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ACTIVITIES DIRECTOR WANTED

We are looking for someone with a creative mind and a passion for the elderly. If that is you, here is a great opportunity for YOU!

➤ Interview and assess all residents prior to the initial Care Plan Conference; document this information in the medical record, develop an individual recreation plan based on the assessment and participate in Interdisciplinary Care Plan meetings

➤ Update assessments and plans as needed and required by state or federal regulations

➤ Develop monthly recreation program calendars that reflect and meet the needs of facility residents

➤ Communicate facility programs to residents, staff, family and volunteers

➤ Manage facility Volunteer Program

➤ Maintain departmental documentation that reflects services provided and resident progress towards goals

➤ In coordination with social services facilitate the residents in the organization and continued development of a Resident's Council

➤ Make job assignments and set priorities

➤ Serve as member of QAA committee

We are an equal employment opportunity employer. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status or any other characteristic protected by law.



1106 N 2nd Street ~ Groton, SD ~ 605-397-2365

Service Notice:

Bonnie Sanderson

Memorial services for Bonnie Sanderson, 85, of Claremont will be 1:00 p.m., Saturday, May 18th at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Pastor Rodney Ulmer will officiate. Inurnment will follow in Sunset Memorial Gardens, Aberdeen.

Visitation will be held at the chapel on Saturday for one hour prior to services.

Bonnie passed away May 14, 2019 at Prairie Heights Healthcare in Aberdeen.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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Cub Cadet

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- 159cc Cub Cadet® performance-tuned OHV engine
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*Product Price - Actual retail prices are set by dealer and may vary. Taxes, freight, setup and handling charges may be additional and may vary. Models subject to limited availability. Specifications and programs are subject to change without notice. Images may not reflect dealer inventory and/or specifications. **As rated by Kohler. All power levels are stated in gross horsepower at 3600 RPM per SAE J1940 as rated by engine manufacturer. **See your local Cub Cadet Independent Dealer for warranty details. © 2018 Cub Cadet SPV, LLC. COMMERCIAL

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

Thursday, May 16, 2019

10:00am: Golf: Girls Varsity Meet @ Sis-ton Golf Course

12:00pm: Track: Varsity Regions @ Red-field High School

Friday, May 17, 2019

12:30pm- 3:00pm: Elementary Track and Field Day at Doney Field

Sunday, May 19, 2019

2:00pm: Graduation at Groton Area High School

Tuesday, May 21, 2019

2:00pm: DARE Graduation at GHS Gym-nasium

7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at the Gro-ton Community Center

Wednesday, May 22, 2019

End of 4th Quarter - Final Day of School
12:00pm: Golf: Girls Varsity Meet @ Milbank Golf Course

Thursday, May 23, 2019

Faculty Inservice
10:00am: Golf: Girls Varsity Regions @ Milbank Golf Course

Friday, May 24, 2019

Faculty Inservice
STATE TRACK MEET @ TEA AREA

Saturday, May 25, 2019

STATE TRACK MEET @ SIOUX FALLS

NOW HIRING!

Truss Pros

10954 424th Avenue | Britton, SD 57430

Looking for assemblers - both shifts

* New Starting Wage - \$15/hr day shift and
\$16/hr night shift
Overtime Available

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- Referral Bonuses

To apply visit www.uslbn.com/careers or call Diane at 605-448-2929.

Weekly Vikings Roundup By Jordan Wright

We spend a lot of time in this column, talking about the Minnesota Vikings. Today, however, let's turn our attention to the rest of the league to see how teams fared during the draft.

The 2019 NFL draft had plenty of storylines. There were teams who made some boneheaded moves, while other teams seemingly made some great moves that should make their teams better. It will take a few years before we really know how well or poorly teams drafted, that won't stop us from talking about the draft's biggest winners and losers.

Winners

The Buffalo Bills were one of the biggest winners from the draft. They let the draft fall to them, so to speak, and were rewarded with Ed Oliver falling into their laps. The defensive lineman seems to be a perfect fit for the Bills, and immediately upgrades their defensive line. Then, in the second round, the Bills were once again rewarded when Cody Ford, the talented offensive lineman who many predicted would go in the first round, fell to them in the second round. The Bills needed an infusion of talent in the trenches, and they got just that with their first two picks.

The Washington Redskins were another winner from the draft. With incumbent quarterback Alex Smith breaking his leg late last season, the Redskins were in need of a quarterback – not just for this season but for the future – and they got just that when Dwayne Haskins from Ohio State fell to them in the middle of the first round. Haskins was clearly the second-best quarterback in this draft, and being able to get him where the Redskins did is tantamount to stealing.

Losers

The New York Giants are, for the second straight season, in the loser column. The entire world knows the Giants have needed a quarterback to succeed 38-year-old Eli Manning. Instead of drafting a quarterback last year, they went with a running back (and as awesome as Saquon Barkley is, a great running back is worth far less than a decent quarterback). This year, the Giants took their quarterback in the first round, but they went with Daniel Jones from Duke. Jones was pegged by many to be a third rounder at best, but the Giants wanted to make sure they got their guy. Jones threw for under 60% completion rate in college, and the list of quarterbacks to throw for under 60% and increase that in the NFL is very small.

Another loser in the draft was the Arizona Cardinals. The Cardinals had the first pick in the draft and wanted to draft Kyler Murray from Oklahoma. The problem is that they had just spent a first-round pick on a quarterback last year! And to make matters worse, word is that they didn't start trying to trade Josh Rosen until right before the draft. Had they finalized their plan to draft Murray sooner, the team could have gotten a lot more return on Rosen, but instead they only got a second rounder. I believe the team upgraded at quarterback some when they drafted Murray, but Rosen has plenty of upside and the Cardinals could have gotten a lot more for him.

Who do you think should be on the winners and losers list from this year's draft? Reach out to me on Twitter and let me know (@JordanWrightNFL). Skol!

State Golf Meet location changed

PIERRE – Due to unfavorable conditions, specifically issues of water and drainage that have affected the playability of several holes at Wild Oak Golf course in Mitchell, the SDHSAA has chosen to relocate the 2019 SDHSAA Class 'B' State Golf Championships to Yankton.

The tournaments remain scheduled for their original dates of June 3 & 4, with the Boys' Class 'B' event being played at Hillcrest Golf & Country Club, and the Girls' Class 'B' event will be contested at Fox Run Golf Course.

Additionally, the SDHSAA staff will recommend to its Board of Directors the relocation of the 2020 State Championships, originally scheduled to have been played in Yankton, to be moved to Mitchell.

South Dakota Maintains Highest Credit Rating

PIERRE, S.D. – This week, both Standard & Poor's Global (S&P) and Moody's Investors Service announced they have reaffirmed South Dakota's AAA Issuer Credit Rating with a stable outlook.

"AAA is the highest possible rating assigned by credit rating agencies," said Gov. Noem. "Sound fiscal management is a priority for my administration. As a result of our fiscal discipline, maintaining reserve funds at 10 percent, and a structurally balanced budget, South Dakota continues to benefit from the highest rating possible. The financial impact of the AAA credit rating will continue to position the next generation for success."

Both S&P and Moody's note the strong financial condition of South Dakota, strong level of reserve funds, well-funded pension system, and a focus on a structurally balanced budget as key reasons for reaffirming the state's AAA rating.

"We consider the state's management practices strong under S&P Global Ratings' financial management assessment (FMA), indicating that, in our view, practices are strong, well embedded, and likely sustainable," said S&P.

Moody's Investors Service stated, "The stable outlook reflects the expectation that low leverage and fixed costs combined with a very healthy financial position will support South Dakota's strong credit quality going forward."

Credit ratings give potential bond purchasers a measurement of state performance and credit worthiness. High credit ratings allow issued bonds to carry a lower interest rate, providing interest savings to issuers as well as the taxpayers in the State of South Dakota.

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Today in Weather History

May 16, 1883: Benchmark flooding in the Black Hills occurred in 1883, with extremely high flows reported throughout the hills that resulted from heavy rainfall on top of snowmelt.

May 16, 1929: On this day, Aberdeen recorded 3.0 inches of snow. This snowfall is the latest measurable snow for the city of Aberdeen on record.

May 16, 1992: It was a wild day across the tri-state region of Nebraska, South Dakota, and Iowa, with tornadoes and destructive straight-line winds. A tornado damaged three-grain bins and two farm wagons in Cedar County of northeast Nebraska before crossing into Dixon County. As it traveled east, it destroyed two barns and a garage and was responsible for killing between 5,000 and 10,000 chickens at a chicken farm. In northwest Iowa, Sioux City reported winds of around 60 miles an hour causing some minor damage. Elsewhere, winds gusted as high as 75 miles an hour in Spencer and 74 miles an hour in Le Mars.

1874: The Mill Creek disaster occurred west of North Hampton, MA. Dam slippage resulted in a flash flood that claimed 143 lives and caused a million dollars property damage. Click [HERE](#) for more information from the New England Historical Society.

1983: An unyielding spring storm dumped heavy snow across the Front Range in Colorado. High winds of 20 to 40 mph with gusts to 55 mph produced blizzard conditions at times. The Foothills received 1 to 2 feet of snow with 4 to 12 inches along the Foothills. Blowing snow whipped the snow into drifts several feet deep closing schools and highways. Power outages occurred; with 20 square miles of Denver blacked out. Hundreds of passengers were stranded as only half of the runways were open at Stapleton International Airport. The high temperature at Denver the next day of just 40° set a record low maximum. Much of the snow melted on the 18th as temperatures rebounded into the middle and upper 50s causing widespread street flooding.

1989: Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather in the south-central U.S. Thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes, and there were 180 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A tornado in Cleburne, Texas caused thirty million dollars damage. A violent F-4 tornado touched down near Brackettville, Texas and a strong F-3 tornado killed one person and injured 28 others at Jarrell, Texas.

1874 - The Mill Creek disaster occurred west of Northampton MA. Dam slippage resulted in a flash flood which claimed 143 lives, and caused a million dollars property damage. (David Ludlum)

1924 - The temperature at Blitzen OR soared to 108 degrees to set a state record for the month of May. The record was later tied at Pelton Dam on the 31st of May in 1986. (The Weather Channel)

1952 - High winds in the Wasatch Canyon of Utah struck Ogden and Brigham City. Winds at Hill Air Force Base gusted to 92 mph. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was a summer-like day as thunderstorms abounded across the nation. Thunderstorms in Texas drenched Guadalupe County with more than three inches of rain resulting in flash flooding. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)





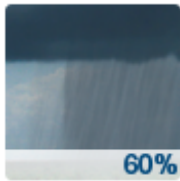
1988 - Afternoon and evening thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather from Florida to New York State. Unseasonably warm weather prevailed in the north central U.S. Havre, MT, reported a record high of 95 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms developing ahead of a cold front produced severe weather in the south central U.S. Thunderstorms spawned twenty tornadoes, and there were 180 reports of large hail and damaging winds. A tornado at Cleburne, TX, caused 30 million dollars damage. A violent (F-4) tornado touched down near Brackettville, TX, and a strong (F-3) tornado killed one person and injured 28 others at Jarrell, TX. Thunderstorms also produced softball size hail at Shamrock, TX. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

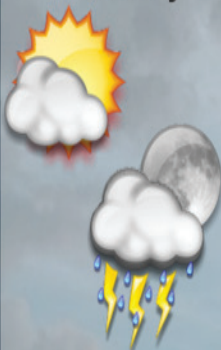
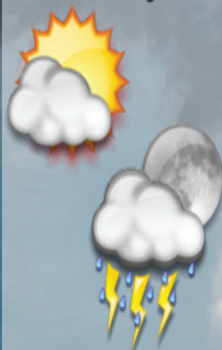



1990 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Oklahoma and northeastern Texas to the Upper Ohio Valley. Thunderstorms spawned seventeen tornadoes, including a twister which killed one person and injured another north of Corning, AR. There were 128 reports of large hail or damaging winds. Strong thunderstorm winds killed one person and injured six others at Folsomville, IN, and injured another five persons in southeastern Hardin County KY. In Arkansas, baseball size hail was reported near Fouke and near El Dorado. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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| Today | Tonight | Friday | Friday Night | Saturday |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Partly Sunny | Mostly Cloudy | Slight Chance T-storms and Breezy | Showers Likely | Showers Likely and Breezy |
| High: 65 °F | Low: 45 °F | High: 61 °F | Low: 47 °F | High: 54 °F |

Cooler And Unsettled

| Thursday | Friday | Saturday | Sunday | Monday |
|---|---|---|--|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| Dry Today Scattered Thundershowers Tonight | Strong T-Storms Overnight | Rain | Rain | Showers |
| HIGHS Mid 60s to | HIGHS Mid 50s to | HIGHS Mid 40s to | HIGHS Mid and | HIGHS 50s |

The pattern becomes more unsettled over the next several days, with another period where temperatures fall well below average. Our focus for severe weather is mainly across southern South Dakota later today and then we'll see a little more widespread severe weather potential on Friday night.

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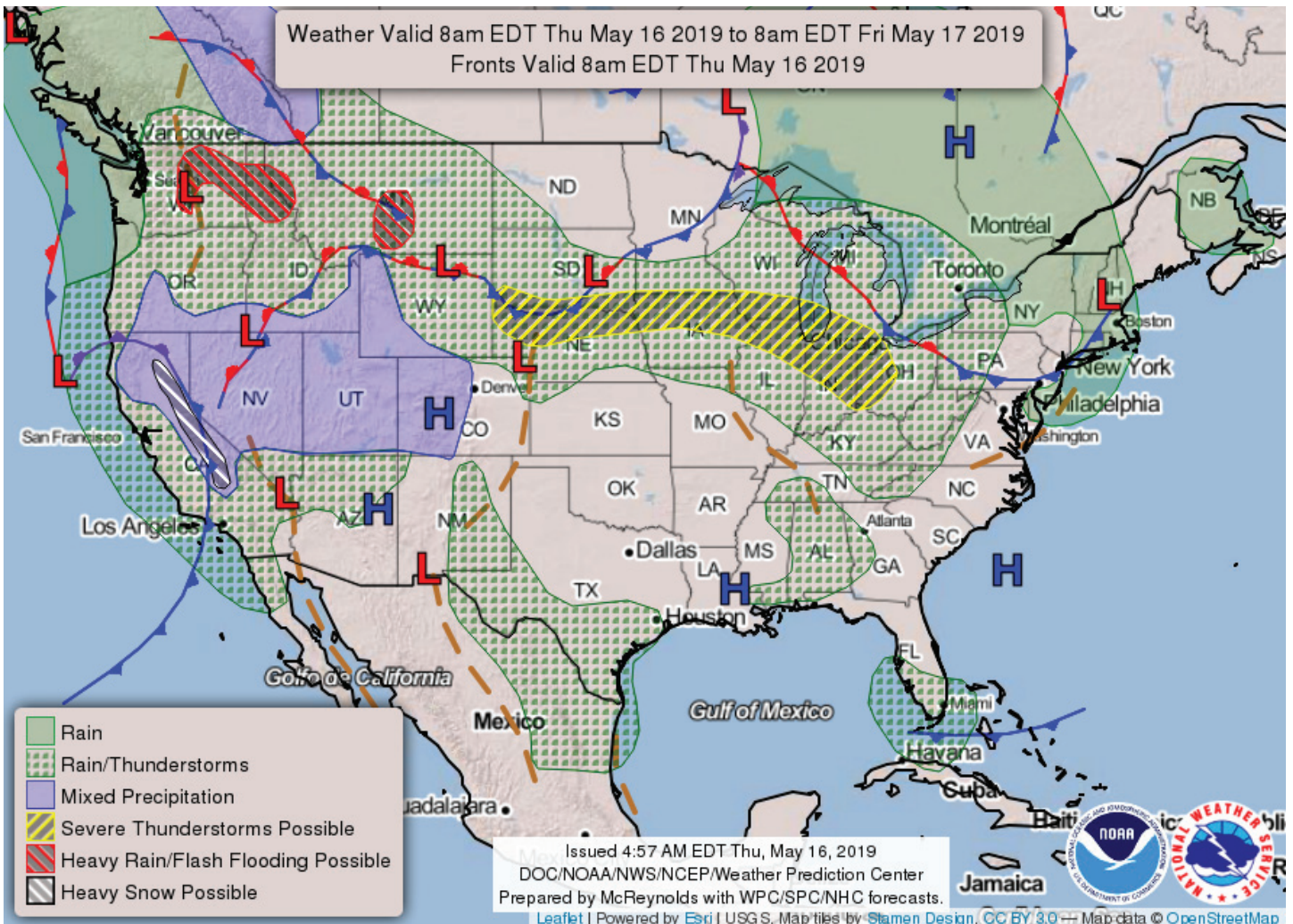
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 5:24 PM
Low Temp: 54 °F at 4:17 AM
Wind: 32 mph at 4:46 PM
Day Rain: 0.00 in

Today's Info

Record High: 101° in 1934
Record Low: 23° in 2014
Average High: 69°F
Average Low: 44°F
Average Precip in May.: 1.53
Precip to date in May.: 0.49
Average Precip to date: 5.56
Precip Year to Date: 5.18
Sunset Tonight: 8:58 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:01 a.m.



