as part of a deal to avoid the latest government shutdown.

In the end, O'Rourke "may have some firsthand knowledge, but I don't know if it's a winning argument," said Democratic political consultant James Aldrete, who helped conduct Hispanic outreach for Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton.

El Paso had only limited border security before 1978 when, facing an influx of immigrants looking for work in the U.S., Congress approved chain-link fencing later dubbed the "Tortilla Curtain." A 1986 federal law granting legal status to about 2 million Mexicans in the U.S. made the prospect of heading north even more attractive.

Eventually, thousands of people were pouring into El Paso every day, sometimes paying as little as a quarter for rides on makeshift rafts over the Rio Grande.

"People could cross whenever they wanted," said Silvestre Reyes, who was chief of the Border Patrol's El Paso sector in 1993 and won a congressional seat in 1996. "The city was tired of it."

Reyes ordered around-the-clock patrols and authorities repaired 100-plus holes in nine miles of fences downtown.

But when O'Rourke, then an upstart ex-City Council member, ran against Reyes in the 2012 Democratic primary, he didn't make Reyes' border crackdown an issue. Instead, O'Rourke more frequently complained of long wait times for cars crossing into El Paso from Juarez.

O'Rourke now opposes pumping any money into new walls. Instead, he'd like to see a coalition of border Democrats and Republicans in Congress hammer out a broader immigration overhaul.

"We know that there is no bargain where we can sacrifice some of our humanity to gain a little more

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security," O'Rourke told an emotional El Paso rally he headlined after the Trump protest march. "We know that we deserve to, and will, lose both of them if we do."

Reyes doesn't agree with O'Rourke on much but also opposes erecting concrete walls, which Trump has supported in the past.

"We have a lot of slats where you can still see through it," he said of El Paso. "That helps Border Patrol agents, but it also is supported by people living at the border."

## In France, the Force is strong with lightsaber dueling

By JOHN LEICESTER, AP Sports Writer

BEAUMONT-SUR-OISE, France (AP) — Master Yoda, dust off his French, he must.

It's now easier than ever in France to act out "Star Wars" fantasies, because its fencing federation has borrowed from a galaxy far, far away and officially recognized lightsaber dueling as a competitive sport, granting the iconic weapon from George Lucas' saga the same status as the foil, epee and sabre, the traditional blades used at the Olympics.

Of course, the LED-lit, rigid polycarbonate lightsaber replicas can't slice a Sith lord in half. But they look and, with the more expensive sabers equipped with a chip in their hilt that emits a throaty electric rumble, even sound remarkably like the silver screen blades that Yoda and other characters wield in the blockbuster movies .

Plenty realistic, at least, for duelists to work up an impressive sweat slashing, feinting and stabbing in organized, 3-minute bouts. The physicality of lightsaber combat is part of why the French Fencing Federation threw its support behind the sport and is now equipping fencing clubs with lightsabers and training would-be lightsaber instructors. Like virtuous Jedi knights, the French federation sees itself as combatting a Dark Side: The sedentary habits of 21st-century life that are sickening ever-growing numbers of adults and kids .

"With young people today, it's a real public health issue. They don't do any sport and only exercise with their thumbs," says Serge Aubailly, the federation secretary general. "It's becoming difficult to (persuade them to) do a sport that has no connection with getting out of the sofa and playing with one's thumbs. That is why we are trying to create a bond between our discipline and modern technologies, so participating in a sport feels natural."

In the past, the likes of Zorro, Robin Hood and The Three Musketeers helped lure new practitioners to fencing. Now, joining and even supplanting them are Luke Skywalker , Obi-Wan Kenobi and Darth Vader.

"Cape and sword movies have always had a big impact on our federation and its growth," Aubailly says. "Lightsaber films have the same impact . Young people want to give it a try."

And the young at heart.

Police officer Philippe Bondi, 49, practiced fencing for 20 years before switching to lightsaber. When a club started offering classes in Metz, the town in eastern France where he is stationed for the gendarmerie, Bondi says he was immediately drawn by the prospect of living out the love he's had for the Star Wars universe since he saw the first film at age 7, on its release in 1977 .

He fights in the same wire-mesh face mask he used for fencing. He spent about 350 euros (\$400) on his protective body armor (sturdy gloves, chest, shoulder and shin pads) and on his federation-approved lightsaber, opting for luminous green "because it's the Jedi colors, and Yoda is my master."

"I had to be on the good side, given that my job is upholding the law," he said.

Bondi awoke well before dawn to make the four-hour drive from Metz to a national lightsaber tournament outside Paris this month that drew 34 competitors. It showcased how far the sport has come in a couple of years but also that it's still light years from becoming mainstream.

The crowd was small and a technical glitch prevented the duelers' photos, combat names and scores from being displayed on a big screen, making bouts tough to follow. But the illuminated swooshes of colored blades looked spectacular in the darkened hall. Fan cosplay as Star Wars characters added levity, authenticity and a tickle of bizarre to the proceedings, especially the incongruous sight of Darth Vader



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buying a ham sandwich and a bag of potato chips at the cafeteria during a break.

In building their sport from the ground up, French organizers produced competition rules intended to make lightsaber dueling both competitive and easy on the eyes.

"We wanted it to be safe, we wanted it to be umpired and, most of all, we wanted it to produce something visual that looks like the movies, because that is what people expect," said Michel Ortiz, the tournament organizer.

Combatants fight inside a circle marked in tape on the floor. Strikes to the head or body are worth 5 points; to the arms or legs, 3 points; on hands, 1 point. The first to 15 points wins or, if they don't get there quickly, the high scorer after 3 minutes. If both fighters reach 10 points, the bout enters "sudden death," where the first to land a head- or body-blow wins, a rule to encourage enterprising fighters.

Blows only count if the fighters first point the tip of their saber behind them. That rule prevents the viper-like, tip-first quick forward strikes seen in fencing. Instead, the rule encourages swishier blows that are easier for audiences to see and enjoy, and which are more evocative of the duels in Star Wars. Of those, the battle between Obi-Wan and Darth Maul in "The Phantom Menace" that ends badly for the Sith despite his double-bladed lightsaber is particularly appreciated by aficionados for its swordplay.

Still nascent, counting its paid-up practitioners in France in the hundreds, not thousands, lightsaber dueling has no hope of a place in the Paris Olympics in 2024.

But to hear the thwack of blades and see them cut shapes through the air is to want to give the sport a try.

Or, as Yoda would say: "Try not. Do! Or do not. There is no try."

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## 'Digital gangsters': UK wants tougher rules for Facebook

By MAE ANDERSON and JILL LAWLESS, Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British lawmakers issued a scathing report Monday that calls for tougher rules to keep Facebook and other tech firms from acting like "digital gangsters" and intentionally violating data privacy and competition laws.

The report on fake news and disinformation on social media sites followed an 18-month investigation by Parliament's influential media committee. The committee recommended that social media sites should have to follow a mandatory code of ethics overseen by an independent regulator to better control harmful or illegal content.

The report called out Facebook in particular, saying that the site's structure seems to be designed to "conceal knowledge of and responsibility for specific decisions."

"It is evident that Facebook intentionally and knowingly violated both data privacy and anti-competition laws," the report said. It also accused CEO Mark Zuckerberg of showing contempt for the U.K. Parliament by declining numerous invitations to appear before the committee.

"Companies like Facebook should not be allowed to behave like 'digital gangsters' in the online world, considering themselves to be ahead of and beyond the law," the report added.

U.K. parliamentary committee reports are intended to influence government policy, but are not binding. The committee said it hoped its conclusions would be considered when the government reviews its competition powers in April.

The government said it welcomed the "report's contribution towards our work to tackle the increasing threat of disinformation and to make the U.K. the safest place to be online. We will respond in due course."

While the U.K. is part of the 28-country European Union, it is due to leave the bloc in late March, so it is unclear whether any regulatory decisions it takes could influence those of the EU.

Facebook said it shared "the committee's concerns about false news and election integrity" and was open to "meaningful regulation."

"While we still have more to do, we are not the same company we were a year ago," said Facebook's

U.K. public policy manager, Karim Palant.

"We have tripled the size of the team working to detect and protect users from bad content to 30,000 people and invested heavily in machine learning, artificial intelligence and computer vision technology to help prevent this type of abuse."

Facebook and other internet companies have been facing increased scrutiny over how they handle user data and have come under fire for not doing enough to stop misuse of their platforms by groups trying to sway elections.

The report echoes and expands upon an interim report with similar findings issued by the committee in July . And in December , a trove of documents released by the committee offered evidence that the social network had used its enormous trove of user data as a competitive weapon, often in ways designed to keep its users in the dark.

Facebook faced its biggest privacy scandal last year when it emerged that Cambridge Analytica, a now-defunct British political data-mining firm that worked for the 2016 Donald Trump campaign, had accessed the private information of up to 87 million users.

Conservative lawmaker Damian Collins, who heads the media committee, said "democracy is at risk" from malicious, targeted disinformation campaigns, often directed from countries such as Russia and spread on Facebook and other social networks.

"We need a radical shift in the balance of power between the platforms and the people," he said. "The age of inadequate self-regulation must come to an end."

Anderson reported from New York.

## DC's many prankster activists turn anger into street theater

By ASHRAF KHALIL, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the nation's capital, it can be hard for protesters to stand out. A group of 50 people — or even 500 — holding signs and shouting hardly merits a second glance in this city of protests.

That's why Washington activists have to get creative. There's an ethos of performative prankster-style protest wired into the District of Columbia's history, dating back decades.

This confrontational street-theater school is flourishing with the Trump administration as its nemesis. Each month brings new acts of political theater — some confrontational, some deliberately absurdist.

"It can take a serious issue into more of a playful place," said Robin Bell, who regularly projects disparaging messages onto the outside of the Trump International Hotel. "Oftentimes we visualize the absurdity of the situation."

In January, a group of activists associated with political pranksters The Yes Men passed out dozens of fake Washington Posts , with detailed articles depicting President Donald Trump resigning and fleeing the White House. For about a month last fall, a Robert Mueller investigation-themed ice cream truck roamed Washington, passing out free scoops with names like IndictMint Chip and Rocky Rod Rosenstein.

While some protests are designed to get attention, others hide in plain sight like Easter eggs for the observant. Within sight of the White House, a realistic-looking street sign declares the street Khashoggi Way, after Jamal Khashoggi, the dissident Saudi journalist killed inside the Saudi Consulate in Istanbul. About 10 of these signs have been scattered around Washington.

Activist Claude Taylor said he planted his first sign in front of the Saudi Embassy, where it lasted 24 hours before being removed. But he's pleased the sign outside the White House has lasted so long — more than a month — since his protest is against both Khashoggi's murder and what he considers Trump's soft response. Taylor also drives around town carrying an inflatable effigy depicting the president as a giant rat .

"It's got to be art, it's got to be creative. That's what gets people hooked," said Adam Eiding, perhaps Washington's most high-profile political provocateur.

Eiding is one of the District's public faces for marijuana legalization and is known for disruptive protests. In 2017, his group passed out 1,000 joints on Capitol Hill, but only to ID-carrying congressional staffers.

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He says he still owns a small jail cell on wheels for use in political stunts.

Eidinger lists the advantages to this sort of theatrical approach. It's more enjoyable and inspiring for the participants, more likely to garner media attention and go viral. Equally important, it's more likely to annoy opponents.

"One of the goals is to have a psychological impact, to get into their heads," he said.

He says he's been arrested 23 times, although he emphasizes that usually isn't the point.