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PAYING THE PRICE

Making amends means I've harmed someone. Not an easy thing to do. First, if I have harmed someone, they certainly deserved it or had it coming to them. Secondly, whenever I apologize, I admit that I did something that is or was wrong - and that simply is not like me to do something like that. Or, They are too sensitive - they shouldn't wear their feelings on their sleeves or shoulders. It's about them, not me. I know what I'm doing.

Unfortunately, those options do not agree with God's Word. First, All have sinned. So, I'm not in any position to harm anyone. Secondly, No one is righteous, not even one. Well, there goes my reputation. Or, If you have never committed a sin, pick up a stone and throw it at the first person you see - for they surely have! So, when I investigate my stone-carrier, it's empty.

Fools, according to Solomon, mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright. This includes all of us in one way or another. One who mocks at making amends would be a person who has no sense of right or wrong or personal accountability for their actions. They turn a blind-eye to God's ever-present, watchful eye. That's not wise!

To feel unaccountable for our sin implies that we will not be judged by God or man. That surely is foolish, for one day we will all stand before God to be judged. On the other hand, men of goodwill are those who want to be approved by God and others for the way they act. They want their relationships, beginning with God, to be open and beyond reproach. Do to others as you would have them do to you is what making amends is all about.

Prayer: Lord, it's much easier to live in denial than to be a person of honesty and integrity. Give us courage, when we are or do wrong, to seek forgiveness. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 14:9 Fools mock at making amends for sin, but goodwill is found among the upright.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/17/2019 Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program (Memorial Day)
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-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
- 06/22-23/2019 Groton Junior Legion Tournament
- 06/29/2019 Groton U10/U12 Round Robin Tournament
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest/Car Show (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/18/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Tournament
- 07/21/2019 Granary Ice Cream Social & Family Music Fest
- 08/02/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Wine on Nine
- 08/09-11/2019 State Junior Legion Tournament in Groton
- 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
- 09/08/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 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 (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 4/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 5/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)

News from the Associated Press

Populist alliances of 'cowboys and Indians' are protecting rural lands

Zoltan Grossman Evergreen State College

(The Conversation is an independent and nonprofit source of news, analysis and commentary from academic experts.)

Zoltan Grossman, Evergreen State College

(THE CONVERSATION) The sea of red on recent election maps make it look like rural areas are uniformly populated by Republicans. And conventional wisdom suggests that those Americans are largely conservative populists who question many government regulations and do not welcome cultural diversity.

But the growing influence of Native American nations in some rural areas is starting to change that picture. Empowered by their treaty rights, they are beginning to shift the values of their white neighbors toward a populism that cuts across racial and cultural lines to challenge large corporations.

I'm a geographer who studies the relationships between tribes and rural white farmers, ranchers and fishers. In my book "Unlikely Alliances: Native Nations and White Communities Join to Defend Rural Lands," I relate what I learned through dozens of interviews with Native Americans and their non-Native allies who described how the tribes are fusing the power of their sovereignty with the populist grievances of the tribes' historic enemies.

By teaming up to defend the place they all call home, they are protecting their lands and waters for all. Unlikely alliances

Ever since Native Americans began to reassert their treaty rights to harvest fish, water and other natural resources, starting in the 1960s in the Pacific Northwest, a far-right populist backlash from some rural whites has sparked racial conflicts over those resources.

But starting in the late 1970s, some Native nations across the country joined with their rural white neighbors — including people who had been their adversaries in treaty conflicts — to block threats to rural lands and waters, such as mining, pipeline, dam, nuclear waste and military projects.

The alliances joined tribes and rural, mostly white, Americans to confront common enemies. They helped whites in these areas learn more about indigenous cultural traditions, legal powers and ecological values. Tribal members also learned that their neighbors valued the local environment, and wanted to protect it from outside corporations.

In South Dakota and Nebraska, for example, a group called the Cowboy Indian Alliance has, since 2013, brought together Lakota and other tribes with white ranchers and farmers to stop the Keystone XL oil pipeline. The alliance drew from earlier coalitions that stopped uranium and coal projects and a bombing range in the Black Hills of South Dakota.

Farmers and ranchers in these two deep-red states opposed the use of eminent domain to seize their private property for the pipeline. That land had originally belonged to the tribes.

As they worked together against the pipeline, the tribes influenced some white neighbors to protect sacred burial sites on their property.

"We come from two cultures that clashed over land," Alliance spokeswoman Faith Spotted Eagle observed. "This is a healing for the generations."

Fossil fuel and mining projects

In Washington and Oregon, Native nations are using their treaty rights to stop plans to build coal and oil export terminals. The same largely white fishing groups in that region that used to aggressively protest treaty rights now back the tribes in protecting fisheries from oil and coal shipping, and in restoring fish habitat damaged by development.

The Lummi Nation, near Bellingham, Washington, led the fight that staved off a coal terminal in a sacred

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burial ground. The Quinault Nation on the Pacific coast led an alliance that helped kill plans to build oil export infrastructure that would have threatened salmon and shellfish.

The mostly white working-class residents of former logging towns in the area, who have strongly opposed timber industry regulations, have worked more easily with local tribes than with urban environmental groups to protect their local economy from fossil fuels.

"The relationships we have with our neighbors arose out of a relationship of much division, strife, and conflict," Quinault President Fawn Sharp told me. Through that, she added, "they've come to know who we are."

In Wisconsin and Michigan, Ojibwe and Menominee tribes are fighting to prevent new mining projects, joined by their rural white neighbors, because those projects threaten fishing streams, wild rice beds and burial sites.

As recently as the early 1990s, many white anglers in northern Wisconsin were violently protesting Ojibwe treaty rights to spear fish, harassing and physically attacking Native Americans after anti-treaty groups led to them to believe that tribal fishing threatened the local tourism economy.

But the tribes presented their treaties as a legal obstacle to the mines that both groups viewed as a threat to the fishery.

The Midwest Treaty Network convinced many anglers to cooperate with tribes and environmental groups to join in the effort to stymie plans to build a copper and zinc mine near Crandon, Wisconsin. They won a protracted fight in 2003. The anglers had realized that if they kept arguing with the tribes over fishing rights, there might not be any fish left.

More recently, the Bad River Tribe on the Wisconsin shore of Lake Superior led an alliance that stopped the Penokees iron mine in 2015, upstream from wild rice beds culturally valuable to the tribe.

And the Menominee Nation and its allies are trying to block the Back Forty zinc and gold mine in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Unity through diversity

One advantage that sovereign tribal nations have in these battles is that they can draw federal agencies and courts into the fray in a way that local and state governments cannot.

Tribes are in the fight for the long haul, because the survival of their cultures is at stake. They can't simply move away from environmental hazards, because they have harvesting rights only within their treaty territory, and their identities and cultures are rooted in a particular place.

Some areas of the most intense treaty conflicts, where the tribes most strongly asserted their rights, developed the earliest and most successful tribal alliances with white farmers, ranchers and fishers.

In these areas, rural populists have begun to see the tribes as more effective guardians of their local economies from large corporations than their state, local or federal governments. Wisconsin fishing guide Wally Cooper had spoken at rallies against Ojibwe treaty rights. He told me he changed his mind "because Native Americans can stop" the Crandon mine that threatened the rivers that he loved.

The success of these unlikely alliances challenges political stereotypes. Some progressives tend to dismiss rural whites as recalcitrant and unwilling to treat people who are different as equals.

Many conservatives – along with some liberals – presume that highlighting cultural differences through identity politics gets in the way of unifying people who otherwise share economic or environmental goals.

But celebrating differences and unity can be compatible. Native sovereignty can protect land and water for all rural people, and help build an anti-corporate movement that crosses cultural lines. If even cowboys and Indians can find common ground, maybe there is hope for what I call cross-cultural populism.

This article is republished from The Conversation under a Creative Commons license. Read the original article here: <http://theconversation.com/populist-alliances-of-cowboys-and-indians-are-protecting-rural-lands-114268>.

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SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

09-10-19-22-24

(nine, ten, nineteen, twenty-two, twenty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$385,000

Lotto America

04-19-23-35-44, Star Ball: 4, ASB: 3

(four, nineteen, twenty-three, thirty-five, forty-four; Star Ball: four; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$19.74 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$339 million

Powerball

07-17-33-61-68, Powerball: 4, Power Play: 2

(seven, seventeen, thirty-three, sixty-one, sixty-eight; Powerball: four; Power Play: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$250 million

Search for missing girl in South Dakota comes up empty

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have conducted another search for a missing girl in western South Dakota, but she was not found.

Teams from across the state searched Wednesday for Serenity Dennard near Rockerville. But the Pennington County Sheriff's Office says the girl remains missing.

Serenity was 9 years old when she ran away from a children's home on Feb. 3. On Sunday, dozens of people gathered in Rapid City's Main Street Square to celebrate her 10th birthday.

The latest search included agencies from Brown, Butte, Douglas, Hughes and Meade counties, as well as Box Elder, Rapid City, Sioux Falls and Watertown police departments.

The search changed from a rescue to a recovery effort not long after she went missing. Authorities say Serenity likely wouldn't have survived if she was outside in subzero temperatures.

Lewis & Clark system begins delivering water to Worthington

TEA, S.D. (AP) — The Lewis & Clark Regional Water System has started delivering water to Worthington in southwestern Minnesota.

The system began delivering water to Worthington on Monday. The city is the 15th connected member of the system that serves South Dakota, Minnesota and Iowa.

Worthington has a reserved capacity of 1.9 million gallons a day from Lewis & Clark that will be blended with the city's existing water sources.

Scott Hain is general manager of Worthington Public Utilities and also serves on Lewis & Clark's board of directors. Hain says the effort to get water from Lewis & Clark took longer than expected, but the additional source of water will benefit the city.

After years of construction, Lewis & Clark began delivering water in 2012. Five more members have yet to be connected to the system.

South Dakota man sentenced for robbing Iowa bank last year

SIOUX CITY, Iowa (AP) — A South Dakota man accused of robbing a northwest Iowa bank has been sentenced to more than eight years in federal prison.

Federal prosecutors for Iowa said Wednesday in a news release that 43-year-old Brendon Reed, of North Sioux City, South Dakota, was sentenced Tuesday to 105 months in prison and ordered to pay nearly

\$14,000 in restitution to the United Bank of Menville.

Reed pleaded guilty in December to a bank robbery count.

Authorities say he robbed the Menville bank on March 30, 2018, and was caught later that day after crashing a stolen car as he was being chased by officers near Salix.

He previously pleaded guilty in state court to stealing the car and was sentenced to 10 years in an Iowa prison for that crime.

Ex-convict finds redemption after becoming mayor of Crooks

By DANIELLE FERGUSON Argus Leader

CROOKS, S.D. (AP) — It's no secret that Francis "Butch" Oseby has a history.

But as the newly elected mayor of this town of 1,300 located just north of Sioux Falls, the 70-year-old wants to focus on the future.

That's not to say his 25 years of living in Crooks hasn't been eventful.

During that time, he was convicted and sentenced for a federal crime, lived in his lumberyard office with no running water and survived a rare adrenal cancer, for which he is still being treated. Through everything, he said, the people of Crooks have been supportive and even part of his triumph.

"When I went through what I went through, it was community folks who lived here then who were my support," Oseby told the Argus Leader. "It's the new people. Some were understanding. Some weren't."

His 2019 mayoral bid recycled past turmoil in a way he wasn't expecting.

Oseby successfully submitted his petition for mayor on Feb. 22. He was campaigning until a citizen emailed the city's finance manager March 11 raising concerns about Oseby's decades-old criminal conviction and his eligibility to run for elected office.

Oseby was charged in February 1997 with paying a gratuity to a public official. Federal prosecutors said Oseby purchased surplus government equipment obtained by tribes that they were unable to use and sold the property at a profit.

In July 1998, his 20-month federal sentence was reversed and remanded to district court, and he was sentenced to spend about 11 months in federal prison, followed by a few months at a halfway house. He was released in November 1998.

He spent his time in prison, paid his \$35,000 in restitution off early and restarted his life. But he knew his record would resurface when he decided to run for mayor.

"With (running) comes my past of 25 years ago and do I want to relive that?" said Oseby, who was born in Volga and graduated from Brookings High School. "It was a big decision. I decided I could handle it. These are the people that supported me. This is my hometown, as far as I'm concerned. If it wasn't for the people 25 years ago, I don't think I could have made it."

On March 22, Oseby received a letter from the city's finance officer, saying that "no mechanism exists in South Dakota which might have restored your civil rights absent a presidential pardon." The letter con-



Mayor Francis "Butch" Oseby stands at the entrance to Crooks, S.D., on Tuesday, May 7, 2019. Oseby was sworn in as mayor on Monday, May 13. (Erin Bormett/Argus Leader via AP)

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cluded that Oseby wasn't eligible to run for office.

Under South Dakota law, if you are not eligible to vote, you are not eligible to run for public office. The state's constitution says that those who have a felony conviction are ineligible to vote; however, the right to register to vote is restored after the convicted person's sentence and probation are completed.

Oseby filed a writ of mandamus — a request for a court order to a government to perform its duties — saying that not allowing him to run for mayor would be a "deprivation of (his) civil rights." He also said he should be allowed to run to "preserve the right of voters of the City of Crooks to choose their Mayor."

The main argument, though, was whether a city finance officer has the authority to determine whether he was eligible to run.

Oseby argued that the Minnehaha County Auditor's office restored his right to vote in October 2008 and he has since voted in at least eight local elections.

In court briefs, Crooks responded that the city's finance officer had the authority to determine whether Oseby met the eligibility criteria and concluded he didn't because of his past conviction. The city also argued the finance director had the authority to determine whether a candidate was a "qualified voter" rather than a "registered voter," though no specific statute was cited.

Oseby's attorney, Thomas Wilka of Sioux Falls, said he didn't think that argument would be supported by South Dakota law.

"My initial instinct was just this didn't sound right," Wilka said. "Your rights are restored whether you are a state or a federal felon (when the sentence is complete). (Oseby) had re-registered to vote."

A judge ultimately determined that the county auditor trumps a city finance director when it comes to someone's eligibility to vote and run for office under South Dakota law.

Second Circuit Court Judge Camela Theeler said in an order granting Oseby's request that Oseby "does have a clear legal right to have his nominating petitions accepted and appear on the mayoral ballot," and said the city finance officer "has the obligation to perform that duty."

Oseby's name was back on the ballot, and he won the April 30 special election against incumbent mayor Jamison Rounds by 62 votes: 273 to 211.

"At this time, it is what it is," Rounds said of the recent results. "We do the best we can moving forward. Right now we're making sure everything is in order to make sure the transition is smooth."

Rounds, who had been mayor since 2015, posted on his Facebook page before the election, saying, "the issue of candidate eligibility lies with the city finance officer and I accept his decision."

After the election, he posted to his Facebook page: "I congratulate Butch on his win. I wish nothing but the best for this community! I trust that working together we can make Crooks even better."

He said that the town has "a lot of great things happening," and "we want to see the town continue to improve and keep getting better."

When Oseby is asked about what happened leading up to the election, he quickly diverts to focusing on the future. He doesn't want negative headlines associated with his town, he said, a place he is proud to call home.

He's looking forward to being sworn in as mayor at an upcoming City Council meeting. He wants to be a leader in building a new elementary school and finish the town's housing development. He's supportive of a new rec center, but wants to make sure the city has the funds to pay for it first. He hopes to have a town square and make downtown Crooks more of a destination for businesses or apartments.

"We need more rooftops, more houses, need to get our tax base up and get some commercial economic development going," he said. "We're kind of a hidden gem out here. How do we get ready for the boom? How do we grow and get the amenities and pay for them? There's a balancing act there."

When Oseby completed his federal sentence, he didn't have much.

He had to sell his house to pay for an attorney, so when he was released, he lived in the lumberyard in Crooks for about a year. He had to use a forklift to get water from across the street. If he needed to use a bathroom, it was at the town grocery store.

"I was broke. I moved into the lumberyard, just me and my dog," Oseby said. "I had two walls that were

black plastic and I had a space heater.”

He started doing more digging and filling jobs for construction sites and started Dakota Hardscape Supply in 2005.

“I had made a comeback,” Oseby said. “Until I got sick.”

Oseby turned 70 in March. Five years ago, he didn’t think he’d be alive to reach that milestone.

He had started feeling ill around 2010. Doctors couldn’t figure out what was causing his issues, Oseby said, until one found a spot on a scan in 2014.

Oseby had a tumor on his adrenal gland. Within hours of finding the spot, he was in surgery. He was diagnosed with the adrenal cancer in February 2014, and he was told he may have three to six months to live.

Luckily, Oseby said, his oncologist at the Mayo Clinic had seen this type of cancer before and was able to help with treatment.

“There’s not a clear medical reason why I’m here,” Oseby said. “I’ve just been blessed. A year ago I couldn’t have done what I’m doing now. Don’t give up and keep going and be thankful and give back.”

It was only recently he felt healthy enough to make the run for mayor. Each year after the surgery he gained back a bit more strength.

Oseby still goes for cancer treatment about every six months at the Mayo Clinic and said he thinks he’s healthy and ready for office.

He has no hard feelings about anyone involved in the other side of the election, he said. He just wants to move forward.

“I just want to do good and give back,” Oseby said. “If I didn’t win the election, then I thought there’s something else the Lord has in mind for me. I just want to do good. I want to make our town better and grow.”

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

Sioux Falls man reunites with birth mother after 50 years

By STU WHITNEY Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The phone call arrived last December during a faculty meeting at Augustana University, where Jason Harris teaches business law.

“I don’t usually leave faculty meetings,” he told the Argus Leader. “But I just sort of said, ‘I’m going to take this one.’”

A series of events had led the 50-year-old Harris — who was adopted as a newborn during the summer of 1968 in Sioux Falls — to begin the painstaking and emotional process of seeking out his birth mother.

Though raised as part of a loving family in Rapid City, Harris felt a void for much of his life and a desire to learn more about his identity. Where did his ancestors come from? What did his parents look like? Why did his mother give him away? Did she ever think of him?

Using genealogy services and online research, Harris found a North Carolina family that matched “non-identifying information” he received decades earlier from the adoption agency. He reached out to a first cousin with no idea what the reaction would be. Weeks went by with only sporadic messages.

The phone call that drew his attention came from a North Carolina number belonging to a woman who turned out to be his aunt. She had served as a conduit as Harris inquired as to whether a semi-retired accountant named Sandi Gunning Arrington was the person who gave birth to him a half-century earlier at Sioux Valley Hospital.

“Jason,” came the words through the phone. “You need to know that you’ve found her.”

She arrived in South Dakota under the cover of secrecy in late March of 1968. Sandi Arrington was a junior at Florida State University who was unmarried and pregnant, a potentially scandalous combination at the time.

Her parents had a friend with a sister who lived in Sioux Falls, where Lutheran Social Services could

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arrange an adoption. The biological father, who had dropped out of college and joined the Army, knew of the plan but was no longer part of Sandi's life. Her two younger brothers thought she was still at school.

"It was a lonely time," recalls Sandi, who stayed in a small basement apartment and had plenty of time to think. She sewed clothes and read books and watched baseball on TV with her hosts. As the daughter of a chemist, she had moved often with her family before attending high school in Mississippi. South Dakota represented another temporary stop on the path toward her own life.

Closed adoption, in which there is no interaction between the birth mother and prospective adoptive families, was common at the time, making the prospect of future reunions remote. The late 1960s were a particularly busy time for such adoptions, in contrast to the more open process that exists today.

The landmark Roe v. Wade court decision that legalized abortion was still five years in the future, further reducing options for unwed mothers-to-be. But Sandi would not have chosen that route.

One thing she didn't do during her four months in Sioux Falls was second-guess her decision. Circumstances dictated that she couldn't keep her baby, but she wanted her baby to be born.

"It was felt by the social worker," said a report compiled by LSS adoption staff, "that in other circumstances, she would have been very excited about becoming a mother."

Circumstances couldn't be changed, and her mind was made up. But when it came time for the delivery and nurses whisked the newborn away without Sandi being able to hold her newborn son, the emptiness was undeniable.

"I never even saw him," says Sandi, now 71 and living in Hendersonville, North Carolina, "I knew he was a boy and that's it. I would have preferred to have been able to see him, just to know that he was OK and had 10 fingers and 10 toes. That's a mom thing, I guess, regardless of whether the baby is coming home with you."

Jason Harris had a family. He was certain of that.

He was adopted on Aug. 14, 1968 by Russell and Mary Ann Harris of Rapid City, leading to a happy childhood that included a love of baseball, long days of downhill skiing and the prideful role of alto sax player in the school band.

With two older brothers who are developmentally disabled and an older sister, Jason was the youngest child and never had any illusions about the fact that he was adopted.

"I don't recall ever not knowing," says Harris, an assistant professor at Augustana since 2006. "My parents were always open about it, and I always felt like I belonged as a member of the family. I had everything I needed, but the feelings were always there."

In biology class, when the teacher discussed DNA and inheritance traits, most students talked about what color eyes their parents had and other genetic links. Harris sat silent.

"I didn't know any of those answers," he says. "I knew my birthday and that I was born in Sioux Falls,



In a May 9, 2019 photo, Jason Harris sits in the dining room at his home Wednesday, May 8, in Sioux Falls. Harris, adopted as a child, was reunited with his birth mother after 50 years. (Erin Bormett/The Argus Leader via AP)

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but there always that nagging feeling about wanting to know more.”

He had a friend in high school who was adopted and familiar with state law regarding the availability of birth records when a person turns 18.

As a freshman at Augustana in 1986, Harris reached out to LSS and received basic facts about his biological mother. She was 20 years old when she had him and came from out of state. She was 5 feet, 5 inches tall with “hazel green eyes that changed from brown to blue.” She had hay fever. Her nationality was half Scottish and the rest English and German, and she was “pleasant in appearance and manner.”

The adoption agency staff offered to do a search for the birth mother for \$300, and he also could have sought a court order for certain records. But Harris balked. Whether it was the money or concerns about the feelings of his adoptive parents, he didn’t feel comfortable at 18 years old taking that next step.

“I’m not ready,” he told himself. He didn’t know if he would ever be.

How do you miss someone you know nothing about, with no face or name to hang onto? Sandi couldn’t describe the feelings exactly, but she also couldn’t shake them.

They hit hardest on Christmas and Mother’s Day and June 15, the birthdate he celebrated somewhere with someone. They stirred occasionally when she watched her other children play soccer or frolic in the yard, making her wonder if he enjoyed the same things.

She had met a fellow student named Phil Arrington before coming to Sioux Falls in 1968 and married him the next year. Both had fulfilling careers, with Sandi working for a time as a revenue agent for the Internal Revenue Service in Washington, D.C. Phil was an artist and writer who took a job as creative services director at WCCO-TV in the Twin Cities, where Sandi worked for the Veteran’s Administration while raising a son, Bram, and daughter, Carrie.

Sandi even traveled to Sioux Falls for an event at the VA Medical Center in 2009, but it was a quick business trip with little time to dwell on the past.

She had no idea that the boy she gave birth to in 1968 was living in the city at the time — and they had much in common. Outside of a physical resemblance, both majored in government in college with a history minor. They rooted for the Minnesota Twins and enjoyed many of the same Twin Cities restaurants. Both had a dry sense of humor and loved to travel.

But by the time Sandi and Phil settled in Hendersonville, where she still prepares taxes and relishes time with her extended family, she had largely resigned herself to the fact that she would never know the son that she gave away. Most of her family, including her children, had no idea that part of her life even existed.

Her secret seemed secure. It had lasted 50 years.

The very idea of writing a letter to the mother he’d never met was agonizing for Jason. Where we would even come up with the words?

For one thing, he had a fulfilling life. He was blessed in many ways. His law degree from the University of South Dakota spawned a career that included private practice and public service, leading to a faculty position at his alma mater.

He married his wife, Wanda, at Chapel of the Hills in Rapid City and has a family that includes two sons, one from her previous marriage and one who is a sophomore at Washington High School.

It should have been enough. But a lack of healthy identity development, an unfortunate byproduct of closed adoption, has been shown to stall feelings of contentment well into adult life.

The void demanded attention. He decided it was time to listen.

“The pang really started occurring was when I turned 50 last June and my wife kept asking me what I wanted for my 50th birthday,” says Jason. “I started thinking about what it means to be 50, and it was sort of a reaffirmation that family is important and that’s what I wanted for my birthday. But that included renewing the search for my birth mother, because she was 20 when she had me and I was turning 50 — so I knew my window could be closing.”

He talked to his wife, who was surprised to hear that thoughts of his past were so persistent.

“She didn’t know that I had this void,” says Jason. “She didn’t know that I had this pain. I mean, I had a good life with an amazing wife and wonderful children and great parents growing up. I just didn’t know how to talk to her about it. But once that conversation started, I made the decision that I was going to

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start putting pieces of the puzzle together.”

The emergence of genetic testing sites such as 23andMe and Ancestry have made searching for biological parents and adoptees more accessible, with the caveat that not everyone wants to be found.

“Sometimes the other party is caught off guard when they get a phone call out of the blue,” says Ryan Hanlon, vice president of the National Council for Adoption. “It’s important to give them time and space to process the information.”

After Harris learned of his first cousin last summer and sent her a message, leading to conversations with his aunt, the process moved slowly. Neither of them knew that an adoption had taken place.

More research led to North Carolina and the existence of Sandi, whose age matched the information Harris received as a college student. When he pinpointed a likely address last September, it was time to start writing a letter that would take him nearly two weeks to compose.

He assured her that he was loved by his adoptive family and he appreciated her “courageous decision” to give him life. He had questions about health-related issues and inquired about family medical history. And, most consequentially, he expressed a desire for reunification so he could meet her and other members of his birth family.

“I made sure I gave her an out, because you don’t know what’s happening on the other side,” he says. “I had a friend who was adopted and reached out to the birth mother and was told, ‘I don’t want to have anything to do with you.’ So I took my time and was careful in my wording, because it was unlike any letter that I would ever write in my life.”

Sandi Arrington walked down to her mailbox last October and started sifting through assorted bills. Then she spotted an envelope that changed everything in an instant.

“I saw the return address and knew exactly what it was,” says Sandi, who also received a photo of her son. “My first reaction was joy in knowing he was OK, because I had no idea. I had wondered for many years. That was very reassuring.”

There were other emotions as well, most of them complicated. Sandi had forged an entire existence after returning from Sioux Falls more than 50 years earlier, with a family and career and moments that comprised the story of her life. Only her husband knew that the story had a missing chapter.

Her niece was getting married and Thanksgiving was coming fast. The thought of tossing a family bombshell into the mix, however well it would be received, made her delay her response. She needed time to figure things out.

“Trying to maintain a balance was challenging,” she says. “His letter was a gift to me, and it took me a while to process everything that was going on. I knew I was going to respond, but it took me a while to figure out exactly what I wanted to write.”

Phil was a writer by trade and helped with the family history. But Sandi knew that no one else could adequately express the feelings of a mother toward her son, even one she had never laid eyes on. By the time she found her balance and composed an email that she felt was fit to send, it was nearly Christmas.

Her son had given her a gift. It was time to return the favor.

Jason Harris was not in the holiday spirit. His family was celebrating Christmas Eve in Sioux Falls and certain essentials had been forgotten, requiring a run to the grocery store. He had drawn the assignment.

His mood was already soured by the fact that he had not heard from his birth mother despite sending that carefully crafted letter several months earlier. The phone call from his aunt in early December let him know he had the right person and address, but no more progress had been made.

“So I find myself in the Hy-Vee checkout line and I’ve got my phone out and I’m thinking I might as well check my email,” he says. “And there it was, an email from Sandi Arrington that said ‘Happy Christmas’ on the subject line, and I knew I needed to get out of there pretty quick.”

He hurried to his car for privacy before pulling up the email and letting the words unfold.

Dearest Jason, he read while fighting back tears in the parking lot. Fifty Christmases and birthdays have passed, and I’ve thought of you on every one of them. I never saw you, so to have a visual image is a gift. Such a gift.

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"I sat there and read through it and read it again and cried and then realized that I needed to get home," he says. "And I totally forgot what it was that I was mad about."

That sparked a line of communication that started with emails, moved to Facebook messages and led to the first phone call between mother and son on Feb. 3, 2019, which was Super Bowl Sunday.

"The first few minutes were sort of awkward," says Jason. "I mean, how do you have that conversation? And then we ended up talking for probably two hours that night and it seemed totally normal. I think 50-year-old Jason was a lot more ready for that conversation than 18-year-old Jason."

Both were busy in their daily lives. Jason had recently returned from a trip to England with a group of Augustana students where he taught a course on Brexit, and Sandi was feeling the brunt of tax season.

But they finally broached the subject of a reunion and negotiated a date in March, during Jason's spring break. He booked his flight to North Carolina and waited for perhaps the most meaningful moment in his life to arrive.

The flight was late, but she kept her cool. Sandi had gone 50 years without seeing her son and could wait a few hours more.

When Jason's plane finally touched down at the Asheville airport and passengers disembarked, she saw the 5-foot-7 law professor collect himself and head her way. To anyone watching as they smiled and embraced, the physical resemblance would have made it clear that this was a mother and her son.

"To be able to hold him was incredible," says Sandi. "It was just like holding your baby for the first time — one of the most emotional points in a parent's life. Mine was just a little bit bigger than most."

Jason spent five days in Hendersonville, talking baseball with his sister Carrie and viewing Phil's artwork. He talked about his trip to England and his son's upcoming high school tennis season. Although his brother Bram was busy chaperoning a Cub Scout camping trip, Jason met the aunt who had helped his search as well as an uncle from Texas, who traveled just to meet him.

But most of the time was devoted to quiet moments with Sandi, who asked about his childhood in Rapid City and shared insights into decisions she had made. Rather than focus on the past, though, they nurtured their new relationship and appreciated the time they had left.

There's a picture of them at a restaurant where Jason is showing her something on his phone and she rests her head on his shoulder, showing a sense of ease and comfort undeterred by time.

Fifty years after the heyday of closed adoptions, marred by secrecy and shame, most experts agree that open communication and relationships with birth parents promote health identity development.