"Just getting arrested is not creative. You should be willing to get arrested doing something else transgressive," he said.

The Trump administration is not the only target for these sorts of protests. On Thursday, two female activists disrobed inside the National Gallery of Art to protest what they say is a lack of diversity in the artists being featured. One led security on a brief chase before being subdued. The National Gallery of Art did not respond to a request for comment.

A day earlier, activists targeted the Philippine Embassy with a protest that was deliberately obscure. Around 7 a.m., several people strung swaths of red jute fabric on every tree, sign and lamp post surrounding the embassy, including the nearby statue of Daniel Webster. Last month, this group wrapped an enormous stretch of jute around the entire embassy fence, blocking both driveways.

It's an elaborate protest against Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte's war on drugs, in which human rights groups estimate more than 10,000 people have been killed by police and militias.

But there were no signs indicating that. In fact, given the date, most passers-by probably assumed it was related to Valentine's Day.

"There's a deliberate mystery to what we're doing" said an organizer, speaking on condition of anonymity to avoid prosecution. "Our audience is the embassy. Hopefully the guy at the embassy is going to be like 'I don't know what this is about, but I better tell my boss.'"

An embassy spokesman said local authorities had been contacted, but that all forms of "peaceful freedom of expression are all welcome."

The godmother of this local protest ethos is Nadine Bloch, a resident of the historically liberal hotspot of Takoma Park, Maryland, located just over the Washington line. Bloch's activism goes back to captaining a ship for Greenpeace in the 1990s seeking to disrupt French nuclear tests. Both Eidinger and Bell credit her with helping form their own sensibilities as part of the Washington Action Group.

"Nadine gathered all these people in the late '90s and now they're out there on their own doing it," Eidinger said.

Bloch speaks of the "artist-activist" and trains activists in a school of creative revolution known as "beautiful trouble." She said simple public weirdness is not enough and counsels activists to think through their goals, their message and their audience.

"A lot of people are in love with their clever tactics," Bloch said. "But if you don't know what your goal is, then good luck if your message actually delivers."

In the institutional memory of Washington's activists, December 1987 stands as an iconic moment. That's when posters suddenly appeared across town with a brutal assessment of President Ronald Reagan's attorney general, Edwin Meese: "Experts Agree: Meese is a Pig."

Their origin was a local mystery at first, eventually revealed to be the work of Jeff Nelson, drummer for the Washington-based political hardcore band Minor Threat.

Nelson said his posters weren't particularly clever or constructive but more like a vulgar scream of frustration.

"I was just looking for some sort of megaphone to shout back," said Nelson, now 56 and living in Toledo, Ohio. "Basically I did what I knew how to do, which was silkscreen posters."

But Nelson's legacy lingers.

When Bell, the projectionist, started targeting the Trump hotel after the 2016 election, he paid homage to his forebears.

His first projection said: "Experts Agree: Trump is a Pig."

## Israeli leaders' Nazi remarks scuttle summit with Europeans

By ARON HELLER, Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's off-hand comment in Warsaw about Poland and the Holocaust set in motion a diplomatic crisis that on Monday scuttled this week's summit of central European leaders in Israel.

Poland's abrupt decision to cancel its participation in the planned Visegrad conference in protest blew up the gathering, which Netanyahu has touted as a major milestone in his outreach to emerging democracies in eastern Europe and his broader goal of countering the criticism Israel typically faces in international forums.

The crisis was sparked last week when Netanyahu told reporters that "Poles cooperated with the Nazis." The seemingly innocuous comment infuriated his Polish hosts, who reject suggestions that their country collaborated with Hitler.

Poland's prime minister, Mateusz Morawiecki, announced Sunday that he would be skipping this week's Visegrad summit, a gathering with fellow prime ministers from Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia. Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz was supposed to replace him at Tuesday's meeting in Jerusalem, the first time the gathering is being held outside of Europe.

But after Israel's acting foreign minister reiterated the collaboration claims, Morawiecki cancelled Poland's participation altogether, denouncing the comments as "racist." As a result, the summit was called off and Netanyahu was planning to meet the other leaders independently.

Lost in the diplomatic uproar was that Netanyahu was actually defending his close alliance with Poland and other eastern European leaders when he made his comments.

Historians and domestic critics have accused Netanyahu of cozying up too tightly to nationalistic leaders who have promoted a distorted image of the Holocaust and turning a blind eye to anti-Semitism associated with them.

Morawiecki himself last year equated Polish perpetrators of the Holocaust to supposed "Jewish perpetrators." Netanyahu has recently hosted leaders of Lithuania, Ukraine and other countries who have engaged in selective World War II-era commemorations that play down their countries' culpability while making heroes out of anti-Soviet nationalists involved in the mass killing of Jews.

In response to a question from The Associated Press during his two-day visit to Warsaw, Netanyahu said he raises the issue of historical revisionism with the various leaders. He rejected the notion he was a partner to diminishing anyone's complicity in the genocide of Jews in World War II.

"I know the history. I don't starch it and I don't whitewash it. In Lithuania, in particular, there were some horrible things. No one is concealing that," said Netanyahu, the son of a historian. "This whole idea that we diminish history — we don't distort, and we don't hide, and no one has any interest in that, on the contrary."

In the same briefing with his travelling press corps, Netanyahu tried to deflect prominent criticism by Israeli historians of the deal he struck with Polish leaders over their country's controversial Holocaust speech law, which criminalized blaming the Polish nation for crimes committed against Jews during World War II.

Israeli officials saw it as an attempt by Poland to suppress discussion of the well-documented killing of Jews by Poles during and after the wartime German occupation.

"Poles collaborated with the Nazis and I don't know anyone who was ever sued for such a statement," Netanyahu told the reporters.

However, some media outlets reported him saying "THE Poles," which set off an angry rebuke in Warsaw, including a summoning of the Israeli ambassador for clarifications. Netanyahu's office said he was misquoted and blamed the misunderstanding on an editing error in an Israeli newspaper.

Netanyahu's office then reiterated that he "spoke of Poles and not the Polish people or the country of Poland." That only got him in hotter water at home for seemingly catering to the Polish obsession over his wording.

"The prime minister of the Jewish state is selling out the memory of the Holocaust for a dubious alliance

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with an anti-Semitic leader," said Tamar Zandberg, leader of the opposition Meretz party.

Nonetheless, the Polish government said it considered Netanyahu's response insufficient and threatened to withdraw from the conference.

With emotions running high in Poland, Israel's new acting foreign minister, Israel Katz, went on TV Sunday to reiterate that "Poles collaborated with the Nazis" — even mentioning Poles who "sucked anti-Semitism with their mothers' milk."

That prompted Poland to withdraw completely. Following that announcement, Czech Prime Minister Andrej Babis said the so-called V4 summit was cancelled altogether and bilateral meetings would be held instead.

Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman Emmanuel Nahshon confirmed the summit was off, saying all four prime ministers had to be present for it to take place.

Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orban, who is already in Israel, is another leader who has trod into the sensitive terrain of World War II conduct.

Orban has lavished praise on Miklos Horthy, Hungary's World War II-era ruler, who introduced anti-Semitic laws and collaborated with the Nazis. Orban also has backed a state-funded museum that experts say plays down the role of Hungarian collaborators and also used anti-Semitic imagery in a campaign against the liberal American-Hungarian billionaire George Soros.

When pressed by the AP, though, Netanyahu came to his ally's defense.

"His response was the most direct, saying 'we are not willing to accept this,'" Netanyahu responded. "He (Orban) attacked Horthy at some point. They are going the furthest here."

Netanyahu also addressed his warm welcome in January to President Petro Poroshenko of Ukraine, whose parliament had just designated the birthday of Ukrainian wartime collaborator Stepan Bandera a national holiday.

Bandera's forces fought alongside the Nazis and were implicated in the murder of thousands of Jews. The same day Poroshenko was visiting Israel, another memorial was being erected in Kiev for Symon Petliura, whose troops are linked to pogroms that killed as many as 50,000 Jews after World War I.

Netanyahu said he was not aware of that specifically but that he had some discussions with Poroshenko on the larger issue.

"I spoke to him too. I speak to them all. It's not that we can't raise the issue. We raise it freely," he insisted.

Still, he then quickly shifted attention toward the contemporary anti-Semitism from the "anarchist left" and Muslim communities.

"I think the mass of anti-Semitism today in Europe is what is happening in western Europe," Netanyahu said. "What is happening in Britain is astounding. This is the new phenomenon. There is the anti-Semitism of the right that hasn't changed. That existed and still exists."

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## Besieged IS militants refuse to surrender, ask for an exit

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

AL-OMAR OIL FIELD BASE, Syria (AP) — More than 300 Islamic State militants surrounded in a tiny area in eastern Syria are refusing to surrender to U.S.-backed Syrian forces and are trying to negotiate an exit, Syrian activists and a person close to the negotiations said Monday.

The development comes amid the Islamic State group's last stand in the village of Baghouz, where militants are hiding among hundreds of civilians and preventing them from leaving. It also will likely further delay a declaration on IS' territorial defeat that U.S.-backed Syrian forces were hoping to make last week.

A person familiar with the negotiations said the militants are asking for a corridor to the rebel-held north-western province of Idlib, and demand that they be allowed to leave along with the evacuated civilians. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to speak about the talks, which he described as taking place indirectly.

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It was not clear how the current standoff would be resolved.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, an activist group that monitors the civil war in Syria, said another request by IS to be evacuated to neighboring Iraq was also rejected. The group said that IS released Sunday 10 SDF fighters it had been holding, adding that it was not clear what, if anything, the extremists would get in return.

From a self-proclaimed caliphate that once spread across much of Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group has been knocked back to a speck of land in Baghouz in Deir el-Zour province, on the countries' shared border.

In that tiny patch on the banks of the Euphrates River, the militants are holed up in what SDF officials described as a small tented village, atop a network of tunnels and caves with the civilians — some of them possibly hostages.

The SDF and the coalition have battled to uproot the militants from villages and towns on the eastern banks of the Euphrates since September.

The capture of the last pocket of IS territory in either Syria or Iraq would mark the end of a four-year global campaign to crush the extremist group's caliphate. It has been a long and destructive battle. In decline since 2016, the militant group was stripped of its self-declared capital of Raqqa, in Syria, in the summer of 2017, leaving behind a destroyed city whose residents are still struggling to return.

The DeirEzzor 24, an activist collective in eastern Syria, said several trucks loaded with food stuff entered IS-held areas in Baghouz in Deir el-Zour on Monday morning. The group also reported that IS released 10 SDF fighters were released Sunday without saying whether the supplies of the food stuff were in return for the release.

DeirEzzor 24 said that the truce reached between IS and the SDF last week has been extended for five more days as of Sunday. It added that in return several trucks loaded with food entered IS-held area on Sunday.

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Associated Press writer Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed to this report.

## **Abe mum on Trump's claim of nomination for Nobel Peace Prize**

**By HARUKA NUGA, Associated Press**

TOKYO (AP) — Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe kept quiet Monday over President Donald Trump's claim that he had nominated him for the Nobel Peace Prize, but praised him and emphasized he did not deny doing so.

Trump's assertion Friday that Abe had nominated him for the honor and sent him a copy of the letter has raised questions and criticism in Japan.

Questioned in parliament, Abe praised Trump for his dealings with North Korea but said, "In light of the Nobel committee's policy of not disclosing recommenders and nominees for 50 years, I decline to comment."

Neither the prime minister nor his spokesman denied Trump's comment.