"Back then, there was a move toward maintaining privacy for the individual that was placed for adoption, thinking it would be helpful for that person," says Hanlon of the National Council for Adoption. "But now we see a trend toward encouraging connections with the birth family and allowing individuals to really own their story — and choose with whom they want to share it."

For Jason and Sandi, the adventure continues. She will fly to Sioux Falls next month to meet Jason's wife and two sons, coming full circle from her experience as a 20-year-old college student trying to safeguard her future while still giving life to another.

The notion that she would be able to go on forever without those lives converging was flawed, though it took a son's persistence to help their story unfold.

"I had a hole in my heart, and that hole was Jason," says Sandi. "I don't have a hole in my heart anymore. It's filling out, and it's been such an incredible gift to get to know and love him and finally count all 10 of his fingers. I've decided I'm going to trust him on the toes."

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

Meade School District loans historic painting to museum

By DEB HOLLAND Black Hills Pioneer

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Randy Bender has uncovered a gem that is now on display for all to see: While visiting Sturgis Brown High School, the president of board of directors of the Old Fort Meade Museum stumbled upon a watercolor painting of the 222-year-old USS Constitution, the oldest commissioned warship in the world still afloat.

Bender's discovery of the painting came while he was working with students at the high school a couple years ago.

He said he wrote down the information contained on a plaque that explained the painting and sent off an email to the USS Constitution Museum.

"I took a picture of it with my phone, and I asked them what information they could give me on it," he said to the Black Hills Pioneer.

A woman from the museum replied, saying that it looked like a Gordon Grant print that was sold from 1927-31 as a fundraiser for the re-fitting of the ship.

According to the Smithsonian American Art Museum, Grant's specialty was depictions of historic sailing vessels, such as the USS Constitution, also known as Old Ironsides.

It was one of six frigates authorized to be built under the Naval Armament Act of 1794. By 1925, the ship desperately needed work, and Congress authorized repairs, but stipulated it be paid for by public donations.

The Grant prints sold for 25 to 50 cents each. They also sold picture frames made of salvaged bits of the ship. An inscription on the frame reads: "The material was taken from the original hull of the U.S. Frigate Constitution keel laid in 1794."

The Sturgis High School Class of 1929 made the decision to buy a print and frame as their legacy gift to the school.

Nationwide, the effort raised \$750,000 — the equivalent of \$11 million in 2019.

"It's phenomenal that the public stepped up and did this. The school children alone sent in over \$300,000," Bender said.

Bender first noticed the painting in a trophy case at the end of a long hallway, and wanted to bring it to the museum for more people to view.

"I don't think anybody saw it out at the high school. If you weren't looking for it, you would never see it," he said.

Bender approached the school district about displaying the print at the museum. They initially declined allowing the painting to leave school property.

Bender asked again, and Superintendent Jeff Simmons agreed to loan the painting to the museum, saying it made sense to share the artifact.

"It seemed like this would be a good place to have it and get it out where a lot of people can see it," he said.



Randy Bender, president of board of directors of the Old Fort Meade Museum, and Meade School District Superintendent Jeff Simmons hold a framed print of the USS Constitution, aka Old Ironsides. (Deb Holland/Black Hills Pioneer via AP)

Bender tied the print into the Fort Meade story by displaying it next to the musical score for the Star-Spangled Banner.

Here's the tie-in: The USS Constitution played a significant role in the War of 1812, during which Francis Scott Key wrote the Star-Spangled Banner.

Fast-forward 78 years: In 1892, Col. Caleb H. Carlton began using the Star-Spangled Banner as part of the Retreat Ceremonies at Fort Meade — beginning a movement that made it our national anthem.

Rapid City woman motivates students with art after accident

By **ARIELLE ZIONTS** Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — “You can do hard things. Who believes that?” Leah Nixon asked an audience of fourth- and fifth-grade Rapid City students.

The students quickly shot their hands into the air, the Rapid City Journal reported.

Nixon, who delivered a multimedia talk recently at Wilson Elementary, knows a thing or two about completing difficult tasks and told students they too can achieve their goals through hard work, taking small steps and leaning on the support of those around you.

Last August, the 30-year-old Rapid City resident was working on a Habitat for Humanity home build when a forklift fell on top of her, leaving her trapped under the machine's crushing weight for about 30 minutes until she was removed by the Rapid City Fire Department and rushed to the hospital.

There, Nixon had eight surgeries, including multiple amputation and back procedures. The forklift damaged her spinal column, leaving her back, core and legs paralyzed, and she needed an above-the-knee amputation.

“I didn't care. I just wanted to survive,” Nixon told a student who asked if she was upset when she learned she wouldn't be able to walk.

After 29 days in the intensive care unit, Nixon took a medical helicopter to Craig Hospital in Denver, which specializes in rehabilitating spinal cord injuries. Three months later she transferred to QLI in Omaha, where she re-learned skills such as how to cook, exercise and drive using adaptive hand controls. Three more months and she was back in Rapid City where she continues to heal and focus on her art.

“I think it's a pretty amazing thing to come so close to dying and just being so grateful for what I have: My brain and my arms and my hands and a supportive family and a supportive community,” Nixon told the Journal. “Even though there's a lot of things that I can't do anymore, like run on the beautiful trails in Rapid City, I still get to be with my dog, I still get to be outside, and even just breathing or drinking a cup of coffee is something I can be really grateful for.”

During her presentation, Nixon projected photographs and videos of her life before the accident, work-



Leah Nixon, who was paralyzed in a construction accident a year ago, is surrounded by students from Wilson Elementary in Rapid City on Thursday, May 9, 2019. (Adam

Fondren/Rapid City Journal via AP)

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ing as a full-time builder with Habitat for Humanity and going on runs. She also documented her recovery from being immobilized in the ICU to learning how to sit up to returning home.

"It took me a long time to get here," Nixon told the students.

She explained how she had to learn how to hold her torso up without being able to activate her back and core muscles, and how she must use her hands to move her legs every 30 minutes since she can't feel pressure building up. Taking care of her body is equivalent to a "part-time job," she said.

Nixon challenged the students to make their own goal, whether it's being nice to their friends or finishing a long book. She said they should focus on taking small steps and using the support of others, like when her father motivated her to complete a marathon.

Nixon brought some of her paintings to show the students and projected daily comic sketches where she draws herself as a weasel or balancing egg going through recovery.

She first began drawing weasel cartoons at St. Thomas More High School, inspired by her Latin teacher who liked to use the word weasel, or mustela. Nixon renewed her interest in comics while studying art in college and drew daily comics for three years. She re-started the habit soon before her accident and began drawing her recovery-themed illustrations as soon as she could after the injury, about two weeks into her stay at the ICU.

Nixon, who had been focused on architecture and building before her accident, said she's happy to return to her artwork and has rented a space at the Racing Magpie Gallery.

The accident "really pushed me back towards painting and illustration and so I think it was a really exciting opportunity in some ways to be re-directed," she said. There are "paintings that I've been wanting to do for probably five years, I'm actually getting to do them now."

Nixon says she also hopes to create a graphic novel that illustrates her "journey through rehab" that would connect with other people dealing with spinal cord injuries as well as those who don't know anything about them.

Nixon and her sister Grace, who own a stationery company together, plan to launch a collection inspired by Leah's experience, focusing on sympathy and thank you cards, and ones that simply tell someone how much they mean to you.

"I think sometimes we don't really get to say those things to people and it was amazing to have so many people reach out to me and tell me that they love me and I think we often reserve those things for after people die, which is so disappointing," Nixon said. "We really believe that it's important to write those things and share those feelings with people."

Nixon hopes to buy a racing chair so she can get back into a sport that's similar to running, and is looking forward to marrying her fiance Kelsey Fitzgerald in July.

She said she was afraid to commit when Fitzgerald asked her to marry him a few years ago.

"In the ICU I realized that he was the exact right person to go through all of this with me and that I didn't want to do it without him," she said. "I asked him if he'd marry me and he said 'of course.'"

After her presentation to the students, she answered their questions about her injury, recovery and artwork. Questions included how did she learn to draw, how much does she sell her art for, what does she remember about the accident (nothing) and whom does she admire (her sister and U.S. Sen. Tammy Duckworth, an Army veteran, double amputee and the first senator to give birth in office).

It was Nixon's first time speaking about her accident in public and she wasn't sure if it would make sense to young kids. But she says the event went well and she hopes to do more.

"I hope that kids can kind of relate to (my journey) with setting goals in school, academically or in sports," she said.

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

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Pine Ridge man expected to plead guilty in a fatal ax attack

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A Pine Ridge man is expected to plead guilty to charges in a fatal ax attack, according to court documents related to a proposed plea agreement.

Emery Arapahoe plans to plead guilty to second-degree murder in the death of 24-year-old Raymond Waters Jr. and to arson for setting a mobile home where Waters was sleeping on fire in 2017, the court records indicate.

Prosecutors plan to drop charges of first-degree burglary and larceny and request dismissal of assault charges in two other cases against Arapahoe, according to the Rapid City Journal . He faces up to life in prison if convicted of the murder and arson charges.

Arapahoe messaged the victim's uncle, Nathaniel Waters, on Oct. 16, 2017, about meeting up at his trailer in Allen, according to the factual basis document signed by the defendant. Arapahoe found Ray Waters sleeping on the couch in the living room, grabbed an ax he found inside the trailer and used it to hit him "multiple times" on the head and neck, the document said. The victim died from "multiple traumatic injuries."

He used materials from a bedroom to set fire to the trailer, fled in a pickup truck and soon crashed, according to the document. Evidence of the killing, including a bloody towel, fell out of the truck during the crash, the document said.

Arapahoe, 18, was initially charged in juvenile court but has since had his case moved to adult court. A motive for the killing has not been revealed.

Arapahoe's change of plea hearing has not yet been scheduled.

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

Woman sentenced to 5 years for murder accessory

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A woman accused of leaving the body of a shooting victim in a rural Minnehaha County ditch has been sentenced to five years in prison.

Kelsey Roubideaux was sentenced Tuesday for accessory to a felony for helping dispose of the body of Lakendrick Thornton last September. Roubideaux's testimony was key in the trial of the man accused of killing Thornton. The 23-year-old woman pleaded guilty in March in exchange for her cooperation. The Argus Leader says charges of first-degree manslaughter and possession of a controlled substance were dropped.

Henry Little Long was convicted in April of second-degree murder and first-degree manslaughter for fatally shooting Thornton.

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

Spring wheat planting nears halfway point in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Planting of spring wheat in South Dakota is nearing the halfway point, and planting of corn is getting underway.

The Agriculture Department says in its weekly crop report that 46% of the spring wheat crop is seeded, along with 37% of oats. Corn planting is 4% done. Seeding of all three crops remains well behind the average pace.

Topsoil moisture supplies statewide remain rated 100% adequate to surplus, and subsoil moisture is still 99% in those categories.

The state's winter wheat crop is rated 1% very poor, 5% poor, 26% fair, 59% good and 9% excellent. Pasture and range conditions are rated mostly fair to good.

NYC Mayor de Blasio is seeking Democratic nod for president

By KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK CITY (AP) — New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio announced Thursday that he will seek the Democratic nomination for president, adding his name to an already long list of candidates itching for a chance to take on Donald Trump.

The mayor announced his run with a video released by his campaign.

"There's plenty of money in this world. There's plenty of money in this country. It's just in the wrong hands," de Blasio says at the beginning of the video.

He concludes: "I'm running for president because it's time we put working people first."

In announcing his candidacy, de Blasio seeks to claim a role on the national stage that has eluded him as mayor of the biggest U.S. city.

When he took office in 2014, de Blasio seemed briefly poised to become a leading voice for an emerging left wing of the Democratic Party.

But liberal enthusiasm faded over his first term, partly because of political missteps at home and the emergence of bigger names elsewhere. He could face obstacles trying to distinguish himself in a crowded field.

De Blasio, 58, has drawn small audiences so far in visits to early primary states including Iowa, South Carolina, Nevada and New Hampshire, where an audience of six showed up for a mental health discussion.

A recent Quinnipiac University poll found 76% of New York City voters say they believe he shouldn't run.

De Blasio's hometown press has, so far, delighted in disparaging his presidential hopes.

"De Blasio for President? 'Nah,'" read one recent New York Times headline summing up the city's reaction to his possible candidacy.

"Who hasn't told Bill de Blasio that he shouldn't run for president?" asked New York Magazine.

De Blasio, though, has remained undaunted by the obstacles and said he believes he has a message that can resonate with the American public.

Political observers said that even if de Blasio's candidacy doesn't catch fire, he'll be able to promote his policies and potentially angle for a job in a future Democratic administration. He is barred by term limits from running for mayor again.

"If he ran a strong and credible campaign, it could enhance his stature for gaining a major appointment or becoming a significant player, particularly if a Democrat is elected president," said Michael Malbin, a professor of political science at the University at Albany.

But Matthew Dallek, an associate professor of political management at George Washington University, said a losing White House campaign wouldn't come without risks.

"If his legacy is that a crisis happened and he was off campaigning in Iowa, that's significant," Dallek said. "So yeah, there are risks."



FILE - In this Jan 10, 2019, file photo, New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio speaks at his State of the City address in New York. De Blasio announced Thursday, May 16 that he will seek the Democratic nomination for president, adding his name to an already long list of candidates itching for a chance to take on Donald Trump. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig, File)

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On the campaign trail, de Blasio will be able to cite accomplishments like expanding full-day prekindergarten and curtailing police tactics that critics said were discriminatory, while presiding over continued drops in violent crime.

His central message remains fighting income inequality.

De Blasio was born Warren Wilhelm Jr. in 1961 but took his mother's family name in adulthood because, he said, his father was "largely absent from his life." The mayor has spoken about how his father, Warren Wilhelm, a veteran who lost part of his left leg in World War II, descended into alcoholism and killed himself when de Blasio was 18.

Born in New York City, de Blasio grew up in the Boston area and has provoked New York sports fans by rooting ardently for the Boston Red Sox. He graduated from New York University and earned a master's degree from Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs.

De Blasio met his wife, Chirlane McCray, when they both worked for Democratic Mayor David Dinkins. They married in 1994 and have two children, Chiara and Dante.

De Blasio was elected to a local school board in his Brooklyn neighborhood in 1999 and won a City Council seat in 2001. In 2009, he was elected to the citywide position of public advocate, a job that holds little real power but comes with a bully pulpit that allowed de Blasio to build a reputation as a champion of regular citizens in a city built for the powerful.

He was not initially favored to win the 2013 race for the Democratic nomination for mayor but was helped by the implosion of rival Anthony Weiner's campaign after the disgraced former congressman was accused in a new sexting scandal.

De Blasio defeated Republican Joe Lhota by a wide margin in the 2013 general election for mayor. He won reelection in 2017, defeating Republican state Assemblywoman Nicole Malliotakis by 39 percentage points.

With his candidacy, de Blasio becomes the latest in a line of New York City mayors who have run for president. None has ever won.

John Lindsay sought the office in 1972. Rudy Giuliani ran in 2008. Michael Bloomberg flirted with a run for years before ruling it out in both the 2016 and 2020 campaigns.

Missouri Senate joins GOP anti-abortion wave with 8-week ban

By SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri's Republican-led Senate has passed a wide-ranging bill to ban abortions at eight weeks of pregnancy, acting only hours after Alabama's governor signed a near-total abortion ban into law.

The Missouri bill needs another vote of approval in the GOP-led House before it can go to Republican Gov. Mike Parson, who voiced support for an earlier version Wednesday.

It includes exceptions for medical emergencies, but not for pregnancies caused by rape or incest. Doctors would face five to 15 years in prison for violating the eight-week cutoff. Women who receive abortions wouldn't be prosecuted.

Republican Senate handler Sen. Andrew Koenig described it on Thursday as "one of the strongest" abortion bills yet passed in the U.S.

Missouri joins a movement of GOP-dominated state legislatures emboldened by the possibility that a more conservative Supreme Court could overturn its landmark ruling legalizing the procedure. Its senators voted only hours after Alabama's governor signed the most stringent abortion ban in the nation on Wednesday, making performing an abortion a felony in nearly all cases.

Outnumbered Missouri Senate Democrats launched into an attack on the bill before Republican supporters had a chance to bring it up for debate on the Senate floor.

"So much of this bill is just shaming women into some kind of complacency that says we are vessels of pregnancy rather than understanding that women's lives all hold different stories," St. Louis-area Democratic Sen. Jill Schupp said.

Missouri is among a growing number of states where abortion opponents are working with renewed

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FILE - In this Jan. 16, 2019, file photo, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson delivers his State of the State address in Jefferson City, Mo. Parson on Wednesday, May 15, called on state senators to take action on a bill to ban abortions at eight weeks of pregnancy, the latest GOP-dominated state emboldened by the possibility that a more conservative Supreme Court could overturn its landmark ruling legalizing the procedure. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel, File)

enthusiasm following President Donald Trump's appointment of more conservative high court justices. Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio and Georgia have approved bans on abortion once fetal cardiac activity can be detected, which can occur in about the sixth week of pregnancy. Similar restrictions in North Dakota and Iowa have been struck down in court.

Supporters say the Alabama bill is intentionally designed to conflict with the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationally in hopes of sparking a court case that might prompt the justices to revisit abortion rights.

Missouri's bill also includes an outright ban on abortions except in cases of medical emergencies. But unlike Alabama's, it would kick in only if Roe v. Wade is overturned.

If courts don't allow Missouri's proposed eight-week ban to take effect, it includes a ladder of less-restrictive time limits ranging from 14 to 20 weeks. Roe v. Wade legalized abortion

up until viability, which is usually at 22 to 24 weeks.

"This is not a piece of legislation that is designed for a challenge," Missouri's Republican House Speaker Elijah Haahr said. "This is the type of legislation that is designed to withstand a challenge and to actually save lives in our state."

Republicans and Democrats worked for hours to reach a compromise on the bill, which included an expansion of tax credits for donations to pregnancy resource centers, and waters down other provisions.

The approved version of the wide-ranging bill bans abortions based solely on race, sex or a "prenatal diagnosis, test, or screening indicating Down Syndrome or the potential of Down Syndrome." It also requires that both parents be notified for a minor to get an abortion, but a change was made after hours of late-night negotiations to remove the requirement when a parent lacks legal or physical custody. Current law requires written consent from only one parent.

Still, some lawmakers on both sides of the debate walked away unhappy.

Democrat Schrupp said even after changes, it's "an extreme and egregious piece of legislation that puts women's health at risk."

"It is outrageous that it has no exemptions for victims of human trafficking, rape or incest," she said.

Republican Sen. Bob Onder said negotiators went too far to compromise, leaving the bill "a shadow of what it once was."

"This should be entitled not the 'Missouri Stands for the Unborn Act,'" Onder told colleagues on the Senate floor, "but the 'Missouri Stands for the Unborn Act, sort of kind of only after the minority party and the strongest Planned Parenthood lawyers in the country were done with the bill.'"

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. IRAN BLASTS US SANCTIONS AS TENSIONS MOUNT

Iran's foreign minister slams mounting U.S. sanctions as "unacceptable," even as he insists Tehran is committed to an international nuclear deal.

2. MISSOURI PASSES STRICT ABORTION BILL

Just hours after Alabama's governor signed a near-total abortion ban into law, Missouri's Republican-led Senate passes legislation to ban abortions at eight weeks of pregnancy.

3. DE BLASIO ENTERS 2020 RACE

The mayor of New York City will be joining a crowded field of Democrats running for president in 2020.

4. TRUMP HITS HUAWEI

An executive order apparently aims to ban the telecom giant's equipment from U.S. networks and says it is subjecting the Chinese company to strict export controls.

5. EUROPE'S FAR-RIGHT WOOING THE YOUNG

Far-right candidates in their 20s and 30s are using aggressive social media campaigns playing on themes favored by white supremacists in the U.S., the AP finds.

6. BORDER SECURITY, GREEN CARD CHANGES DRIVE NEW TRUMP PROPOSAL

The immigration policy shift would favor people with high-level skills, degrees and job offers instead of relatives of those already in the country.

7. WHERE HOLLYWOOD HAS REMAINED SILENT

In the week since Georgia banned abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected, there has been no oppositional movement from any of the major film and TV studios.

8. SCHOOLS USING TECH TO STEM VIOLENCE

Gunshot detection systems, apps and artificial intelligence are becoming more common to combat school shootings.

9. PERILOUS GAP BEFUDDLES PANAMANIANIANS

Authorities are struggling to contend with a spike in the number of migrants risking the journey through the Darien Gap, one of the most dangerous stretches of the migratory route toward the U.S., AP reports.

10. BUCKS FINISH STRONG TO TAKE GAME 1 OF EAST FINALS

Brook Lopez scores 13 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter and Milwaukee rallies in the final minutes to beat Toronto 108-100.



During debate in the Missouri Senate in Jefferson City Wednesday, May 15, 2019, Freshman senator, Karla May, D-St. Louis, makes a point regarding Missouri's proposed new abortion law. Opponents of the bill have begun efforts to block it in that legislative body. The bill would prohibit an abortion after the unborn baby's heartbeat is detected.

(Sally Ince/The Jefferson City News-Tribune via AP)

'Gift from God:' Alabama governor bans nearly all abortions

By KIM CHANDLER and BLAKE PATERSON Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Alabama's Republican governor has signed the most stringent abortion legislation in the nation, making performing an abortion a felony in nearly all cases.

"To the bill's many supporters, this legislation stands as a powerful testament to Alabamians' deeply held belief that every life is precious and that every life is a sacred gift from God," Gov. Kay Ivey said in a statement after signing it into law on Wednesday.

The law's sponsors want to give conservatives on the U.S. Supreme Court a chance to gut abortion rights nationwide.

Democrats and abortion rights advocates criticized the legislation as a slap in the face to women.

"It just completely disregards women and the value of women and their voice. We have once again silenced women on a very personal issue," said Sen. Linda Coleman-Madison, a Birmingham Democrat.

The abortion ban would go into effect in six months if it isn't blocked by legal challenges.

Coleman-Madison said she hopes the measure awakens a "sleeping giant" of women voters in the state.

But Republican pollster Chris Kratzer noted that there is no congressional district and likely no legislative district in Alabama with enough swing voters to put Republicans at serious risk.

"The people who are outraged about this are not the people who are electing these guys, generally speaking, especially when we're talking about the primary," he said.

Kratzer also argued that there aren't enough potential swing voters and disenchanted Republicans to make the issue any kind of advantage for the lone Democrat elected to statewide office, U.S. Sen. Doug Jones, who scored a surprise win in a 2017 special election.

Jones upset Republican Roy Moore, in part on the strength of GOP-leaning college graduates abandoning the controversial Moore. But Kratzer said that was more about Moore's long history of flouting federal courts as chief justice of the Alabama Supreme Court and accusations that Moore sexually harassed teens when he was in his 30s — not Moore's hardline stance on abortion.

The legislation Alabama senators passed Tuesday would make performing an abortion at any stage of pregnancy a felony punishable by 10 to 99 years or life in prison for the provider. There is no exception for pregnancies resulting from rape and incest.

The only exception would be when the woman's health is at serious risk. Women seeking or undergoing abortions wouldn't be punished.

Rep. Terri Collins, the bill's sponsor, said she believes the measure reflects the beliefs of the majority of



This photograph released by the state shows Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey signing a bill that virtually outlaws abortion in the state on Wednesday, May 15, 2019, in Montgomery, Ala. Republicans who support the measure hope challenges to the law will be used by conservative justices on the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the Roe v. Wade decision which legalized abortion nationwide. (Hal Yeager/Alabama Governor's Office via AP)

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the state electorate. The vote came after 59% of state voters in November agreed to write anti-abortion language in the Alabama Constitution, saying the state recognizes the rights of the “unborn.”

Ivey acknowledged Wednesday that the measure may be unenforceable in the short term, and even supporters expect it to be blocked by lower courts as they fight toward the Supreme Court.

“It’s to address the issue that Roe. v. Wade was decided on. Is that baby in the womb a person?” Collins said.

Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio and Georgia recently approved bans on abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected, which can occur in about the sixth week of pregnancy. Missouri’s Republican-led Senate voted early Thursday to ban abortions at eight weeks, with no rape or incest exceptions.

The Alabama bill goes further by seeking to ban abortion outright.

Abortion rights advocates vowed swift legal action.

“We haven’t lost a case in Alabama yet and we don’t plan to start now. We will see Governor Ivey in court,” said Staci Fox, president and CEO of Planned Parenthood Southeast.

Evangelist Pat Robertson on his television show Wednesday said the Alabama law is “extreme” and opined it may not be the best one to bring to the U.S. Supreme Court in the hopes of overturning Roe “because I think this one will lose.”

“God bless them they are trying to do something,” Robertson said.

One mile (1.6 kilometers) from the Alabama Statehouse — down the street from the Governor’s Mansion — sits Montgomery’s only abortion clinic, one of three performing abortions in the state.

Clinic staff on Wednesday fielded calls from patients, and potential patients, assuring them that abortion remains legal, for now.

Dr. Yashica Robinson, who provides abortions in Huntsville, said her clinic similarly fielded calls from frightened patients.

“This is a really sad day for women in Alabama and all across the nation,” she said. “It’s like we have just taken three steps backwards as far as women’s rights and being able to make decisions that are best for them and best for their families.”

But Robinson said the bill is also having a galvanizing effect. With phone lines jammed, she said messages came streaming across their fax machine.

“We had letters coming across the fax just asking what they can do to help and telling us they are sending us their love and support our way,” Robinson said.

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Europe’s far-right parties court youth candidates and voters

By LORI HINNANT Associated Press

BOKRIJK, Belgium (AP) — They are strikingly young, but emphatic that they should not be considered newcomers. Rather, they are claiming the mantle of Old Europe at its most traditional.

Several of this year’s far-right candidates in Europe are well under 30 — as are some of their most ardent supporters. In Belgium, the telegenic Dries Van Langenhove, who is among the top picks on the list for the far-right party Vlaams Belang, is 26. In France, the head of the National Rally slate for the upcoming European elections is 23 and has been a card-carrying party member since the age of 16. In Denmark, the lead candidate from the Danish People’s Party is a 29-year-old who is already a veteran campaigner. And in Spain, the chief spokesman for the Vox party is 27 and was elected to parliament last month.

These candidates are part of a growing attempt by Europe’s far-right parties to gear their anti-migration, Euroskeptic message to the young, with everything from beer nights for adults and bouncy castles for kids to an outsized presence on social media, the Associated Press has found. Young European voters are responding with a rightward shift faster and farther than their elders — as illustrated by voting results or party rolls from Italy, France, Spain and Austria. The trend could have major implications for this month’s

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elections , which decide the makeup of the European Parliament as well as some national governments, as in Belgium.

"The far right has made a very explicit effort to pander to younger audiences. They've essentially re-branded themselves," said Julia Ebner, a researcher with the Institute for Strategic Dialogue , a left-leaning think tank. "Far-right political parties have been most active in engaging with social media users."

The far right has also succeeded at picking up on existing grievances and fears among young people and at using their language and cultural reference points, she said.

It's a significant change from where the far right found itself in Europe's postwar era: identified with the Nazis and a Holocaust that killed 6 million Jews, marginalized by governments and eclipsed by a unifying Europe. Opponents say today's far-right candidates have given new window-dressing to old racist beliefs and an implicit

call for violence, pushing a pro-Christian, anti-Islam ideology that Belgium's security services describe as "extreme right in a white collar." Only now they're appealing to a demographic with no memories of where extremist beliefs once led the continent -- to a world war that left almost all of Europe in rubble.

Every country defines and measures its young voters slightly differently. But the trend is unmistakable.

Across Europe, the right has gained ground with the electorate in general, but its strength among young voters who traditionally lean left has come as a surprise, according to poll estimates. In Italy, 17 percent of voters aged 18 to 34 voted for the League in 2018, compared to just 5 percent in 2013. In Austria , 30 percent of the youngest voters chose the Freedom Party in 2017, up from 22 percent in 2013, making it the most popular party among those ages 16 to 29. And in Germany , the AfD's gains were notable while support from the youngest voters for the Green Party barely changed. France's vote showed similar trends.

Belgium's Van Langenhove has 31,000 Instagram followers and a strong presence on social media. Until recently isolated as racist by the rest of the political spectrum, the Flemish independence party Vlaams Belang whose slate he leads in Flemish Brabant has a handful of seats in the parliament and a plan to more than double that.

Van Langenhove is also the leader of Schild en Vrienden, a Flemish nationalist movement known for anti-immigration stunts and named in Belgium's annual report last year on extremist groups as national security concerns. The report did not accuse the group of violence but noted that the movement "deserves our attention."

On a recent spring holiday in a historic park, Van Langenhove's larger-than-life photo was plastered across the Vlaams Belang campaign vans. They were parked alongside the cars of thousands of party supporters and their children, who split their time between anti-immigration speeches inside and an outside festival that included face-painting, bouncy castles and a stand for the book "The Kidnapping of Europe."

Louis Beernaert, 27, has been coming to Vlaams Belang meetings with his father and sister since he was



FILE - In this Friday, April 26, 2019 file photo, far-right Vox party supporters attend an election campaign event in Madrid, Spain. In Spain, Vox's gains have come at the expense of traditional conservatives, who were slow to counter the upstart party's rise among the young. Its events include the popular "Pints for Spain" evenings at bars, nightclubs and cafes, where no one over 25 is allowed through the door. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangué)

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a child. Now his sister's husband and their toddler have joined also. They were all in favor of the party's new faces, which include its 32-year-old president, Tom Van Grieken.

"It needed to get younger," Beernaert said. "Their ideas are the same, but they say them in a less radical way."

Van Langenhove, who holds his torso like a boxer, posed for selfies and chatted with party leaders sometimes decades his senior without a flicker of deference.

He avoids direct discussion of race in favor of what he calls identity. But he routinely posts on social media about "replacement," a term used by white supremacists in the U.S. and Europe for the idea that European populations are being culturally and ethnically replaced by minorities. "Our People First" is the Vlaams Belang slogan.

Even though migration to Europe has slowed to a trickle, the continent is still grappling with the after-effects of the hundreds of thousands of people who arrived in the past few years alone. Belgium's foreign-born population went from just under 12 percent to nearly 17 percent between 2006 and 2017, not including people who slipped in illegally. In France, asylum requests last year topped out at 123,625 — an increase of 23 percent from 2017, when they had already risen 17 percent.

In repeated surveys of young Europeans, including one released this month by the TUI Foundation, migration and asylum are described as Europe's most pressing issue. The environment comes in a distant second.

Vlaams Belang's decision to name Van Langenhove came after the Belgian network VRT linked him to racist and sexist messages in closed chat rooms. He dismissed the show as a "smear," but it prompted protests at the Ghent campus where he was studying law and got him banned briefly. Later, he was suspended from Facebook for content that violated the social network's terms of service. He is now more circumspect online and in front of the camera.

"Everything is on the table right now, it's an all-in game. And that's why more young people are taking the risk of associating themselves with right wing nationalist groups and organizations," he told The Associated Press. "Young people are right in the middle of the problems. Older people, they move to the countryside, they move to areas where there's not a lot of foreigners. But young people have to move to the cities for their jobs, for their education."

Jobs are a sore point, with youth unemployment at around 15 percent in Belgium, just above the European Union average, and 20 percent in France. Vlaams Belang is hoping its message of economic protectionism will help the party, which has forged links in France with Marine Le Pen's National Rally party as well as the loose far-right alliance that includes Italy's League, Austria's Freedom Party, Britain's UKIP, the German far-right AfD and the Danish People's Party.