"I never said I didn't" nominate him, Abe said in response to a follow-up question by Yuichiro Tamaki, a lawmaker for the opposition Democratic Party for the People.

Tamaki said in a tweet Monday that he was concerned such a nomination would "send the wrong message to North Korea and the rest of international society."

Junya Ogawa, another opposition lawmaker, cited various policies and actions by Trump that he said ran contrary to the spirit of the peace prize, calling the nomination "an embarrassment for Japan."

In responding to Tamaki's questions in parliament, Abe lauded Trump for meeting with Kim and working to resolve the crisis over North Korea's nuclear program and missile tests. Trump had also addressed Japan's concerns over past abductions of Japanese citizens by North Korea, Abe said, adding "he and the entire White House also actively cooperated in resolving the issue."

"I highly praise President Trump's leadership," Abe said.

Trump's claim that Abe had sent him a "beautiful copy" of a letter sent to the Nobel committee could

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not be immediately verified. Nor could a report Sunday by the Japanese newspaper Asahi Shimbun, citing unidentified government sources, that Abe had nominated Trump at the U.S. president's request.

The government's top spokesman, Yoshihide Suga, echoed Abe's remarks in refusing further comment.

The situation is awkward for Abe at a time when his government is under fire for allegedly manipulating data on wages to suggest his economic policies were yielding better results than was actually the case.

"Being Trump's closest friend among world leaders has not worked out too well for Abe," said Jeff Kingston, director of Asian Studies at Temple University Japan. "He's not making Abe look very good."

The U.S. is Japan's ally and anchor for national defense and Abe has assiduously cultivated cordial ties with Trump. He was the first foreign leader to meet with Trump after he won the 2016 presidential election. The two share a love for golf and have teed off together both in Japan and the U.S.

The halt to North Korean nuclear and missile tests since early last year has been a relief for Japan, which sits well within the range of its missiles and has sometimes had test rockets land in its territorial waters.

Abe has been keen to claim progress in resolving the abduction dispute with North Korea, an important issue for his nationalist political base.

The deadline each year for Nobel Peace Prize nominations is midnight, Jan. 31. The Nobel committee's website says there are 304 candidates for the 2019 prize, 219 individuals and 85 organizations.

Former U.S. President Barack Obama was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2009, his first year in office, for laying out a U.S. commitment to "seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Trump complained Friday that Obama was there "for about 15 seconds" before he was awarded the prize.

Trump's landmark June 2018 summit with Kim in Singapore was replete with pomp but thin on substance. The two leaders are due to meet later this month in Hanoi, Vietnam. The president's comments Friday drew speculation that South Korean President Moon Jae-in might have been the one who nominated the president, but his spokesman said he had not.

Kim Eui-kyeom, Moon's spokesman, said Moon believed Trump "has sufficient qualifications to win the Nobel Peace Prize" for his work toward peace between North and South Korea, which have yet to sign a peace treaty after their 1950-53 war.

The Nobel committee chooses the recipient of the prize in early October by a majority vote. The prize is awarded on Dec. 10, in Oslo, Norway.

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Associated Press writers Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo and Elaine Kurtenbach in Bangkok contributed to this report.

## Chicago police seek follow-up interview with Jussie Smollett

By SARA BURNETT and GREG MCCUNE, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Chicago police said Sunday they're still seeking a follow-up interview with Jussie Smollett after receiving new information that "shifted" their investigation of a reported attack on the "Empire" actor.

The trajectory of the investigation "shifted" after detectives questioned two brothers about the attack and released them late Friday without charges, police spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said Saturday. He said police also reached out to Smollett's attorney to request another interview with him.

Guglielmi said Sunday the interview had not yet been conducted. He declined to comment on published reports that police believe Smollett staged the assault or that a grand jury may hear evidence in the case. The reports cited unnamed police sources.

"We're not confirming, denying or commenting on anything until we can talk to him and we can corroborate some information that we've gotten," he said.

Smollett, who is black and gay, has said he was physically attacked last month by two masked men shouting racial and anti-gay slurs and "This is MAGA country!" He said they looped a rope around his neck before running away as he was returning home from an early morning stop at a Subway restaurant in downtown Chicago. He said they also poured some kind of chemical on him.

Pamela Sharp, a spokeswoman for Smollett, said Sunday that there were no updates "as of now." An-

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other spokeswoman, Anne Kavanagh, later said she couldn't comment on whether Smollett had agreed to another interview.

Smollett's lawyers said late Saturday that the actor felt "victimized" by reports that he played a role in the assault, adding that, "Nothing is further from the truth and anyone claiming otherwise is lying." The statement from attorneys Todd Pugh and Victor P. Henderson also said Smollett would continue cooperating with police.

Police said they combed surveillance video in the heavily monitored area where Smollett said the attack occurred but were unable to find any footage of the incident. They did obtain images of two people they said they would like to question.

On Wednesday, Chicago police picked up the brothers at O'Hare International Airport as they returned from Nigeria. They described them as "suspects" in the assault, questioned them and searched their apartment.

Then, late Friday evening they released the two men without charges and said they were no longer suspects. They said they had gleaned new information from their interrogation of them.

One of the men is Smollett's personal trainer, whom the actor hired to help get him physically ready for a music video, Smollett's attorneys said in their statement.

"It is impossible to believe that this person could have played a role in the crime against Jussie or would falsely claim Jussie's complicity," the attorneys said.

Police have said they were investigating the attack as a possible hate crime and considered Smollett a victim. Reports of the assault drew outrage and support for him on social media from some politicians and celebrities. Smollett's account of what happened also has been met with skepticism, particularly in the wake of the latest developments.

Smollett, who is also a musician, gave an emotional speech during a Feb. 2 concert in West Hollywood, California, saying he went ahead with the show because he couldn't let his attackers win.

He also gave an interview to Robin Roberts of ABC News that aired Thursday in which he said he was "pissed" at people who did not believe he was attacked.

"I've heard that it was a date gone bad, which I also resent that narrative," he said. "I'm not gonna go out and get a tuna sandwich and a salad to meet somebody. That's ridiculous. And it's offensive."

Earlier this week, police said reports that the attack against Smollett was a hoax were unconfirmed.

Producers of the Fox television drama have supported Smollett, saying his character on "Empire," Jamal Lyon, was not being written off the show.

Smollett turned over redacted phone records that police said were not sufficient for a criminal investigation.

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This story has been corrected to show that the spokeswoman's last name is Kavanagh, not Kavanaugh, and that the first name of Smollett's character on the show is Jamal, not James.

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Check out the AP's complete coverage of the Jussie Smollett case.

## EU states mixed on Trump demand to take back IS fighters

By LORNE COOK and GEIR MOULSON, Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump's demand that European countries take back their citizens fighting in Syria received a mixed reaction Monday, as nations voiced concerns about how to bring home-grown Islamic State extremists to trial.

The question of such foreign fighters has been a conundrum for the Europeans for several years. Islamic State prisoners could be exposed to torture or the death penalty if they remain in jail in Syria or Iraq, and the EU opposes the death penalty.

But few European countries have embassies in Syria or Iraq, let alone extradition treaties to get their citizens back. Proving who is who and gathering solid evidence against suspects that would stand up in European courts is virtually impossible.



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Then there is the question of what to do with the wives and children of European jihadis. The case of a British teenager who ran away to join IS, has given birth to a baby boy and now wants to return to the U.K. has ignited debate in Britain about how to deal with citizens trying to leave Syria now the extremist group is collapsing.

"It is certainly not as easy as they think in America," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told reporters Monday at a meeting of EU foreign ministers. "German citizens have the right to return, but we have little ability in Syria at present to check whether German citizens are actually affected."

Maas said authorities would have to "check to what extent they were involved in fighting for IS, which would result in criminal proceedings having to be opened against them."

"These people can come to Germany only if it is ensured that they can immediately be taken into custody," he said.

Security experts have warned that convicted terrorists will walk free from European prisons by the dozens over the next two years, many of them jihadis who trained or fought in Syria and Iraq but never faced serious charges due to insufficient evidence.

French jihadis made up the largest contingent of European recruits. French officials are concerned because in 2015 and 2016, an Islamic State cell of French and Belgian fighters crossed from Syria into Turkey, eventually launching deadly attacks on Paris and Brussels.

"The last territorial bastions of Daesh (IS) are falling, which doesn't mean that the action of Daesh is finished. On the contrary," said French Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian.

Britain refuses to take back citizens who joined IS and has stripped them of their citizenship. Belgium has said previously that it would not make any great effort to secure the release of 12 citizens imprisoned in Syria and two in Iraq.

Other European countries have remained largely silent about the fate of men and women whom many see as a security threat.

Hungarian Foreign Minister Peter Szijjarto said the issue is "one of the greatest challenges ahead of us for the upcoming months."

"Our major endeavor now should be not to allow them to come back to Europe," said Szijjarto, whose staunchly anti-migrant government has linked extremist attacks to migration.

But Slovakian Foreign Minister Miroslav Lajcak, also part of an anti-migrant government, said "I would certainly be in favor" of Europe taking foreign fighters back.

"There is clearly a need to define ... the European position on this issue," Lajcak told reporters.

"Whether we like or dislike the U.S. position, they make no secret of it. It's very clear," he said. "This is the key partnership for the European Union. But the rules of this partnership have changed and we need to be able to react to it."

U.S. Democratic Senator Bob Menendez, on a visit to Brussels, said the Europeans have to find a way to deal with the challenge.

"If we have someone who we have well established under law as someone who is an ISIS fighter then we should be able to prosecute them whether at home or abroad" he said at the German Marshall Fund think tank.

Moulson reported from Berlin. AP writer Lori Hinnant in Paris and video reporter Sylvain Plazy in Brussels contributed.

## White House indicates Trump to veto disapproval of emergency

By ZEKE MILLER, Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump is prepared to issue the first veto of his term if Congress votes to disapprove his declaration of a national emergency along the U.S.-Mexico border, a top White House adviser said on Sunday.

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White House senior adviser Stephen Miller told "Fox News Sunday" that "the president is going to protect his national emergency declaration." Asked if that meant Trump was ready to veto a resolution of disapproval, Miller added, "He's going to protect his national emergency declaration, guaranteed."

The West Wing is digging in for fights on multiple fronts as the president's effort to go around Congress to fund his long-promised border wall faces bipartisan criticism and multiple legal challenges. After lawmakers in both parties blocked his requests for billions of dollars to fulfill his signature campaign pledge, Trump's declared national emergency Friday shifts billions of federal dollars earmarked for military construction to the border.

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra told ABC's "This Week" that his state would sue "imminently" to block the order, after the American Civil Liberties Union and the nonprofit watchdog group Public Citizen announced Friday they were taking legal action.

Democrats are planning to introduce a resolution disapproving of the declaration once Congress returns to session and it is likely to pass both chambers. Several Republican senators are already indicating they would vote against Trump — though there do not yet appear to be enough votes to override a veto by the president.

The White House's Miller insisted that Congress granted the president wide berth under the National Emergencies Act to take action. But Trump's declaration goes beyond previous emergencies in shifting money after Congress blocked his funding request for the wall, which will likely factor in legal challenges.

Trump aides acknowledge that Trump cannot meet his pledge to build the wall by the time voters decide whether to grant him another term next year, but insist his base will remain by his side as long as he is not perceived to have given up the fight on the barrier.

Sen. Chris Coons, D-Del., told CBS's "Face the Nation" that he believes Congress needs to act to "defend" its powers of the purse.