In March, the young far-right leaders from all those parties and more gathered in Rome, where a 23-year-old raised by a single mother in a suburban Paris housing project was one of the stars. Jordan Bardella's brief speech to a young audience hit many of the same notes as Jean-Marie Le Pen's from decades ago.

"Another challenge of our generation will be immigration. Confronted with the demographic bomb that is Africa, it is the survival of our peoples, our civilizations, our Christian roots that is at stake today," the National Rally candidate tweeted on March 29 .

Marine Le Pen re-branded her father's far-right National Front party as the National Rally after losing the presidency to Emmanuel Macron in 2017. Despite the loss, she made important inroads among young French voters over her previous attempt in 2012, easily outstripping all the traditional parties in polling among the young as well as the far-left candidate. She clearly took something away from the experience. The head of her party list this year is Bardella, an acolyte who joined the National Front at age 16 and swiftly rose to lead its youth movement and that of its successor.

Bardella is nearly as explicit as Van Langenhove about the young leading the way against waves of mass migration and rules from Brussels. While Van Langenhove used a medieval Flemish castle in an elaborate stunt against pro-migrant activists, Bardella uses Old France as his backdrop — casks of Cognac, golden fields, even the classic French comic book characters Asterix and Obelix . He is growing increasingly confident about campaigning on his own, especially with recent stumbles by Macron's party.

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"The generation that is committed to nationalist political movements today is the generation that tomorrow will be called upon to lead Europe," Bardella told The Associated Press.

That is exactly what Pawel Zerka fears. A researcher with the left-leaning European Council on Foreign Relations, he said the mainstream parties have barely made an effort to appeal to younger voters, seeing them as a lost cause because so few actually turn out.

"So many young voters across Europe don't believe the future will be better than today and they believe the past was better than today," he said, citing repeated surveys. "The current European Union or the (mainstream) parties don't offer a credible or attractive vision for the future for the young."

The far right is stepping in. In Denmark, Peter Kofod, 29, has risen steadily since his first election in 2014 to city council. The following year, he became chairman of the youth wing of the anti-immigrant, populist Danish People's Party, which drew votes from a fifth of young voters.

In Spain, Vox's gains have come at the expense of traditional conservatives, who were slow to counter the upstart party's rise among the young. Its events include the popular 'Pints for Spain' evenings at bars, nightclubs and cafes, where no one over 25 is allowed through the door.

Under Manuel Mariscal, the 27-year-old Vox spokesman and a newly elected lawmaker, the main Instagram channel has more than 300,000 followers, more than half of them younger than 34. A lot of its outreach happens on WhatsApp, where Vox's Madrid youth operation has nearly 1,750 active members.

"A young kid who is highly motivated is capable of convincing many others. He talks to friends, he debates constantly with others, with family, that enthusiasm is contagious," said Luis Felipe Ulecia, the 24-year-old vice secretary for youth. A bracelet with the Spanish flag around his left wrist, he spoke to AP at a working-class bar in northern Madrid about the party's effort to recruit among the young.

"We are not looking for high-and-mighty young leaders... they need to be street-smart, they need to know about Spain's countryside, and they need to have been to the polígonos," he said in reference to the factory hubs in the cities' periphery.

He later led a small outing of well-dressed young supporters in unfriendly territory in Barcelona, handing out pamphlets to anyone willing to take them and at one point carefully confronting leftist activists.

Although the party has a tiny footprint in Spain — elections in April made it the No. 5 political party in the parliament's lower house — it's already influencing the political debate on migration or the country's territorial unity. Still, Vox's vote total was far lower than its social media following would indicate.

This shows a possible ceiling for the ability of far-right groups to translate likes to votes, according to Manuel Mostaza Barrios, an analyst at the Madrid-based Atrevia consulting group.

As he put it: "The candidates most followed on social media aren't necessarily those that get the most votes."

Aritz Parra contributed from Madrid, along with Elaine Ganley in Paris, Jan M. Olsen in Copenhagen, David Rising and Frank Jordans in Berlin, and Raf Casert in Brussels.

China criticizes US action against Huawei

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China vowed Thursday to "resolutely safeguard" Chinese companies after Washington labeled telecom equipment giant Huawei a security risk and imposed export curbs on U.S. technology sales to the company.

A foreign ministry spokesman, Lu Kang, criticized the moves as an "abuse of export control measures" after the Trump administration issued an order requiring Huawei to obtain government permission for purchases.

Huawei Technologies Ltd., the biggest global maker of switching equipment for phone companies, has spent a decade fighting accusations it facilitates Chinese spying.

"We urge the United States to stop the wrong approach," said a foreign ministry spokesman, Lu Kang. "China will take further necessary measures to resolutely safeguard the legitimate rights and interests of

Chinese enterprises.”

Lu gave no details, but analysts warned the export controls threaten to worsen a U.S.-Chinese conflict over technology and trade.

The restriction is “a grave escalation with China that at minimum plunges the prospect of continued trade negotiations into doubt,” said Eurasia Group analysts in a report.

“Unless handled carefully, this situation is likely to place U.S. and Chinese companies at new risk,” the report said.

President Donald Trump also issued an executive order Wednesday that bans phone carriers from using technology of “foreign adversaries” deemed to pose “unacceptable risks” to national security.

While it doesn’t name specific countries or companies, it follows months of U.S. pressure on Huawei. It gives the Commerce Department 150 days to come up with regulations.

A Ministry of Commerce spokesman, Gao Feng, gave a similar warning about “necessary measures” at a separate news conference but also gave no details of possible official steps.

Chinese retaliation against U.S. tariff hikes has included targeting American companies in China by slowing down customs clearance and issuance of business licenses.

Trump’s order addresses U.S. government concerns that equipment from Chinese suppliers could pose an espionage threat to U.S. internet and telecommunications infrastructure.

Huawei said blocking it from doing business in the United States would hamper introduction of next-generation communications technology in which the company is a world leader.

“We are ready and willing to engage with the U.S. government and come up with effective measures to ensure product security,” the company said in a statement.

Associated Press researcher Liu Zheng contributed.



Shoppers browse smartphones at a Huawei retail store in Hangzhou in eastern China’s Zhejiang province, Thursday, May 16, 2019. In a fateful swipe at telecommunications giant Huawei, the Trump administration issued an executive order Wednesday apparently aimed at banning its equipment from U.S. networks and said it was subjecting the Chinese company to strict export controls. (Chinatopix via AP)

Huawei hit by US export controls, potential import ban

By FRANK BAJAK and TALI ARBEL Associated Press

In a fateful swipe at telecommunications giant Huawei, the Trump administration issued an executive order Wednesday apparently aimed at banning its equipment from U.S. networks and said it was subjecting the Chinese company to strict export controls.

Huawei would be the largest business ever subjected to the controls, a law enforcement measure that requires it to obtain U.S. government approval on purchases of American technology, said Kevin Wolf, who had been the assistant secretary of commerce for export administration in the Obama administration.

“It’s going to have ripple effects through the entire global telecommunications network because Huawei affiliates all over the planet depend on U.S. content to function and if they can’t get the widget or the

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part or the software update to keep functioning then those systems go down," he said.

Asked if that could include barring Google from selling its Android operating system, which Huawei uses on its handsets, Wolf said it would be premature to say until he's seen a published order from the Commerce Department's Bureau of Industry and Security to be sure of the scope.

The executive order declares a national economic emergency that empowers the government to ban the technology and services of "foreign adversaries" deemed to pose "unacceptable risks" to national security — including from cyberespionage and sabotage.

While it doesn't name specific countries or companies, it follows months of U.S. pressure on Huawei. It gives the Commerce Department 150 days to come up with regulations.

Washington and Beijing are locked in a trade war that partly reflects a struggle for global economic and technological dominance, and Wednesday's actions up the ante.

The export restriction is "a grave escalation with China that at minimum plunges the prospect of continued trade negotiations into doubt," said Eurasia Group analysts in a report.

"Unless handled carefully, this situation is likely to place U.S. and Chinese companies at new risk," the report said.

It appears the law invoked in Wednesday's executive order, the 1977 International Emergency Economic Powers Act, has never before been declared in a way that impacts an entire commercial sector. It has routinely been used to freeze the assets of designated terrorists and drug traffickers and impose embargoes on hostile former governments.

The order addresses U.S. government concerns that equipment from Chinese suppliers could pose an espionage threat to U.S. internet and telecommunications infrastructure. Huawei, the world's biggest supplier of network gear, has been deemed a danger in U.S. national security circles for the better part of a decade.

U.S. justice and intelligence officials say Chinese economic espionage and trade secret theft are rampant. They have presented no evidence, however, of any Huawei equipment in the U.S. or elsewhere being compromised by backdoors installed by the manufacturer to facilitate espionage by Beijing. Huawei vehemently denies involvement in Chinese spying.

Huawei said blocking it from doing business in the United States would hamper introduction of next-generation communications technology in which the company is a world leader.

"We are ready and willing to engage with the U.S. government and come up with effective measures to ensure product security," the company said in a statement.

The restrictions "will not make the U.S. more secure or stronger," the company said. It said the United States would be limited to "inferior yet more expensive alternatives," which would hurt companies and



FILE - In this Thursday, March 7, 2019 file photo, the Texas state flag flies outside the Huawei Technologies Ltd. business location in Plano, Texas. President Donald Trump issued an executive order Wednesday, May 15, 2019, apparently aimed at banning equipment from Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei from U.S. networks. It does not name specific countries or companies and gives the Department of Commerce 150 days to come up with regulations. (AP Photo/Tony Gutierrez, File)

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consumers.

A senior U.S. administration official, who briefed reports on condition of anonymity, said in a hastily arranged call that the order was "company and country agnostic" and would not be retroactive. Officials said "interim regulations" were expected before final rules were set but were vague on what that meant.

In a statement, Federal Communications Commission Chairman Ajit Pai called the executive order "a significant step toward securing America's networks."

"It signals to U.S. friends and allies how far Washington is willing to go to block Huawei," said Adam Segal, cybersecurity director at the Council on Foreign Relations. Many in Europe have resisted a fierce U.S. diplomatic campaign to institute a wholesale ban on the Chinese company's equipment in their next-generation 5G wireless networks.

Democratic Sen. Mark Warner, vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee and a former telecoms executive, called the order "a needed step" because Chinese law compels Huawei to act as an agent of the state.

The order's existence in draft form was first reported by The Washington Post last June. Segal said that with U.S.-China trade talks at a standstill, the White House "felt the time had finally come to pull the trigger."

It is a "low-cost signal of resolve from the Trump administration," Segal said, noting that there is little at stake economically.

All major U.S. wireless carriers and internet providers had already sworn off Chinese-made equipment after a 2012 report by the House Intelligence Committee said Huawei and ZTE, China's No. 2 telecoms equipment company, should be excluded as enablers of Beijing-directed espionage.

Last year, Trump signed a bill that barred the U.S. government and its contractors from using equipment from the Chinese suppliers.

The FCC also has a rule in the works that would cut off subsidies for companies that use any equipment banned as posing a national security threat. Huawei's handsets are virtually nonexistent in the U.S., and last week the FCC rejected a Chinese phone company's bid to provide domestic service.

Huawei says it supplies 45 of the world's top 50 phone companies. But only about 2 percent of telecom equipment purchased by North American carriers was Huawei-made in 2017.

The domestic economic impact will be restricted mostly to small rural carriers for whom Huawei equipment has been attractive because of its lower costs. That could make it more difficult to expand access to speedy internet in rural areas.

Blair Levin, an adviser to research firm New Street Research and a former FCC official, said the order is likely to widen the digital divide.

Roger Entner, founder of telecom research firm Recon Analytics, tweeted: "Banning Huawei in the U.S. has the FCC in a conundrum: Low cost Huawei equipment helps to build out broadband in rural America faster." He wondered if the FCC would subsidize small rural carriers.

Requests for comment from a group representing small carriers, the Competitive Carriers Association, were not immediately returned. Administration officials told reporters they will welcome comments from the telecommunications industry as regulations are set.

They did not say whether subsidies would be considered.

Early this year, the Justice Department unsealed criminal charges against Huawei, a top company executive and several subsidiaries, alleging the company stole trade secrets, misled banks about its business and violated U.S. sanctions on Iran. The sweeping indictments accused the company of using extreme efforts to steal trade secrets from American businesses — including trying to take a piece of a robot from a T-Mobile lab.

The executive charged is Huawei's chief financial officer, Meng Wanzhou, who is also the daughter of the company's founder. She was arrested in Canada last December. The U.S. is seeking to extradite her.

Author of flattering Trump biography gets pardon from Trump

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press



FILE - In this Jan. 13, 2011 file photo, Conrad Black arrives at the federal building in Chicago. President Donald Trump has granted a full pardon to Black, a former newspaper publisher who has written a flattering political biography of Trump. Black's media empire once included the Chicago Sun-Times and The Daily Telegraph of London. (AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast, File)

Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast, File)

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Wednesday granted a full pardon to Conrad Black, a former newspaper publisher who has written a flattering political biography of Trump.

Black's media empire once included the Chicago Sun-Times and The Daily Telegraph of London. He was convicted of fraud in 2007 and spent three and a half years in prison. An appeals court reversed two convictions, but left two others in place.

White House press secretary Sarah Sanders said Black "has made tremendous contributions to business, and to political and historical thought."

In 2018, Black published "Donald J. Trump: A President Like No Other." He wrote a column Wednesday in Canada's National Post describing how Trump called him and revealed the pardon.

"He could not have been more gracious and quickly got to his point: he was granting me a full pardon," wrote Black, who used much of the rest of

the column to explain the case. He called it a long ordeal that was "never anything but a confluence of unlucky events, the belligerence of several corporate governance charlatans, and grandstanding local and American judges, all fanned by an unusually frenzied international media showing exceptional interest in the case because I was a media owner."

In 2015, Black wrote a National Review essay titled "Trump Is the Good Guy." Trump tweeted it was an "honor" to read the piece, adding, "As one of the truly great intellects & my friend, I won't forget!"

The former media mogul was convicted of defrauding investors. A former member of the British House of Lords, he was sentenced to more than six years in prison after his 2007 conviction in Chicago, but was released on bail two years later to pursue an appeal that was partially successful. A judge reduced his sentence to three years.

Sanders said Black is the author of several notable biographies, including volumes on Presidents Franklin D. Roosevelt and Richard Nixon, but she did not mention his book about Trump.

She said Black's case attracted broad support from many high-profile individuals — including former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, Elton John and Rush Limbaugh — who have "vigorously vouched for his exceptional character."

Trump on Wednesday also pardoned Patrick Nolan, a former Republican leader of the California State Assembly. Nolan has been a vocal advocate for criminal justice reform since he spent more than two years in federal prison during the 1990s.

Sanders said Nolan wrote a guide for churches and community groups to help prisoners return to their communities. While incarcerated, he also helped organize religious-study groups and he is "uniformly

described as a man of principle and integrity," she said.

Associated Press writer Rob Gillies contributed to this report from Toronto.

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Missouri Senate passes bill to ban abortions at 8 weeks

By SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press



FILE - In this Jan. 16, 2019, file photo, Missouri Gov. Mike Parson delivers his State of the State address in Jefferson City, Mo. Parson on Wednesday, May 15, called on state senators to take action on a bill to ban abortions at eight weeks of pregnancy, the latest GOP-dominated state emboldened by the possibility that a more conservative Supreme Court could overturn its landmark ruling legalizing the procedure. (AP Photo/Charlie Riedel, File)

JEFFERSON CITY, Mo. (AP) — Missouri's Republican-led Senate has now passed a bill to ban abortions at eight weeks of pregnancy.