"I do think that we should not set the terrible precedent of letting a president declare a national emergency simply as a way of getting around the congressional appropriations process," he said.

Rep. Will Hurd, R-Texas, a critic of Trump's border policies, said he would support legislation to review Trump's emergency declaration, saying, "It sets a dangerous precedent."

"My concern is our government wasn't designed to operate by national emergency," he told CBS.

Trump ally Rep. Jim Jordan, R-Ohio, told ABC that he believes there are enough GOP votes to prevent the supermajorities required to override a veto.

"I think there are plenty of votes in the House to make sure that there's no override of the president's veto," he said. "So it's going to be settled in court, we'll have to wait and see."

## Ex-FBI official: 'Crime may have been committed' by Trump

By ERIC TUCKER, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe said in an interview that aired Sunday that a "crime may have been committed" when President Donald Trump fired the head of the FBI and tried to publicly undermine an investigation into his campaign's ties to Russia.

McCabe also said in the interview with "60 Minutes" that the FBI had good reason to open a counterintelligence investigation into whether Trump was in league with Russia, and therefore a possible national security threat, following the May 2017 firing of then-FBI Director James Comey.

"And the idea is, if the president committed obstruction of justice, fired the director of the of the FBI to negatively impact or to shut down our investigation of Russia's malign activity and possibly in support of his campaign, as a counterintelligence investigator you have to ask yourself, "Why would a president of the United States do that?" McCabe said.

He added: "So all those same sorts of facts cause us to wonder is there an inappropriate relationship, a connection between this president and our most fearsome enemy, the government of Russia?"

Asked whether Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein was onboard with the obstruction and counterintelligence investigations, McCabe replied, "Absolutely."

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A Justice Department spokeswoman declined to comment Sunday night.

McCabe also revealed that when Trump told Rosenstein to put in writing his concerns with Comey — a document the White House initially held up as justification for his firing — the president explicitly asked the Justice Department official to reference Russia in the memo. Rosenstein did not want to, McCabe said, and the memo that was made public upon Comey's dismissal did not mention Russia and focused instead on Comey's handling of the Hillary Clinton email server investigation.

"He explained to the president that he did not need Russia in his memo," McCabe said. "And the president responded, 'I understand that, I am asking you to put Russia in the memo anyway.'"

Trump said in a TV interview days after Comey's firing that he was thinking of "this Russia thing" when he fired Comey.

Those actions, including a separate request by Trump that the FBI end an investigation into his first national adviser, Michael Flynn, made the FBI concerned that the president was illegally trying to obstruct the Russia probe.

"Put together, these circumstances were articulable facts that indicated that a crime may have been committed," McCabe said. "The president may have been engaged in obstruction of justice in the firing of Jim Comey."

McCabe was fired from the Justice Department last year after being accused of misleading investigators during an internal probe into a news media disclosure. The allegation was referred to the U.S. Attorney's office in Washington for possible prosecution, but no charges have been brought. McCabe has denied having intentionally lied and said Sunday that he believes his firing was politically motivated.

"I believe I was fired because I opened a case against the president of the United States," he said.

In the interview Sunday, McCabe also said Rosenstein in the days after Comey's firing had proposed wearing a wire to secretly record the president. McCabe said he took the remark seriously, though the Justice Department last September — responding last September to a New York Times report that first revealed the conversation — issued a statement from an unnamed official who was in the room and interpreted the remark as sarcastic.

McCabe said the remark was made during a conversation about why Trump had fired Comey.

"And in the context of that conversation, the deputy attorney general offered to wear a wire into the White House. He said, 'I never get searched when I go into the White House. I could easily wear a recording device. They wouldn't know it was there,'" McCabe said.

In excerpts released last week by CBS News, McCabe also described a conversation in which Rosenstein had broached the idea of invoking the Constitution's 25th Amendment to remove Trump from office. The Justice Department said in a statement that Rosenstein, based on his dealings with Trump, does not see cause to seek the removal of the president.

Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a Massachusetts Democrat who is seeking her party's nomination for president, told reporters after a campaign event Sunday in Las Vegas that if the people around Trump believe he cannot fulfill the obligations of his office, then they have a duty to invoke the 25th Amendment.

A favorite target of Trump's ire, Warren said she has no special knowledge on whether there are grounds to remove Trump from office but said that "there are a whole lot of people who do see him every day who evidently were talking about invoking the 25th Amendment."

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Associated Press writer Michelle Price in Las Vegas contributed to this report.

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump spins fiction about diversity visas

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN, Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is going after the "horror show" known as the diversity visa lottery program. His description of it is pure fiction.

The president offered a multitude of fabrications and partial truths over the past week on the subject of immigration — both the legal and illegal varieties — as he declared a national emergency aimed at find-

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ing the money to build his border wall. He said drugs are flowing across the hinterlands from Mexico, not from border crossings, and suggested that the federal prison population is laden with hardened criminals who are in the U.S. illegally. Neither claim is substantiated.

Along the way, the president took unearned credit for developments in the auto industry, health care for veterans and trade with China.

A look at the rhetoric and the reality:

## DIVERSITY VISAS

TRUMP: "And then you have the lottery. It's a horror show, because when countries put people into the lottery, they're not putting you in; they're putting some very bad people in the lottery. It's common sense. If I ran a country, and if I have a lottery system of people going to the United States, I'm not going to put in my stars; I'm going to put in people I don't want." — Rose Garden remarks Friday.

THE FACTS: That's completely false. He says this often anyway.

The lottery program is run by the U.S. government, not foreign governments. Other countries do not get to sort through their populations looking for bad apples to put in for export to the U.S. Citizens of qualifying countries are the ones who decide to bid for visas under the program.

The program requires applicants to have completed a high school education or have at least two years of experience in the last five years in a selection of fields identified by the Labor Department. Out of that pool of people from certain countries who meet those conditions, the State Department randomly selects a much smaller pool of winners. Not all winners will have visas ultimately approved, because they still must compete for a smaller number of slots by getting their applications in quickly. Those who are ultimately offered visas still need to go through background checks, like other immigrants.

The lottery is extended to citizens of most countries, except about 20. The primary goal is to diversify the immigrant population by creating slots for underrepresented parts of the world.

## THE WALL

TRUMP: "I've built a lot of wall. I have a lot of money, and I've built a lot of wall." — Rose Garden remarks .

THE FACTS: He's built no new miles of wall, lacking the money. His new construction to date has replaced existing barriers.

This month marks the start of construction of 14 miles (22 kilometers) of fencing in the Rio Grande Valley in Texas, the first lengthening of barrier in his presidency. That's from money approved by Congress a year ago, most of which was for renovating existing barrier.

Money approved by Congress in the new deal to avert another government shutdown would cover about 55 more miles (88 km).

Trump often has often portrayed his wall, falsely, as largely complete, to a point where "Finish the wall" has become his rallying cry, replacing "Build the wall." That masks a distinct lack of progress in physically sealing the border — a frustration that is now prompting him to find money outside the normal channels of congressional appropriation. Trump inherited about 650 miles (1,050 km) of physical border barrier from previous administrations.

## EMERGENCY DECLARATION

TRUMP, on past presidents declaring national emergencies: "There's rarely been a problem. They sign it; nobody cares. I guess they weren't very exciting. But nobody cares. ... And the people that say we create precedent — well, what do you have? Fifty-six? There are a lot of times — well, that's creating precedent. And many of those are far less important than having a border." — Rose Garden remarks.

THE FACTS: Those declarations were rarely as consequential, and that's precisely why they were mostly uncontroversial. He's roughly correct about the numbers. But past declarations did not involve the unilateral spending of substantial sums of money that Congress — which holds the power of the purse — did not approve.

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Emergency declarations by Presidents Barack Obama, George W. Bush and Bill Clinton were overwhelmingly for the purpose of addressing crises that emerged abroad. Many blocked foreign interests or terrorist-linked entities from access to funds. Some prohibited certain imports from or investments in countries associated with human rights abuses.

Trump's number resembles findings from the Brennan Center for Justice, which has tracked 58 emergency declarations back to 1978.

"It's extremely rare for a president to declare a national emergency in a bid to fund domestic construction projects, particularly one that Congress has explicitly refused to fund," said Andrew Boyle, an attorney in the national security program at the center. "The ones that former presidents declared are of a different sort."

Obama declared a national emergency in July 2011 to impose sanctions on transnational criminal groups, blocking any American property interests and freezing their assets, authorizing financial sanctions against anyone aiding them and barring their members from entering the United States. It authorized sanctions against criminal cartels in Mexico, Japan, Italy and Eastern Europe. It did not direct billions in spending by the U.S. treasury.

## TARIFFS

TRUMP: "Billions of Dollars are being paid to the United States by China in the form of Trade Tariffs!" — tweet Saturday.

THE FACTS: U.S. importers typically pay tariffs, not the exporting country. The cost is borne by U.S. business and often passed on to consumers, so the trade dispute is not generating a new source of wealth for the U.S.

After Trump imposed tariffs last year on roughly half the goods that the U.S. imports from China, Ford Motor Co. said the import taxes would raise its costs \$1 billion through this year. Caterpillar said the steel tariffs would cost the company about \$100 million in 2018.

## DRUG SMUGGLING

TRUMP: "And a big majority of the big drugs — the big drug loads — don't go through ports of entry. They can't go through ports of entry. You can't take big loads because you have people — we have some very capable people; the Border Patrol, law enforcement — looking." — Rose Garden remarks.

TRUMP: "We have tremendous amounts of drugs flowing into our country, much of it coming from the southern border. When you look and when you listen to politicians — in particular, certain Democrats — they say it all comes through the port of entry. It's wrong. It's wrong. It's just a lie. It's all a lie." — Rose Garden remarks.

THE FACTS: His own administration says illicit drugs come mainly through ports of entry. He has persistently contradicted his officials — never mind Democrats — on this point. The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration said in a 2018 report that the most common trafficking technique by transnational criminal organizations is to hide drugs in passenger vehicles or tractor-trailers as they drive into the U.S. at official crossings. They also use buses, cargo trains and tunnels, the report says, citing smuggling methods that would not be choked off by a border wall.

"Only a small percentage" of heroin seized by U.S. authorities comes across on territory between ports of entry, the agency says, and the same is true of drugs generally. The great majority of heroin, meth-amphetamines, cocaine and fentanyl is seized at ports of entry. Marijuana is one exception; significant quantities are seized between entry ports.

Even if a wall could stop all drugs from Mexico, America's drug problem would be far from over. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says about 40 percent of opioid deaths in 2016 involved prescription painkillers. Those drugs are made by pharmaceutical companies. Some feed the addiction of people who have prescriptions; others are stolen and sold on the black market. Moreover, illicit versions of powerful synthetic opioids such as fentanyl have come to the U.S. from China, not Mexico.

## IMMIGRANT CRIME

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TRUMP: "Take a look at our federal prison population. See how many of them, percentage-wise, are illegal aliens. Just see. Go ahead and see." — Rose Garden remarks.

THE FACTS: About 40 percent of the people who entered federal prison in 2014 were foreigners, according to the most recent Bureau of Justice Statistics report. The vast majority of the foreigners (20,842 of 28,821) were being held for immigration violations, not violent or property crimes. It's not clear how many were in the country illegally. The federal prison population is not a solid yardstick of immigrant crime because it represents only 10 percent of the overall prison population of the U.S. Most people convicted of crimes are in state prison.

## DEMOCRATS ON IMMIGRATION

SEN. DIANNE FEINSTEIN, Democrat of California: "Unauthorized border crossings are at their lowest levels in decades, about one-third of their peak levels two decades ago. If there were an emergency, the president wouldn't have waited two years to make this political decision." — tweet Thursday.

CALIFORNIA GOV. GAVIN NEWSOM: "We are currently experiencing the lowest number of (illegal) border crossings since 1971." — State of the State speech Tuesday.

THE FACTS: They're wrong in saying illegal crossings are the lowest in recent decades, based on Border Patrol arrests, the most widely used gauge. That was true in the 2017 budget year, when Border Patrol arrests along the Mexican border fell to 303,916, the smallest number since 1971. But arrests jumped 31 percent last year, to 396,579. And in the 2019 budget year, which started in October, southern border arrests nearly doubled through January, to 201,497 from 109,543 the same period a year earlier.

Illegal crossings remain relatively low in historical terms but not as low as the Democrats said.

## KLOBUCHAR'S STAFF

DEMOCRATIC SEN. AMY KLOBUCHAR, a 2020 presidential candidate, responding to reports she can be a tough boss: "I was teasing President Obama the other day. They have hired, the White House hired, over 20 of my staff members. You only have about 25 in a Senate office. And a number of them have come back to me when they were over there. So that's my story. I know I can be too tough sometimes. And I can push too hard, that's obvious. But a lot of it is because I have high expectations for myself, I have high expectations for the people that work with me." — interview with MSNBC on Feb. 11.

KLOBUCHAR CAMPAIGN: "She has many staff ... who have gone on to do amazing things, from working in the Obama Administration (over 20 of them) to running for office to even serving as the Agriculture Commissioner for Minnesota." — statement to news media this month.

THE FACTS: Klobuchar is correct that more than 20 former staffers later worked for Obama, though not all in the White House, with some serving in his administration or on his 2008 campaign, according to a list provided to The Associated Press.

Among them are Jake Sullivan, a former chief counsel to Klobuchar who served in Obama's State Department and was Vice President Joe Biden's national security adviser; Rob Friedlander, a former Klobuchar press secretary who became a spokesman in the Obama Treasury Department; and Joe Paulsen, who worked on Klobuchar's advance team and moved on to become an Obama aide and the president's golfing buddy.

As for "a number of them" coming back to work for her again, three were identified by her campaign team.

They are Brigit Helgen, a former Klobuchar press secretary who served in the U.S. Trade Representative's office in the Obama administration and returned as Klobuchar's chief of staff; Hannah Hankins, a former special assistant who served as communications director and senior adviser for Obama's Domestic Policy Council and returned as Klobuchar's deputy chief of staff; and Andrea Mokros, a former Klobuchar deputy chief of staff who later managed scheduling and advance operations for first lady Michelle Obama. Mokros was an outside political consultant for Klobuchar for her 2018 Senate re-election campaign.

A survey of senators by the website LegiStorm from 2001 to 2016 found that Klobuchar's office had the highest turnover in the Senate. A recent HuffPost article portrayed her as a demanding manager who lost

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some potential 2020 campaign staff members because of her reputation.

## AUTO INDUSTRY

TRUMP: "A lot of car companies are coming back to the United States." — Cabinet meeting Tuesday.

TRUMP: "We're most proud of the fact — you look at the car companies, they're moving back, they're going into Michigan, they're going into Pennsylvania, they're going back to Ohio, so many companies are coming back." — El Paso, Texas, rally on Feb. 11.

TRUMP: "We have massive numbers of companies coming back into our country — car companies. We have seven car companies coming back in right now and there's going to be a lot more." — remarks to reporters Feb. 6.

THE FACTS: There's no such discernible influx. And at the end of this past week, industrial production numbers for January showed an 8.8 percent plunge in the making of motor vehicles and auto parts from the previous month.

Since Trump took office in 2017, auto manufacturing employment has risen by about 51,000 jobs to just over 1 million, according to the Labor Department. That's a 5 percent increase over two years.

There have been new factory announcements, but excluding those that were planned before Trump took office, they don't add up to seven.

Last month, Volkswagen announced plans to expand manufacturing in Chattanooga, Tennessee.

Toyota is building a new factory in Alabama with Mazda, and Volvo opened a plant in South Carolina last year, but in each case, that was in the works before Trump took office.

Fiat Chrysler also has nebulous plans to return some pickup truck production from Mexico to suburban Detroit next year, and it may reopen a small Detroit factory to build an SUV. At least one Chinese auto-maker wants to build in the U.S. starting next year but hasn't announced a site.

Against those uncertain and limited gains, GM is laying people off and plans to close four U.S. factories. Both GM and Ford also are letting go of white-collar workers in restructuring efforts.

## VETERANS

TRUMP: "Another one they said could never get passed, they have been trying to do it for 40 years, we passed VA Choice. Veterans Choice. ... VA Choice, they would wait on line for days and weeks, they couldn't see a doctor. Now, they go out, they have a choice. They get a private doctor, they have things taken care of, and we pay their bills." — El Paso rally.

THE FACTS: He's not the first president in 40 years to get Congress to pass a private-sector health program for veterans. And while it's true the VA recently announced plans to expand eligibility for veterans in the Veterans Choice program, the program remains limited due in part to uncertain funding and longer waits. Contrary to Trump's depiction, veterans still must wait "for days and weeks."

The VA said this month it does not expect a significant increase in new appointments outside VA under the expanded program.

Congress first approved the program in 2014 during the Obama administration after some veterans died while waiting months for appointments at the Phoenix VA medical center. The program currently allows veterans to see doctors outside the VA system if they must wait more than 30 days for an appointment or drive more than 40 miles to a VA facility. Now they are to have that option for a private doctor if their VA wait is only 20 days (28 for specialty care) or their drive is only 30 minutes.

That is to start in June, under a law Trump signed last year to expand the Choice program. But the expanded Choice eligibility may do little to provide immediate help.

That's because veterans often must wait even longer for an appointment in the private sector. Last year, then-Secretary David Shulkin said VA care is "often 40 percent better in terms of wait times" compared with the private sector. In 2018, 34 percent of all VA appointments were with outside physicians, down from 36 percent in 2017.

The VA also must resolve long-term financing due to congressional budget caps after the White House

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opposed new money to pay for the program. As a result, lawmakers could be forced later this year to limit the program, or slash core VA or other domestic programs.

Also key to the program's success is an overhaul of VA's electronic medical records to allow seamless sharing of medical records with private physicians, a process expected to take up to 10 years. VA Secretary Robert Wilkie has said full implementation of the expanded Choice program is "years" away.

## GREEN NEW DEAL

TRUMP, on the effects of the Green New Deal floated by some Democrats: "You're not allowed to own cows anymore." He added that the plan would "shut down American energy" and "a little thing called air travel." — El Paso rally.

THE FACTS: The Democratic plan would do none of those things. Trump chose to ignore the actual provisions of the plan, which calls for a drastic drop in greenhouse-gas emissions from fossil fuels such as oil, coal and natural gas but would not ban methane-emitting cows or air travel.

Instead, Trump took his cue from a fact sheet that was distributed by the office of Democratic Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, then clumsily disavowed by her and replaced with a more accurate summary of the plan.

The first version described measures beyond those contained in the plan, such as: "Build out high-speed rail at a scale where air travel stops becoming necessary." And it made the impolitic statement: "We set a goal to get to net-zero, rather than zero emissions, in 10 years because we aren't sure that we'll be able to fully get rid of farting cows and airplanes that fast." Corbin Trent, a spokesman for Ocasio-Cortez, said that was meant as an ironic quip.

## EL PASO CRIME

TRUMP, on the effect of a border wall on crime in El Paso: "When that wall went up, it's a whole different ball game. ... I don't care whether a mayor is a Republican or a Democrat. They're full of crap when they say it hasn't made a big difference. I heard the same thing from the fake news. They said, 'Oh crime, it actually stayed the same.' It didn't stay the same. It went way down. ... Thanks to a powerful border wall in El Paso, Texas, it's one of America's safest cities now." — El Paso rally.

THE FACT: Trump falsely suggests a dramatic drop in crime in El Paso due to a border wall. In fact, the city's murder rate was less than half the national average in 2005, the year before the start of its border fence. It's true that the FBI's Uniform Crime Report shows that El Paso's annual number of reported violent crimes dropped from nearly 5,000 in 1995 to around 2,700 in 2016. But that corresponded with similar declines in violent crime nationwide and included periods when the city's crime rates increased year over year, despite new fencing and walls.

Before the wall project started, El Paso had been rated one of the three safest major U.S. cities going back to 1997.

## CROWD SIZE

TRUMP, describing the crowd for a competing rally in El Paso, Texas, led by Beto O'Rourke, a potential 2020 Democratic presidential candidate: "He has 200 people, 300 people, not too good. ... That may be the end of his presidential bid." — El Paso rally.

THE FACTS: That's far from true. O'Rourke's march and rally drew thousands. Police did not give an estimate, but his crowd filled up nearly all of a baseball field from the stage at the infield to the edge of outfield and was tightly packed.

## IMMIGRANTS-COSTS AND BENEFITS

TRUMP: "Illegal immigration hurts all Americans, including millions of legal immigrants, by driving down wages, draining public resources and claiming countless innocent lives." — El Paso rally.

THE FACTS: These assertions are unsupported by research, which Trump appeared to acknowledge



obliquely by making a crack about “phony stats.”

The weight of research on wages suggests that immigrants have not suppressed them, although it's not cut and dried. What's clear is that macro forces that go beyond immigration are at work in the sluggishness of wage growth: the decline in unionization, an intensified push to maximize corporate profits, growing health insurance costs that supplant wages and the rise of a lower-wage global labor force that in an intertwined worldwide economy can hinder pay growth for Americans.

On public resources, the National Academy of Sciences concluded: “An immigrant and a native-born person with similar characteristics will likely have the same fiscal impact.” The academy found that because state and local governments supply most of the money for public schools, immigrants often receive more in benefits than they pay in taxes. But education produces children who grow into adults who get jobs, buy cars, buy houses and pay taxes and thereby contribute to economic growth. And succeeding generations of immigrant families become net contributors to government budgets, according to the study.

On the loss of lives, plenty of research challenges the assumption that people in the country illegally drive up violent crime. In one such study, sociologists Michael Light and Ty Miller reviewed crime in every state and the District of Columbia from 1990 to 2014. They found that a rising number of immigrants in the country illegally corresponded with a drop, not a rise, in reported crime.

Associated Press writers Tom Krisher in Detroit, Will Weissert in El Paso, Texas, Elliot Spagat in San Diego, and Josh Boak, Colleen Long, Kevin Freking, Michael Balsamo and Matthew Daly in Washington contributed to this report.

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## Team LeBron rallies to beat Team Giannis, 178-164

By **TIM REYNOLDS, AP Basketball Writer**

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP) — LeBron James was trading lob passes with Dwyane Wade again, one last time. Catching lobs from former teammate Kyrie Irving once again, too. And after making a stepback 3-pointer late, he stared down Joel Embiid to send a message without saying a word.

Oh, this mattered to James — and Team LeBron as well.

Team LeBron, down by 20 in the second half, finally got firing and went on to beat Team Giannis 178-164 in the All-Star Game on Sunday night. MVP Kevin Durant scored 31 points for Team LeBron, the one that James drafted and led to victory in the captain's-choice format for a second consecutive season.