Senators approved the legislation 24-10 early Thursday with just hours left before a Friday deadline to pass bills. It needs at least one more vote of approval in the GOP-led House before it can go to Republican Gov. Mike Parson, who voiced support for it on Wednesday.

Parson called on state senators to take action, joining a movement of GOP-dominated state legislatures emboldened by the possibility that a more conservative Supreme Court could overturn its landmark ruling legalizing the procedure. Their vote came only hours after Alabama's governor signed the most stringent abortion ban in the nation on Wednesday, making performing an abortion a felony in nearly all cases.

The Missouri proposal includes exceptions for medical emergencies, but not for pregnancies caused by rape

or incest. Doctors would face five to 15 years in prison for violating the eight-week cutoff. Women who receive abortions at eight weeks or later into a pregnancy wouldn't be prosecuted.

Outnumbered Senate Democrats launched into an attack on the bill before Republican supporters had a chance to bring it up for debate on the Senate floor.

"So much of this bill is just shaming women into some kind of complacency that says we are vessels of pregnancy rather than understanding that women's lives all hold different stories," St. Louis-area Democratic Sen. Jill Schupp told colleagues. "We cannot paint with a broad brush and interfere by putting a law forward that tells them what they can and cannot do."

Missouri is among a growing number of states where abortion opponents are working with renewed enthusiasm following President Donald Trump's appointment of more conservative high court justices. Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio and Georgia have approved bans on abortion once fetal cardiac activity can be detected, which can occur in about the sixth week of pregnancy. Similar restrictions in North Dakota and Iowa have been struck down in court.

Supporters say the Alabama bill is intentionally designed to conflict with the 1973 Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion nationally in hopes of sparking a court case that might prompt the justices to revisit abortion rights.

Missouri's bill also includes an outright ban on abortions except in cases of medical emergencies. But unlike Alabama's, it would kick in only if *Roe v. Wade* is overturned.

If courts don't allow Missouri's proposed eight-week ban to take effect, it includes a ladder of less-restrictive time limits ranging from 14 to 20 weeks. *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion up until viability, usually at 22 to 24 weeks.

"This is not a piece of legislation that is designed for a challenge," Missouri's Republican House Speaker Elijah Haahr said. "This is the type of legislation that is designed to withstand a challenge and to actually save lives in our state."

Other provisions in the wide-ranging abortion bill include a ban on abortions based solely on race, sex or a "prenatal diagnosis, test, or screening indicating Down Syndrome or the potential of Down Syndrome."

The bill would also require that both parents be notified for a minor to get an abortion, with exceptions. A change made after hours of late-night negotiations means written notification is only required if the second parent has joint legal or physical custody of the minor.

Current law requires written consent from only one parent.

New Trump immigration plan would overhaul green card system

By JILL COLVIN and ALAN FRAM Associated Press



President Donald Trump speaks at the 38th Annual National Peace Officers' Memorial Service at the U.S. Capitol, Wednesday, May 15, 2019, in Washington. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

WASHINGTON (AP) — After years of setbacks and stalemates, President Donald Trump will lay out yet another immigration plan as he tries to convince the American public and lawmakers that the nation's legal immigration system should be overhauled.

The latest effort, spearheaded by Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, focuses on beefing up border security and rethinking the green card system so that it would favor people with high-level skills, degrees and job offers instead of relatives of those already in the country.

A shift to a more merit-based system prioritizing high-skilled workers would mark a dramatic departure from the nation's largely family-based approach, which officials said gives roughly 66% of green cards to those

with family ties and only 12% based on skills.

But the plan, which is set to be rolled out on Thursday but has yet to be embraced by Trump's own party — let alone Democrats — faces an uphill battle in Congress. Efforts to overhaul the immigration system have gone nowhere for three decades amid deeply divided Republicans and Democrats. Prospects for an agreement seem especially bleak as the 2020 elections near, though the plan could give Trump and the GOP a proposal to rally behind, even if talks with Democrats go nowhere.

The plan does not address what to do about the millions of immigrants already living in the country illegally, including hundreds of thousands of young "Dreamers" brought to the U.S. as children — a top priority for Democrats. Nor does it reduce overall rates of immigration, as many conservative Republicans would like to see.

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Trump will nonetheless deliver a Rose Garden speech Thursday throwing his weight behind the plan, which has thus far received mixed reviews from Republicans in the Senate.

In briefings Wednesday that attracted dozens of journalists, administration officials said the plan would create a points-based visa system, similar to those used by Canada and other countries.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to outline the plan before Trump's announcement, said the U.S. would award the same number of green cards as it now does. But far more would go to exceptional students so they can remain in the country after graduation, professionals and people with high-level and vocational degrees. Factors such as age, English language ability and employment offers would also be taken into account.

Far fewer green cards would be given to people with relatives already in the U.S. and 57% versus the current 12% would be awarded based on merit. The diversity visa lottery, which offers green cards to citizens of countries with historically low rates of immigration to the U.S., would be eliminated. Officials insisted diversity would be addressed in other ways.

The officials offered fewer specifics on border security, which is expected to remain a key focus for Trump as he campaigns for reelection. Trump has been furiously railing against the spike in Central American migrant families trying to enter the country, and he forced a government shutdown in a failed effort to fulfill his 2016 promise to build a southern border wall.

As part of the plan, officials want to shore up ports of entry to ensure all vehicles and people are screened and to create a self-sustaining fund, paid for with increased fees, to modernize ports of entry.

The plan also calls for building border wall in targeted locations and continues to push for an overhaul to the U.S. asylum system, with the goal of processing fewer applications and removing people who don't qualify faster.

While the officials insisted their effort was not a "political" plan, they nonetheless framed it as one they hoped Republicans would unite behind, making clear to voters what the party is "for."

"I don't think it's designed to get Democratic support as much as it is to unify the Republican Party around border security, a negotiating position," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a close ally of the White House.

Indeed, the plan drew immediate criticism from Democrats as well as immigration activists, who remain deeply skeptical of Trump after past negotiation failures.

Democrats and some Republicans tried crafting a compromise with Trump last year that would have helped young Dreamer immigrants and added money for border security. But those talks collapsed over White House demands to curb legal immigration and a dramatic Senate showdown in which lawmakers rejected three rival proposals that aligned with the "four pillars" immigration plan Trump unveiled that year.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer criticized the White House for failing to engage in talks with Democrats over the latest proposal.

"Don't come up with a plan that Stephen Miller rubber stamps and say, 'Now, pass it.' It's not going to happen," Schumer, D-N.Y., said, referring to Trump's hard-line policy adviser.

Lisa Koop, director of legal services at the National Immigrant Justice Center, also criticized the various planks of the proposal, including its failure to address those brought to the U.S. illegally as children who are currently protected from deportation by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy, or DACA, which Trump has tried to end.

"A plan that forces families apart, limits access to asylum and other humanitarian relief, and doesn't contemplate a path to citizenship for DACA recipients and other undocumented community members is clearly a political stunt intended to posture rather than problem-solve," she said.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates for lower immigration rates, applauded a "very positive effort" on legal immigration, but said it was "undermined by the embrace of the current very high level of immigration."

Republicans on the Hill, too, voiced skepticism, even as administration officials insisted the plan had been embraced by those who briefed on it. A PowerPoint presentation shared with reporters Wednesday referred to the plan as "The Republican Proposal," even though many GOP members had yet to see it.

Graham, who rolled out his own proposal Wednesday to address the recent flood of migrants seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, said he had advised Trump to try to cut a new deal with Democrats and believed Trump was open to that.

"I am urging the president to lead us to a solution," he said.

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Iran claims right to respond to 'unacceptable' US sanctions

By AYA BATRAWY and MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press



Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif, right, walks to meet Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at Abe's official residence in Tokyo Thursday, May 16, 2019. Iran's foreign minister has said his country is committed to an international nuclear deal and criticized escalating U.S. sanctions "unacceptable" as he met with Japanese officials in Tokyo amid rising tensions in the Middle East.

(AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko, Pool)

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's foreign minister on Thursday said sanctions imposed by the Trump administration are "unacceptable" but that his country is committed to an international nuclear deal that has steadily unraveled amid rising tensions.

On a visit to Tokyo, Mohammad Zarif defended Iran's right to respond to the U.S. pullout from the nuclear deal last year and the imposition of sanctions.

"We believe that escalation by the United States is unacceptable and uncalled for. We have exercised maximum restraints," he said. In other comments carried on the semi-official Mehr news agency, Zarif was quoted as saying "a multilateral deal cannot be treated unilaterally."

Recent days have brought allegations of sabotage attacks targeting oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, a drone attack on a Saudi oil pipeline claimed by Yemen's Iran-allied Houthi rebels, and the dispatch of U.S. warships and bombers

to the region.

Saudi Arabia's Deputy Defense Minister Khalid bin Salman tweeted Thursday that Tehran had ordered "the terrorist acts" on the pipeline.

"The attack by the Iranian-backed Houthi militias against the two Aramco pumping stations proves that these militias are merely a tool that Iran's regime uses to implement its expansionist agenda in the region," he wrote.

Iran has been accused by the U.S. and the U.N. of supplying ballistic missile technology and arms to the Houthis, which Tehran denies.

Saudi Arabia responded to Tuesday's drone attack with a wave of airstrikes on Houthi targets in Yemen's rebel-held capital, Sanaa. On Thursday, residents scrambled to pull 14 wounded people from the rubble of a building.

Fawaz Ahmed told The Associated Press he saw three bodies being retrieved from the rubble — a father,

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mother and child, all buried together. Yemen's Health Ministry said the strikes killed six people, including four children, and wounded more than 40.

The ministry says 41 people were also wounded, including two women of Russian nationality.

A Saudi-led coalition has been at war with the Houthis since 2015, and carries out near-daily airstrikes. The drone attacks on the pipeline marked one of the rebels' deepest and most significant strikes inside Saudi territory since the conflict began.

The Saudi-led coalition acknowledged in a statement it had struck a number of Houthi targets on Thursday, including what it said were weapons depots and military sites.

At the root of the recent spike in Persian Gulf tensions appears to be President Donald Trump's decision a year ago to pull the U.S. from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, embarking on a maximalist sanctions campaign against Tehran to cripple the country's economy.

In response, Iran's supreme leader issued a veiled threat Tuesday, saying it wouldn't be difficult for the Islamic Republic to enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels. He also said that while his country would not negotiate with the United States, Iran is not seeking war.

On Wednesday, the U.S. State Department ordered all nonessential government staff to leave Iraq, and Germany and the Netherlands both suspended their military assistance programs in the country in the latest sign of tensions.

The movement of diplomatic personnel is often done in times of conflict, but what is driving the decisions from the White House remains unclear. Iraq is home to powerful pro-Iranian militias, while also hosting more than 5,000 American troops. The U.S. military's Central Command said its troops were on high alert, without elaborating.

Last week, U.S. officials said they had detected signs of Iranian preparations for potential attacks on U.S. forces and interests in the Middle East, but Washington has not publicly provided any evidence to back up claims of an increased Iranian threat.

A senior British officer in the U.S.-backed coalition fighting the Islamic State group appeared to push back against the U.S. claims, telling reporters earlier in the week that there'd been no increased threat from Iranian-backed forces in Iraq and Syria. Maj. Gen. Chris Ghika's comments exposed international skepticism over the American military buildup.

Iran recently threatened it might resume higher enrichment by July 7, beyond the level permitted by the current deal between Tehran and world powers. The U.S. pulled out of the deal last year, re-imposing sanctions that penalize countries and global companies that do business with Iran.

Though Iran maintains its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, scientists say the time needed to reach the 90% threshold for weapons-grade uranium is halved once uranium is enriched to around 20%.

Late Wednesday, Anwar Gargash, the UAE minister of foreign affairs, said the Saudi-led coalition would "retaliate hard" for attacks on civilian targets, without elaborating.

However, he also said the UAE is "very committed to de-escalation" after the alleged sabotage of oil tankers off the country's coast on Sunday. Gargash declined to directly blame Iran for the attack, though he repeatedly criticized Tehran.

In a joint letter to the U.N. Security Council, the UAE, Saudi Arabia and Norway said that while the alleged sabotage targeted four ships, "the attacks damaged the hulls of at least three." It did not elaborate. A U.S. official previously said all four ships sustained damage at or below their waterlines.

Meanwhile, the Qatar-funded satellite news broadcaster Al-Jazeera said Qatar is trying to "defuse escalating tensions." It cited an anonymous official as saying that Qatar's foreign minister, Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, had traveled to Tehran in recent days to speak with his Iranian counterpart, and that the U.S. was aware of the trip in advance.

Qatar hosts the forward headquarters of the U.S. military's Central Command at its vast Al-Udeid Air Base. Several of the B-52 bombers ordered by the White House to the region amid the latest escalation between Washington and Tehran are stationed there.

Qatar has grown closer to Iran diplomatically over the past two years after four Arab nations, including

Saudi Arabia and the UAE, cut ties to protest its regional policies.

Yamaguchi reported from Tokyo. Associated Press writers Ahmed Al-Haj in Sanaa, Yemen and Jon Gambrell in Dubai contributed to this report.

Hollywood's big players stay quiet on Georgia abortion law

By LINDSEY BAHR and SANYA MANSOOR Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Georgia and Hollywood are worlds away from one another, physically and culturally, but irresistible tax incentives have turned the state into a filming powerhouse dubbed "Hollywood of the South." Productions as big as Marvel Studios' superhero blockbusters and shows like "Stranger Things" and "The Walking Dead" call the state home base, and some have not shied away from throwing their weight around when values clash with proposed laws.

But in the week since Georgia Gov. Brian Kemp signed into law one of the nation's most restrictive abortion laws, none of the major film or television studios have commented on the issue or altered production plans. The backlash has been limited to smaller production companies, like Color Force ("Crazy Rich Asians"), Killer Films ("First Reformed"), "The Wire" creator David Simon of Blown Deadline Productions (HBO's "The Deuce") and the Duplass Brothers Productions (HBO's "Room 104"). Some actors and actresses, like Alyssa Milano, Mark Hamill and Mandy Moore, have suggested they will boycott filming in the state.

Jordan Peele and J.J. Abrams, meanwhile, are proceeding with plans to shoot their HBO show "Lovecraft County" in Georgia in the next few weeks, but have said that they will donate 100% their "episodic fees" to organizations fighting the law including the ACLU of Georgia and Fair Fight Georgia.

The muted reaction is in striking contrast to what happened just three years ago when Netflix and Disney threatened to pull productions if a law allowing faith-based refusal of services to LGBTQ persons was passed. Other companies also publicly denounced that proposed law, including AMC, Time Warner, Lionsgate, Sony, NBC Universal and CBS.

Georgia's "heartbeat bill" would ban abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected, which can be as early as six weeks, before many women know they are pregnant. Unless it's blocked in court, it is set to go into effect in 2020. The ACLU has already said the group will mount a legal challenge.

"Film and television production in Georgia supports more than 92,000 jobs and brings significant economic benefits to communities and families," said Chris Ortman, a spokesman for the industry lobbying group The Motion Picture Association of America in a statement last week. "It is important to remember that similar legislation has been attempted in other states, and has either been enjoined by the courts or is currently being challenged."

The MPAA said it continues to monitor developments.

Some believe knowing they still have time until 2020 is part of the reason big entertainment industry players haven't spoken out yet. Another is that for some the issue intersects with religious beliefs and few companies want to wade into that territory. Others point to resistance to boycotts among critics of the law in Georgia.

Matt Donnelly, a senior film writer for the Hollywood trade Variety, noted that the same day some called for boycotts, there were also a "wave of stories that it had fizzled out" in part because of pledges like the one Abrams and Peele made to donate money but keep production in the state.

"That to me is a sort of murky pivot that allows people to keep their jobs and tax rebates and also seemingly support the cause," Donnelly said. "(It's) more of a solution for Hollywood than it is addressing the values and the morality the boycott raises for women across this industry."