“You put me on the floor, I love to compete,” James said in the postgame interview room. “I’m a competitor, no matter what it is. I was competing to see if I could get to this table first.”

He wasn't kidding. He then turned to NBA spokesman Mark Broussard, asked if he was the first player to get into the room and grinned when told he was.

“See what I’m talking about?” James said.

Klay Thompson scored 20 points, and James and Kawhi Leonard each had 19 for the winners.

“It’s all sweet to me,” Durant said after getting his second All-Star MVP award, to go with the one he claimed in 2012. “It’s hard to rank because everything’s special. But it’s cool to be out there with some of the best players to ever play the game. And to win MVP in front of my family and friends is pretty sweet.”

Giannis Antetokounmpo — the first-time captain — led everybody with 38 points on 17 for 23 shooting for the club he drafted. Paul George and Khris Middleton each scored 20 points for Team Giannis, which got 17 apiece from Stephen Curry and Russell Westbrook.

“Just being the leader of a team, it wasn’t as tough as I thought,” Antetokounmpo said. “My teammates, the guys in the locker room, encouraged me to step up and take it serious and play hard.”

The highlights, as would be expected, were absurdly good, time and again.

Curry slammed the ball off the floor on a first-half fast break and watched it ricochet toward the rim

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with an apex that flirted with the top of the backboard. Too high for most humans — but Antetokounmpo isn't most humans. The freakishly long Greek star slammed Curry's unconventional alley-oop pass home, with both benches reacting in disbelief.

Curry then slammed an alley-oop on the last play of the game, to himself, for a dunk that closed the scoring in his hometown.

"I thought we put on a great show tonight," said Kemba Walker, Charlotte's lone player in the game.

It was not a defensive showcase, as always.

Team Giannis set an All-Star record with 23 field goals in the first quarter, topping the mark of 22 set on four other occasions — by both the West and the East in the first quarter of the 2017 game, and by the West in both the second and third quarters of the 2016 game.

The 53 points tied a one-quarter All-Star record as well, matching the total by the West in the third quarter of the 2016 games and by the East in the first quarter of the 2017 game. But when it was time to get competitive, things tightened up considerably, at least by All-Star standards.

But when Team LeBron used a flurry of 3s to get back into it in the third quarter, everyone on the bench was standing — sometimes running from the bench and onto the court during play, the celebrations a bit more exuberant than what's usually allowed.

"We got the win," said Houston's James Harden, who scored 12 points for Team LeBron. "That's all that matters."

And the All-Star farewells for Miami's Wade and Dallas' Dirk Nowitzki — the adds to the game by NBA Commissioner Adam Silver, in honor of their career bodies of work — were festive, as everyone wanted.

Nowitzki entered the game late in the first quarter and made his first three shots — all of them 3-pointers — before heading back to the bench. Wade checked in not long after Nowitzki took the floor, then started the second half and achieved his primary missions for his last All-Star Game as a player.

He got an alley-oop lob from James.

And he threw an alley-oop lob to James.

Wade dunked, James dunked, and the close friends who entered the NBA together in 2003 and won championships with Miami in 2012 and 2013 got a couple more moments to savor in their final night as on-court teammates.

Wade finished with seven points in 10 minutes, and Nowitzki never returned after his nine-point, four-minute opening stint. When the third quarter ended, every player gathered behind them as Wade and Nowitzki were honored with commemorative jerseys at midcourt.

"Thank you to the commissioner and the NBA for allowing us to both be on this stage again," Nowitzki said.

"Exactly what Dirk said," Wade said as he took the microphone. "We're very thankful for this opportunity. ... The game is in great hands. It's easy to walk away right now."

TIP-INS

Team Giannis: Antetokounmpo was awarded a first-quarter free throw — but instead of shooting it, he tossed a pass to himself off the backboard. It isn't legal, and didn't work, but he didn't mind. ... Embiid had 12 rebounds and Antetokounmpo added 11. ... Team Giannis gave up 96 points in the second half after leading 95-82 at the half.

Team LeBron: James spent part of halftime on the court listening to J. Cole's performance, then grabbed a hug from New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft. ... New Orleans' Anthony Davis, who was dealing with a muscle strain in his shoulder, played five minutes and made both of his shot attempts.

SPLAT BROTHERS

Ordinarily "Splash Brothers" in Golden State, Curry went splat — courtesy of Thompson.

Early in the fourth quarter, Curry shot a 3-pointer from the right wing while getting fouled by someone who's usually his teammate. Thompson gave a dismissive wave, as if to ask "Why'd I do that?" when Curry's 3 swished. And Curry made the free throw to seal the four-point play.

"I felt like the opposition for once. ... It sucked to be on the receiving end," Thompson said. "But it's all

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fun and games in the All-Star Game and that was a crazy shot.”

## DUAL COACHSPEAK

Team Giannis coach Mike Budenholzer of the Milwaukee Bucks and Team LeBron coach Michael Malone of the Denver Nuggets did their postgame news conference together. That doesn't happen in normal games, and they were asked if they liked speaking alongside one another.

“Probably not a good idea,” Budenholzer said.

## OLADIPO SPEAKS

Victor Oladipo's season is over with a leg injury that kept him from playing in the All-Star Game as well. The Indiana Pacers star, however, was watching. “Wish I could be there playing with you guys but I know this will be a good game to watch!” Oladipo tweeted. “I was on Team LeBron last year but this year it's all about #TeamGiannis! Lets Go Fellas!!!” Oladipo was replaced on the Team Giannis roster by Brooklyn's D'Angelo Russell.

## NO-FIGHT NIGHT

There were no fights, though that didn't stop the league from bringing in renowned boxing ring announcer Michael Buffer to deliver his famed “Let's get ready to rumble” proclamation just before tip-off.

## UP NEXT

The next All-Star Game is Feb. 16, 2020, in Chicago.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Aurora shooter's permit was revoked but gun wasn't seized

By **DON BABWIN** and **JULIE WATSON**, Associated Press

AURORA, Ill. (AP) — An initial background check failed to detect a felony conviction that should have barred the man who killed five co-workers and wounded six other people at a suburban Chicago manufacturing plant from buying the gun.

Months later, a second background check of Gary Martin found his 1995 aggravated assault conviction in Mississippi involving the stabbing of an ex-girlfriend. But it prompted only a letter stating his gun permit had been revoked and ordering him to turn over his firearm to police — raising questions about the state's enforcement to ensure those who lose their permits also turn over their weapons.

A vigil for the victims, including a university student on his first day as an intern and a longtime plant manager, was held Sunday outside Henry Pratt Co. in Aurora, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Chicago. More than 1,500 people braved snow and freezing drizzle to attend.

Martin, 45, was killed in a shootout with officers Friday, ending his deadly rampage at the plant. His state gun license permit was revoked in 2014, Aurora Police Chief Kristen Ziman said.

But he never gave up the .40-caliber Smith & Wesson handgun he used in the attack. Investigators are still trying to determine what exactly law enforcement agencies did after that letter was sent, Ziman said.

Illinois lawmakers who support more gun control measures said Martin was able to keep the gun because of a flaw in the 1968 law that requires residents to get a Firearm Owner's Identification card, or FOID card, to purchase firearms or ammunition. They must pass a background check, but the law does not mandate that police ensure weapons have been removed if a red flag is raised later.

Legislation was introduced in 2016 to require police go to the homes of gun owners who have their FOID cards revoked and search for the weapons, but it failed over concerns it would overtax police departments, said Democratic Rep. Kathleen Willis.

She wants to see a similar measure introduced again.

“Let's use some common sense. If you have someone with a felony, obviously they are not the best law-abiding citizens who are going to follow through when they get the letter and go, ‘oh yeah, here's my gun, no problem,’” Willis said. “We have to have oversight. That's the biggest flaw in the whole system. We're asking people who already have done something wrong, to do something right.”

Last year, Illinois joined other states like California in passing a law that allows family members to peti-

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tion to have a gun removed from a home and a person's permit revoked if they believe they might use it to harm themselves or others.

Lawmakers are also working to add teeth to restrictions on the transfers of gun ownership from a person whose permit has been revoked, Willis said. The change follows a 2018 shooting at a Tennessee Waffle House involving a man who had to give his guns to his father after his Illinois FOID card was revoked, but his father later gave them back to him.

Legislators want people who obtain such weapons to sign an affidavit vowing to not return the weapons to the original owner.

Martin was no stranger to police in Aurora, where he had been arrested six times over the years for what Ziman described as "traffic and domestic battery-related issues" and for violating an order of protection.

After an initial background check failed to detect his felony conviction, Martin was issued his FOID card and bought the Smith & Wesson handgun on March 11, 2014. Five days after that, he applied for a concealed carry permit. That background check, which used digital fingerprinting, did flag his Mississippi felony conviction and led the Illinois State Police to revoke his permit.

Records stemming from his 1995 conviction in Mississippi described an extremely violent man who abused a former girlfriend, at one point hitting her with a baseball bat and stabbing her with a knife, The Washington Post reported Saturday.

After serving less than three years, he moved to Illinois and landed a job at Henry Pratt. The conviction was not detected in a company background check.

Authorities said Saturday that Martin pulled out the gun and began shooting right after hearing he was being fired from his job of 15 years at the industrial valve manufacturer for various workplace violations. The company has not given further details on what they were.

Martin killed three people in the room with him and two others just outside, Ziman said. Among the dead was a college student starting a human resources internship at the plant that day. Martin also wounded a sixth worker, who is expected to survive.

After wounding five officers, Martin hid in the back of the building, where officers found him about an hour later and killed him during an exchange of gunfire, police said. All of the wounded officers are expected to live.

Police identified the slain workers as human resources manager Clayton Parks of Elgin; plant manager Josh Pinkard of Oswego; mold operator Russell Beyer of Yorkville; stock room attendant and fork lift operator Vicente Juarez of Oswego; and Trevor Wehner, the new intern and a Northern Illinois University student who lived in DeKalb and grew up in Sheridan.

Wehner, 21, was on the dean's list at NIU's business college and was on track to graduate in May with a degree in human resource management.

The Rev. Dan Haas told those who gathered outside Henry Pratt for Sunday's vigil that the killings left the victims' families brokenhearted and in mourning.

"All of these were relatively young people — many of them were very young people. We will never know their gifts and talents. Their lives were snuffed out way too short," he said.

Babwin reported from Chicago. Watson reported from San Diego. Associated Press writers Caryn Rousseau, Carrie Antfinger and Amanda Seitz contributed.

## Aurora shooting victims included plant manager, intern

By CARYN ROUSSEAU, Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — The victims of an employee who started shooting after hearing he was being fired at a suburban Chicago industrial warehouse were co-workers that included a plant manager whose wife says he texted her "I love you, I've been shot at work," and an intern in his first day on the job. A look at the victims:

JOSH PINKARD

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Terra Pinkard says it all started with a text from her husband, Josh: "I love you, I've been shot at work." The Chicago Tribune reported that she later learned he was among the five victims of Friday's shooting at Henry Pratt Co. in Aurora.

She wrote in a Facebook post Sunday that she read the text message several times before it "hit me that it was for real." She called Josh's phone, texted him and FaceTimed him, but got no response.

She called Henry Pratt, where he had been plant manager since the spring of 2018, and a woman answered and said she was "barricaded in her room with police everywhere."

"Of course my heart dropped," Terra Pinkard wrote.

She loaded her and Josh's three children into her car and drove toward the plant. When an officer stopped her at a street that had been closed and couldn't provide information, she headed to two of the nearest hospitals.

Hours later, police told her about a staging area for victims' families. An officer there read Josh's name among the fatalities.

"I want to shout from the rooftops about how amazing Josh was! He was brilliant! The smartest person I've ever met! My best friend! The man I would have leaned on during devastation like this who would tell me it's ok Terra, it is all going to be fine," she wrote in the Facebook post. "The man who was dying and found the clarity of mind for just a second to send me one last text to let me know he would always love me."

Josh Pinkard, 37, had attended the meeting where the gunman was fired.

A native of Alabama, Josh joined the parent company 13 years ago at its Albertville, Alabama, facility.

He earned a bachelor's degree in industrial engineering from Mississippi State University and a master's degree from the University of Arkansas, according to his LinkedIn account.

TREVOR WEHNER

The 21-year-old Northern Illinois University student was on his first day as an intern in human resources at Henry Pratt and also was at the fateful meeting.

Jay Wehner said his nephew grew up about 30 miles (50 kilometers) south of Aurora in Sheridan and was expected to graduate from Northern Illinois University in May with a degree in human resource management. He was on the dean's list at NIU's business college.

"He always, always was happy," Jay Wehner said. "I have no bad words for him. He was a wonderful person. You can't say anything but nice things about him."

RUSS BEYER

Ted Beyer said his son had a "big heart" and tried his best to make his office a better place. He told the Chicago Sun-Times that's why the 20-year mold operator and union chairman sat in on Gary Martin's termination meeting Friday afternoon. Ted Beyer said his son had helped Martin win back his job months earlier.

Russ Beyer was shot outside the meeting.

"He was a hard worker, just like I was," Ted Beyer, 71, said of his son. "I loved him ... We were close. He was my first kid."

Russ Beyer had followed in the footsteps of his father, a previous union chairman who worked at Henry Pratt for four decades. Ted and his 46-year-old son enjoyed camping, fishing and swimming together, usually at Taylorville Lake in central Illinois.

They also shared one more connection: Ted Beyer had also previously vouched for Martin in grievance meetings with management. Beyer remembered Martin as a kind, caring man who brought him coffee and walked with him following back surgery.

But, Beyer said, that doesn't take away the pain of losing Russ, the oldest of three children, who also had two adult children of his own.

"Anybody who knew him knew he had a big heart," Ted Beyer said of his son. "I just recently lost my sister and now this and, you know, it hurts. It's just like somebody reached in there and took your heart out."

CLAYTON PARKS

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The 32-year-old from Elgin, about 20 miles (32 kilometers) north of Aurora, had joined Henry Pratt in November 2018 as HR manager responsible for operations in Aurora, Illinois; Hammond, Indiana; and Denver, the company said. He also was in the meeting where the gunman was being fired.

Parks was married and had an infant son Axel, according to a Facebook post by his wife Abby.

"Every time I've closed my eyes over the last twelve hours, I've opened them hoping to wake from a terrible dream, but that's not the case," Abby posted. "I'm living my worst nightmare. My husband, my love, my best friend."

Parks was a 2014 graduate of the Northern Illinois University College of Business.

VICENTE JUAREZ

Neighbors remembered Vicente Juarez as a hardworking grandfather and rock of his tight-knit family.

Juarez was shot outside the meeting where the gunman was being fired. Juarez had been employed at Henry Pratt since 2006 and was a member of the shipping and warehouse team in Aurora. He had held several other jobs previously in the warehouse, the company said.

The Chicago Tribune reported that Juarez lived with his wife, adult daughter and four grandchildren in a subdivision in Oswego, about 6 miles (10 kilometers) south of Aurora.

Relatives declined comment, saying they appreciate the support but are still dealing with the shock. Neighbor Julie Zigman called Juarez "the patriarch of the family" and said "everyone looked to him."

Neighbor Joven Ang said anytime he was working outside Juarez asked him if he needed help. "That's the kind of person he was," Ang said.

## Warren highlights her work on economic crisis in Vegas stop

By MICHELLE L. PRICE, Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Democrat Elizabeth Warren used her first visit to Nevada as a presidential candidate to describe a squeeze on working families and a political system that she says fails to protect homeowners, including the residents of Las Vegas who were pummeled by the mortgage crisis a decade ago.

The Massachusetts senator spoke about her work as a consumer activist and her role overseeing the bailout of banks and insurers a decade ago, a job that brought her to the city to hear from residents struggling to keep their homes.

Warren said her own family almost lost their home when she was growing up and recalled one man she met in her Las Vegas visit a decade earlier who was one of millions around the country losing his home.

"You better believe one reason that I am in this fight is we can never let this happen again. Never," Warren told about 500 people at a botanical garden and event center northeast of the Las Vegas Strip.

Warren, fresh off a Saturday swing through South Carolina and Georgia, was bundled up in a puffy coat for the unusually chilly Las Vegas weather as she appeared on an outdoor stage with an American flag backdrop and a faux sandstone formation.

Nevada's early presidential caucus is the first in the West and is seen as a key test of a candidate's ability to appeal to a state with powerful labor groups and diverse demographics, including a population that's about 29 percent Latino.

In her speech, Warren condemned predatory mortgages targeted to minorities and said income inequality disproportionately affects communities of color. She also said unions need strengthening and that the country needs comprehensive immigration reform.

The senator described Washington, D.C., as a place that works well for corporations and lobbyists but not families, saying that when a government "only works for the rich and the powerful, that is corruption, plain and simple, and we've got to call it out for what it is."

She called President Donald Trump's administration "the most corrupt administration in living memory" but didn't focus on the president during her speech.

Speaking to reporters afterward, Warren said she was ready to take on the president in 2020.

"I think I've been going toe-to-toe with President Trump for a while," she said with a laugh. "I'm not afraid of him."

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In response to Warren's visit, the Republican National Committee released a statement calling her campaign a "full-fledged apology tour" for her past claims of Native American heritage. The statement referred to her as "Fauxcahontas," a reference to Trump's use of the slur "Pocahontas."

Warren's event was about 10 miles away from the site a Las Vegas Strip country music festival that became the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history in 2017 when 58 people were killed and hundreds were wounded.

Warren was introduced by a local activist with Moms Demand Action, a nonprofit that works to change gun laws, and the senator used part of her speech to praise Nevada for passing an expanded firearm background check law this past week — the first gun-control move by the state Legislature since the mass shooting.

"We need background checks. Not just in Nevada," Warren said. "We need them all over this country."

Warren also pitched a catalog of progressive ideas, from her 2 percent wealth tax on those with more than \$50 million in assets to Medicare for all, universal child care and early preschool, and a need to lower student debt.

She also dismissed what she called "poo-pooing" of the Green New Deal, an ambitious plan to address climate change that she and at least five other senators eyeing the White House are supporting.

Warren said the plan is important and time is running out to tackle climate change. She said that while the Green New Deal will be "a big, noisy debate," Congress needs to start tackling it and passing it in pieces over the next few years.

Near the stage, the campaign debuted a large, white lighted sign that read "Warren 2020" and offered attendees a spot to pose for selfies.

Carolyn Sakamoto and Helen Henson, 75-year-old retired teachers, took selfies in front of Warren's new lighted sign.

Sakamoto said Warren's message on health care and making people pay "their rightful taxes" has put the senator at the top of her list of those she's interested in backing, but mainly she wants to ensure a Democrat is elected in 2020.

"We just want somebody that can win," Sakamoto said. "A lot of people might be good, but they may not have what it takes to win."

Henson said Warren is in her top tier of 2020 candidates but has some reservations about supporting the senator because of the stumbles she's made over her claims of Native American heritage.

"I think that it was an honest mistake on her part, but I think that that's provided a lot of bad publicity," Henson said. "She's just spoken out so strongly from the very beginning about the recession and financial crisis and I just feel like she has a lot to offer on that."

Henson said it will be hard for Warren to move past the heritage controversy.

"With anyone else, maybe she could," she said. "But with Trump, I think he's going to pound it to the ground."

## Denny Hamlin cruises to 2nd Daytona 500 victory in 4 years

By JENNA FRYER, AP Auto Racing Writer

DAYTONA BEACH, Fla. (AP) — Denny Hamlin came to the Daytona 500 determined to honor his late car owner with a victory.

He delivered with a storybook tribute for Joe Gibbs Racing.

Hamlin won NASCAR's biggest race for the second time in four years Sunday, leading JGR in a 1-2-3 sweep of the podium in overtime. The race and the season have been dedicated to J.D. Gibbs, Joe Gibbs' eldest son who died last month after battling a degenerative neurological disease.

J.D. Gibbs helped his father start the race team, ran it while Joe Gibbs was coaching the Washington Redskins, was a tire changer on the team's first Daytona 500 victory and the one who discovered Hamlin during a test session at Hickory Motor Speedway in North Carolina. Hamlin was hired to drive the No. 11 — the number J.D. Gibbs used when he played football — and J.D. Gibbs' name is on the Toyota.

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When Hamlin stopped his car along the frontstretch to collect the checkered flag, he immediately credited J.D. Gibbs.

"The whole family, they did so much for me over the course of my career, and this one is for J.D.," Hamlin said. "We are desperately going to miss him the rest of our lives. His legacy still lives on through Joe Gibbs Racing and proud to do this for them."

Hamlin was met in victory lane by the entire Gibbs family, including J.D.'s widow and four sons.

"He meant a lot to me and it's hard for me not getting choked up because I've been choked up about 100 times about it," Hamlin said. "Just to have Melissa (Gibbs) and all the kids here, it's just crazy."

Joe Gibbs, the Hall of Fame NFL coach with three Super Bowl victories, ranked the tribute win to his son first in his career accomplishments. J.D. Gibbs encouraged his father to move the team from a crowded-Chevrolet camp to become Toyota's flagship team in 2008 and the Daytona 500 victory was the 100th for JGR in a Camry.

"It is the most emotional and biggest win I've ever had in my life, in anything," Gibbs said. "It was the most important night in my occupational life. I know J.D. and everybody in my family was emotional."

Kyle Busch and Erik Jones finished second and third as JGR became the second team in NASCAR history to sweep the Daytona 500 podium. Hendrick Motorsports did it in 1997 with Jeff Gordon, Terry Labonte and Ricky Craven.

Busch, now winless in 14 Daytona 500s, was initially openly disappointed in falling short.

"He's got two, I've got none, and that's just the way it goes sometimes," Busch said.

But he reiterated the JGR and Toyota goal of working together to win the race and noted he didn't have much of a shot at beating Hamlin because the field had been decimated by a flurry of late accidents.

"Was trying to make sure one of us gets to victory lane, first and foremost," Busch said. "There wasn't enough cars out there running at the end. I don't know how it would have played out."

The Cup Series slogged through three uninspiring exhibition races during Speedweeks to cause concern over a potentially disappointing main event. Jim France, who took over as chairman of NASCAR last August, used the pre-race driver meeting to ask the drivers to liven up the activity. Hamlin and Chase Elliott were the rare drivers to use the bottom lane in the exhibition races while the rest of the field ran single-file along the top.

"I hope a few of you drivers out there will get down on the bottom with Denny and Chase and put on a good show today," France told the field.

The drivers obeyed and delivered an action-packed and wreck-filled running of "The Great American Race."

There was an accident on pit road, a 21-car crash, 12 cautions and five wrecks in the final 20 laps of regulation. The race was stopped twice for cleanup totaling nearly 40 minutes in the final stretch. During the second red-flag, one of NASCAR's track-drying trucks broke down while cleaning oil off the racing surface.

Hamlin and Busch alternated as the leaders during the handful of late restarts, and the final rush to the checkered flag was a push to hold off Ford driver and reigning NASCAR champion Joey Logano. The Ford camp went 1-2-3 in both of Thursday's qualifying races and was favored to win the Daytona 500.

Logano, who started his career at JGR, settled for fourth and also took a moment to honor J.D. Gibbs.

"I'm not a Gibbs driver but for what J.D. has done for my career is the reason why I'm sitting here today," Logano said. "As bad as I want to win it, it is pretty cool to think that the first race after his passing, to see those guys one, two, three, it just says he's up there watching and maybe gave (those) guys a little extra boost there at the end."

Michael McDowell was fifth in a Ford but aggravated Logano by not working with him in the two-lap overtime sprint to the finish.

"I just told him that my team doesn't pay me to push Joey Logano to a win," McDowell said.

Ty Dillon was sixth in the highest-finishing Chevrolet.

The race featured eight drivers making their Daytona 500 debuts and rookie Ryan Preece, a short track racer from New England, was best in class with an eighth-place finish. Ross Chastain, the eighth-generation watermelon farmer who lost his main ride for this year when the FBI raided his sponsor right



before Christmas, finished 10th,

Jamie McMurray, the 2010 winner, led six laps and was in the mix until he was collected in one of the late accidents. He finished 22nd in his final race before retirement.

William Byron and Alex Bowman were the youngest front row in race history but had little to show for it after the race. Bowman finished 11th and Byron, the pole-sitter, was 21st.

Hamlin last year suffered through his first winless season in the Cup Series and made a crew chief change during the offseason. When he won the 500 in 2016 it was his debut race with crew chief Mike Wheeler, and this victory came in his first race with Chris Gabehart.

Hamlin's first Daytona 500 victory was in a photo finish against Martin Truex Jr. and the celebration was a blur. This one, he said, he will enjoy.

"I think I was so dumbfounded about everything that happened the first time with the photo finish and everything," Hamlin said. "This one lets me soak it in a little bit more. I'm going to have a terrible hangover tomorrow, but I'm going to enjoy it the rest of my life."

More AP auto racing: <https://apnews.com/apf-AutoRacing> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## 'Taking their last breath': IS hides among Syrian civilians

By SARAH EL DEEB, Associated Press

BAGHOUZ, Syria (AP) — From a self-proclaimed caliphate that once spread across much of Syria and Iraq, the Islamic State group has been knocked back to a speck of land on the countries' shared border. In that tiny patch on the banks of the Euphrates River, hundreds of militants are hiding among civilians under the shadow of a small hill — encircled by forces waiting to declare the territorial defeat of the extremist group.

A spokesman for the U.S.-backed Syrian Democratic Forces fighting the militants said Sunday that the group is preventing civilians from leaving the area, closing a corridor from which nearly 40,000 residents have managed to escape since December.

"They are taking their last breath," said Dino, an SDF fighter deployed at a base near the front line in the village of Baghouz, about 2 kilometers (1¼ miles) from the militants' last spot.

An Associated Press team visited the base Sunday, escorted by the SDF, driving past mostly one-story rural houses that were destroyed, a reminder of the cost of the battle. Occasional airstrikes and artillery rounds by the U.S.-led coalition supporting the SDF, meant to clear land mines for the advance, could be seen in the distance.

The road to the base passes through a number of villages and towns from which IS were uprooted in recent weeks.

In Hajin, a major center for the militants that fell to the SDF in December, some residents have begun to return but the town remains battered by the fighting and airstrikes. Small shops selling tools and construction material have sprung up.

For weeks, the militants fought desperately for their shrinking territory. Once in control of about a third of Syria and Iraq, they now are down to what SDF officials describe as a small tented village atop a network of tunnels and caves. But they are holding on to hundreds of civilians — some of them possibly hostages — taking cover among them at the edge of Baghouz, the village in eastern Deir el-Zour province.

"Regrettably, Daesh have closed all the roads," preventing civilians from leaving, said Mustafa Bali, a spokesman for the Kurdish-led SDF, referring to IS by its Arabic acronym.

The extremists may include high-level commanders, and the presence of possible captives could explain the slow final push, they added.

As civilians trickled out of the enclave in recent weeks, the SDF and coalition officials screened them. Women and children were transferred to camps miles away; men suspected of links to the militant group were taken into custody at other facilities.

SDF commanders said some of the hostages taken from their force have been freed in recent days. Fighters at the base said one of their colleagues was set free in the last two days.

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Khatib Othman, an SDF fighter, came back from the front line a few days ago to take a break. His brother, also an SDF fighter, was taken hostage by IS in the last weeks of fighting. He is now believed to be held in Iraq as a suspected militant and negotiations are underway to free him.

"We want to take revenge. We will not let the blood of our martyrs go to waste," Othman said. "We are waiting for the civilians to go out, and we will go in and attack. It is a matter of days. They are under siege, no food and no water. They are encircled from four sides. They have to give up."

He added that the militants are running out of ammunition.

The capture of the last pocket of IS territory in either Syria or Iraq would mark the end of a four-year global campaign to crush the extremist group's so-called caliphate. It has been a long and destructive battle. In decline since 2016, the militant group was stripped of its self-declared capital of Raqqa, in Syria, in the summer of 2017, leaving behind a destroyed city whose residents are still struggling to return.

In Deir el-Zour, the SDF and the coalition have battled to uproot the militants from villages and towns on the eastern banks of the Euphrates since September.

Battle-hardened militants, including some of the group's leading fighters and foreign commanders, had taken refuge in the area between Syria and Iraq. They fought back, dispatching suicide bombers from underground tunnels, deploying female fighters and launching counteroffensives that reclaimed many of the villages for weeks. Nearly 700 SDF fighters were killed in fighting that left at least 1,300 militants and over 400 civilians dead, according to the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

"We will very soon bring good news to the whole world," Ciya Furat, an SDF commander, said Saturday at a news conference at the al-Omar Oil Field Base, miles from Baghouz.

But experts and U.S. defense officials warn that IS still poses a major threat and could regroup within six months if pressure is not kept up.

Thousands of IS fighters and their families have emerged in the past few months from the group's last enclave. The SDF is holding 900 foreign fighters in lockups and camps in northern Syria, and their fate is a major concern, particularly as U.S. troops prepare to withdraw from Syria. In a tweet Sunday, U.S. President Donald Trump called on Britain, France and Germany and other European countries to take back their militants and put them on trial at home.

"The Caliphate is ready to fall," Trump said. He suggested the alternative would be that the U.S. would be forced to release them.

"We do so much, and spend so much - Time for others to step up and do the job that they are so capable of doing. We are pulling back after 100% Caliphate victory!" he added.

The Kurdish forces and officials have said the same in recent weeks, appealing to countries to take back their militants.

Bali, the SDF spokesman, declined to comment on Trump's statement.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Feb. 18, the 49th day of 2019. There are 316 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Feb. 18, 2001, auto racing star Dale Earnhardt Sr. died in a crash at the Daytona 500; he was 49.

On this date:

In 1546, Martin Luther, leader of the Protestant Reformation in Germany, died in Eisleben.

In 1861, Jefferson Davis was sworn in as provisional president of the Confederate States of America in Montgomery, Alabama.

In 1913, Mexican President Francisco I. Madero and Vice President Jose Maria Pino Suarez were arrested during a military coup (both were shot to death on Feb. 22).

In 1930, photographic evidence of Pluto (now designated a "dwarf planet") was discovered by Clyde W. Tombaugh at Lowell Observatory in Flagstaff, Arizona.

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In 1943, Madame Chiang Kai-shek, wife of the Chinese leader, addressed members of the Senate and then the House, becoming the first Chinese national to address both houses of the U.S. Congress.

In 1970, the "Chicago Seven" defendants were found not guilty of conspiring to incite riots at the 1968 Democratic national convention; five were convicted of violating the Anti-Riot Act of 1968 (those convictions were later reversed).

In 1972, the California Supreme Court struck down the state's death penalty.

In 1977, the space shuttle prototype Enterprise, sitting atop a Boeing 747, went on its debut "flight" above Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1983, 13 people were shot to death at a gambling club in Seattle's Chinatown in what became known as the Wah Mee Massacre. (Two men were convicted of the killings and are serving life sentences; a third was found guilty of robbery and assault.)

In 1988, Anthony M. Kennedy was sworn in as an associate justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 1997, astronauts on the space shuttle Discovery completed their tune-up of the Hubble Space Telescope after 33 hours of spacewalking; the Hubble was then released using the shuttle's crane.

In 2003, an arson attack involving two South Korean subway trains in the city of Daegu claimed 198 lives. (The arsonist was sentenced to life in prison, where he died in 2004.)

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama launched a \$75 billion foreclosure rescue plan aimed at saving homes. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton began a two-day visit to Indonesia. Eric Holder, the nation's first black attorney general, said in a speech to Justice Department employees marking Black History Month that the United States was "a nation of cowards" on matters of race. Pope Benedict XVI received House Speaker Nancy Pelosi at the Vatican, telling her that Catholic politicians had a duty to protect life "at all stages of its development."

Five years ago: Megan Rice, an 84-year-old nun, was sentenced in Knoxville, Tennessee, to nearly three years in prison for breaking into a nuclear weapons complex and defacing a bunker holding bomb-grade uranium, a demonstration that exposed serious security flaws at the Y-12 National Security Complex in Oak Ridge. (Two other activists received sentences of just over five years.) Maria Franziska von Trapp, 99, the last surviving member of the seven original Trapp Family Singers of "Sound of Music" fame (and stepdaughter of "the" Maria von Trapp), died in Stowe, Vermont.

One year ago: "Black Panther," the Marvel superhero film from the Walt Disney Co., blew past expectations to take in \$192 million during its debut weekend in U.S. and Canadian theaters. LeBron James scored 29 points and won his third NBA All-Star Game MVP award as his team beat the rival squad headed by Stephen Curry, 148-to-145.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. John Warner, R-Va., is 92. Author Toni Morrison is 88. Singer Yoko Ono is 86. Singer-songwriter Bobby Hart is 80. Singer Irma Thomas is 78. Singer Herman Santiago (Frankie Lymon and the Teenagers) is 78. Actress Jess Walton is 73. Singer Dennis DeYoung is 72. Actress Sinead Cusack is 71. Actress Cybill Shepherd is 69. Singer Randy Crawford is 67. Rock musician Robbie Bachman is 66. Actor John Travolta is 65. Actor John Pankow is 64. Game show host Vanna White is 62. Actress Jayne Atkinson is 60. Actress Greta Scacchi (SKAH'-kee) is 59. Actor Matt Dillon is 55. Rock musician Tommy Scott (Space) is 55. Rapper Dr. Dre is 54. Actress Molly Ringwald is 51. Actress Sarah Brown is 44. Country musician Trevor Rosen (Old Dominion) is 44. Actor Ike Barinholtz is 42. Actor Kristoffer Polaha is 42. Singer-musician Sean Watkins (Nickel Creek) is 42. Actor Tyrone Burton is 40. Rock-singer musician Regina Spektor is 39. Opera singer Isabel Leonard is 37. Roots rock musician Zac Cockrell (Alabama Shakes) is 31. Actor Shane Lyons is 31. Actress Sara Sutherland is 31. Actress Maiara Walsh is 31.

Thought for Today: "Temperament is temper that is too old to spank." — Charlotte Greenwood, American actress-comedian (1893-1978).

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