The issue is bound to get only more complex, as the governor in neighboring Alabama on Wednesday signed the nation's most stringent anti-abortion measure into law. Louisiana, another favored filming venue that offers generous tax incentives, moved closer to approving its version of a fetal "heartbeat bill."

Kemp recently postponed an annual trip to promote his state's film industry in Los Angeles after Georgia film executives worried that protests and no-shows could taint the industry mixer, The Atlanta Journal

Constitution reported .

Many Georgians, from politicians to the people who work on film sets, worry about the adverse effects of the law.

Stacey Abrams, who narrowly lost a contentious gubernatorial race against Kemp, tweeted Wednesday that she respects the calls for a boycott, "but I do not believe it is the most effective, strategic choice for change."

Georgia's Democratic lawmakers have urged Hollywood to keep production in the state. Boycotts, some say, are not the response they're looking for.

The impact would not only be felt by actors, directors and writers but also by low-income Georgians and small businesses contracted to provide catering, maintenance and construction, said Crystal Redman, executive director of SPARK Reproductive Justice Now, a grassroots Georgia group that has advocated against the abortion law.

Molly Coffee, a film production designer in Georgia, helped start a petition with other women in the film industry urging Hollywood not to leave the state and emphasizing her commitment to fight the new abortion law.

"It's very easy, from California, to make a statement that you're not going to spend your dollars in Georgia," Coffee said. "It's important for people to ask the women of Georgia how they feel."

Staci Fox, CEO of Planned Parenthood Southeast, said a boycott would be counterproductive.

"I understand the power of a boycott but I'm not in favor of any Georgian losing their job because when women lose their jobs the first thing that goes is women's health care," Fox said. "They stop accessing birth control or stop getting pap smears and then we get in this loop where now we're facing unintended pregnancy."

Fox instead urged those with big platforms to remind Georgians that abortion is still legal, adding that the organization is getting hundreds of confused phone calls from concerned women.

Heather Hutton, a filmmaker in Georgia who started out working on set design for "The Walking Dead," said she would like to see Hollywood stay and fight.

"Women would like to see Hollywood stand next to us and fight with us because we don't have deep pockets like they do," she said.

Mansoor reported from Atlanta.

Trump to provide rare look of finances in disclosure report

By BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's latest financial disclosure report is expected to provide a rare glimpse into whether his presidency has helped or hurt his hotels, golf resorts and other parts of his business empire.

The report, which is filed with the Office of Government Ethics and set for release Thursday, will be closely studied for changes in revenue at key properties in 2018, including his Mar-a-Lago resort in Palm Beach, Florida, his Washington, D.C., hotel and his Doral golf resort in Miami.

Experts say the Trump business has taken a hit from the president's divisive policies and rhetoric, though the Trump Organization says much of the business is fine.

Trump's biggest revenue generator among his golf properties, Doral, took in \$75 million in revenue in 2017. By comparison, Trump's "Summer White House," his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, generated \$15 million.

Mar-a-Lago took in \$25 million in 2017 and his Washington hotel generated \$40 million.

In total, the disclosure report for 2017, released a year ago, showed Trump's assets — including books he has written, licensing deals and other business ventures — generated revenue of at least \$453 million. The report estimated the assets were worth at least \$1.4 billion.

While Trump has not released his tax records, he has been filing financial disclosure reports since he

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ran for president.

The latest report, listing 2018 figures, will allow for the first time a 12-month comparison with a previous year. Trump's report released two years ago stated estimates for revenue over 16 months.

A key part of the report released last year was a footnote listing a reimbursement of as much as \$250,000 to Trump's former personal lawyer Michael Cohen. Cohen, who is serving three years in prison for campaign finance violations among other crimes, admitted paying hush money during the presidential campaign to silence Stormy Daniels, the porn actress who alleges she had sex with Trump. The president has denied that he had an affair.

The reports filed with the government ethics agency each year are for revenue, not profits, and the figures are given in ranges and so provide only a partial picture of the finances of Trump and other executive branch officials who file them.

When Trump took office, he refused to fully divest from his global business, a break with presidential tradition. Instead, he put his assets in a trust controlled by his two adult sons and a senior executive. Trump can take back control of the trust at any time, and he's allowed to withdraw cash from it.

Venezuelan government, opposition head to talks in Norway

By **FABIOLA SANCHEZ** and **CHRISTOPHER TORCHIA** Associated Press

CARACAS, Venezuela (AP) — The Venezuelan government and opposition have sent envoys to Norway to attend talks on ways of ending the South American country's crisis, though their mutual mistrust and differences on key issues are likely to slow chances of progress.

The development reported by officials Wednesday appeared to reflect a recognition that neither side had been able to prevail in the struggle for power, leaving Venezuela in a state of paralysis after years of hyperinflation and shortages of food and medicine.

It was also a policy reversal for the opposition, which has accused President Nicolás Maduro of using previous negotiations to play for time.

Senior members of both sides will be involved in the exploratory discussions in Oslo, said members of Venezuela's opposition-controlled congress who spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the talks. Delegations from the two opposing camps had received separate invitations from a group of Norwegians, one official said.

The representatives include Information Minister Jorge Rodríguez on the government side and Stalin González, a leading member of the National Assembly, the officials said.

Maduro did not directly comment on the talks during televised remarks, but he said Rodríguez was on a "very important" mission outside Venezuela.

The planned talks seemed likely to dampen speculation that the United States, the main backer of the Venezuelan opposition, might be considering military action as a way to end the crisis in the near term. U.S. officials have previously said they are focusing on diplomatic and economic measures to force out Maduro, though opposition leader Juan Guaidó said his Washington envoy will meet with the head of the U.S. Southern Command on Monday.

The two sides are currently far apart on many issues. The opposition has insisted that Maduro was illegitimately elected last year and that he must step aside to make way for elections. Maduro, in turn, accuses the opposition of being U.S. stooges intent on illegally seizing power.

The Norway dialogue comes as a mostly European group of nations prepares to send a high-level delegation to Venezuela to propose solutions to the country's protracted crisis. The International Contact Group consists of eight European countries, the European Union and four Latin American countries.

The group formed after Guaidó, the head of the National Assembly, declared himself Venezuela's interim president early this year in a direct challenge to the rule of Maduro, who says his government champions the socialist principles of his predecessor, Hugo Chávez.

The opposition, which is backed by the United States and about 50 other nations, says Venezuela's dire economic state is the result of years of corruption and mismanagement. Maduro blames the country's

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problems on U.S. sanctions that were imposed more recently.

Also Wednesday, the United States suspended all commercial passenger and cargo flights between the U.S. and Venezuela, saying the political unrest and tensions there pose a risk to flights.

The announcement by the Department of Homeland Security affected a dwindling number of flights between the two countries, since U.S. airlines no longer fly to Venezuela. The measure reflected the increasingly sour relationship between the Venezuelan government and the U.S.

Conditions in Venezuela "threaten the safety and security of passengers, aircraft, and crew," the department said. It said the flight suspension will continue indefinitely, though the decision will be reviewed if the situation in Venezuela changes.

Maduro criticized the suspension of flights, saying the measure was an attack on freedom of movement. American Airlines stopped its flights in mid-March after union leaders told pilots not to go there due to safety concerns. Some other international airlines quit flying to Venezuela years ago because of the country's deteriorating economy.

Some Venezuelan airlines had been operating commercial flights to and from Miami, though those were already affected by the upheaval in the South American country, including after a failed call for a military uprising by the opposition on April 30.

US pulls nonessential staff from Iraq amid Mideast tensions

By JON GAMBRELL and PHILIP ISSA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — The U.S. on Wednesday ordered all nonessential government staff to leave Iraq, and Germany and the Netherlands both suspended their military assistance programs in the country in the latest sign of tensions sweeping the Persian Gulf region over still-unspecified threats that the Trump administration says are linked to Iran.

Recent days have seen allegations of sabotage targeting oil tankers off the coast of the United Arab Emirates, a drone attack by Yemen's Iranian-allied Houthi rebels, and the dispatch of U.S. warships and bombers to the region.

At the root of this appears to be President Donald Trump's decision a year ago to pull the U.S. from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers, embarking on a maximalist sanctions campaign against Tehran. In response, Iran's supreme leader issued a veiled threat Tuesday, saying it wouldn't be difficult for the Islamic Republic to enrich uranium to weapons-grade levels.

The movement of diplomatic personnel is often done in times of conflict, but what is driving the decisions from the White House remains unclear. A high-ranking British general said there was no new threat from Iran or its regional proxies, something immediately rebutted by the U.S. military's Central Command, which said its troops were on high alert, without elaborating.

Last week, U.S. officials said they had detected signs of Iranian preparations for potential attacks on U.S. forces and interests in the Middle East, but Washington has not spelled out that threat.

An alert on the website of the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad said all nonessential, nonemergency U.S. government staff were ordered to leave Iraq right away under State Department orders. That includes those working at the U.S. Consulate in Erbil. The U.S. Consulate in Basra has been closed since September following a rocket attack blamed on Iranian-backed militias.

The U.S. in recent days has ordered the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier strike group to the Gulf region, plus four B-52 bombers.

Germany's military said it was suspending training of Iraqi soldiers due to the tensions, although there was no specific threat to its own troops in Iraq. Defense Ministry spokesman Jens Flosdorff said Germany was "orienting itself toward our partner countries" though there are "no concrete warnings of attacks against German targets."

German Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokeswoman Ulrike Demmer expressed concern over the tensions and said it welcomes "any measure that is aimed at a peaceful solution." Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Adebahr said the German government has not reduced its embassy staff in Iraq or Iran.

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In the Netherlands, state broadcaster NOS said its 50-person military mission in Iraq was halted "until further orders," quoting a Defense Ministry spokesman as saying he couldn't elaborate on the threats. It said the Dutch forces primarily train Kurdish forces fighting the Islamic State militants.

The remarks about Iran's nuclear program by Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei came Tuesday night in Tehran at an iftar, the traditional dinner Muslims have when breaking their daily fast during Ramadan.

Tehran is threatening to resume higher enrichment on July 7 if no new nuclear deal is in place, beyond the 3.67% permitted by the current deal between Tehran and world powers.

Iranian officials have said that they could reach 20% enrichment within four days. Though Iran maintains its nuclear program is for peaceful purposes, scientists say the time needed to reach the 90% threshold for weapons-grade uranium is halved once uranium is enriched to around 20%.

"Achieving 20% enrichment is the most difficult part," Khamenei said, according to the newspaper. "The next steps are easier than this step."

It was a telling remark from the supreme leader — Iran is not known to have enriched beyond 20% previously and it's unclear how far Tehran is willing to go in this process. Khamenei has final say on all matters of state in Iran.

Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Zarif, speaking in Tokyo on Thursday, said Iran was committed to an international nuclear deal but the escalating U.S. sanctions were "unacceptable."

On Tuesday, Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi rebels launched a coordinated drone attack on a critical oil pipeline in Saudi Arabia, Tehran's biggest rival in the region. It was the latest incident to shake global energy markets, as authorities allege oil tankers anchored off the coast of the United Arab Emirates were targeted by sabotage. Benchmark Brent crude rose to \$72 a barrel in trading Wednesday, an increase of over 1%.

Yemen's Houthi rebels, who are at war with Saudi Arabia and are believed by the West to receive weapons from Iran, said they launched seven drones targeting vital Saudi installations. That included two pumping stations along its critical East-West Pipeline, which can carry nearly 5 million barrels of crude a day to the Red Sea.

Anwar Gargash, the minister of foreign affairs for the United Arab Emirates, told reporters in Dubai that the Saudi-led coalition will "retaliate hard" for attacks on civilian targets, without elaborating.

Saudi Aramco, the government-controlled oil company, said it temporarily shut down the pipeline and contained a fire, which caused minor damage to one pumping station. It added that Saudi Aramco's oil and gas supplies were unaffected.

An image from San Francisco-based Planet Labs Inc. that The Associated Press examined Wednesday shows Saudi Aramco's Pumping Station No. 8 outside of the town of al-Duadmi, 330 kilometers (205 miles) west of the kingdom's capital, Riyadh.

The photo, taken after the attack, shows two black marks near where the East-West Pipeline passes by the facility — marks that weren't in images from Monday. The facility otherwise appeared intact, corroborating in part Saudi Arabia's earlier comments. The website TankerTrackers.com, whose analysts monitor oil sales on the seas, first reported about the black marks.

Details remain unclear around alleged acts of sabotage to four oil tankers, including two belonging to Saudi Arabia, off the coast of the UAE's port of Fujairah. Satellite images seen by the AP from Colorado-based Maxar Technologies showed no visible damage to the vessels, and Gulf officials have refused to say who might be responsible.

The MT Andrea Victory, one of the alleged targets, sustained a hole in its hull just above its waterline from "an unknown object," its owner Thome Ship Management said in a statement. Images of the Norwegian ship, which the company said was "not in any danger of sinking," showed damage similar to what the firm described.

A U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss an ongoing investigation, has said the other three showed damage as well.

Gargash said an investigation into the alleged ship sabotage would be completed in the coming days, with assistance from American and French investigators. He declined to directly blame Iran for the attack, though he repeatedly criticized Iran.

"We have been bullied by Iran," he said. "We have seen aggressive Iranian action in the region." He added that U.S. sanctions had bit deeply into Iran and that a political solution was necessary. Asked what could be done to encourage one, Gargash quipped: "I know they have President Trump's phone number."

Gambrell reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Associated Press writers Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Angela Charlton in Paris, Mari Yamaguchi in Tokyo, Geir Moulson in Berlin and Robert Burns and Lolita C. Baldor in Washington contributed to this report.

Trump criticizes prosecutors at event for fallen officers

By **KEVIN FREKING Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump used a ceremony for fallen law enforcement officers on Wednesday to criticize big-city prosecutors he asserts don't go after criminals who pose a severe threat to public safety.

Trump pledged to the families of fallen officers that the country will "never, ever leave your side, never disappoint you" but went beyond memorializing for much of the annual event.

He singled out prosecutors in Philadelphia and Chicago as being part of a "dangerous trend" by deciding not to prosecute "many criminals who pose a severe threat to public safety and community well-being."

The Cook County State's Attorney's Office released a statement afterward stating that for years, "we have tried the old, failed way of indiscriminately locking up communities advocated by the Trump Justice Department, and too often what it got us was an ever growing prison population and way too many repeat offenders, especially in communities of color."

The office said it was committed to prosecuting those truly guilty of violent crimes, but fundamentally changing how it deals with nonviolent offenders.

The president also renewed his calls for changes to the nation's immigration laws, citing the shooting death last December of a Northern California police officer, Cpl. Ronil Singh. Trump said the suspect in Singh's killing could have been kept out with "border security, with the wall, with whatever the hell it takes." Paulo Virgen Mendoza, suspected of being in the country illegally, has pleaded not guilty in the case.

Trump also made an apparent reference to the case of actor Jussie Smollett, saying that "those who file false police reports should face full legal consequences."

The actor was charged with felony disorderly conduct and accused of making a false police report after claiming he was attacked by two masked men who shouted slurs at him and put a noose around his neck. The Cook County state's attorney's office abruptly dropped the charges in March.

The White House did not comment on whether Trump was specifically citing the Smollett case.

The 38th annual memorial service honored 228 peace officers who died in the line of duty last year.

Associated Press writer Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

'Time for us to live for him': Hundreds honor slain student

By **KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press**

HIGHLANDS RANCH, Colo. (AP) — Nearly 2,000 people turned out Wednesday for a memorial service to honor the Colorado teenager who was killed while charging one of the two gunmen who opened fire inside a high school and shot nine people just days before graduation.

A line of Jeeps and trucks stretched along a Highlands Ranch roadway ahead of the service for Kendrick Castillo, 18, who was a Jeep and off-road vehicle enthusiast. His casket was draped with yellow and blue flowers that represented the colors of the STEM School Highlands Ranch, and the stage of the church where the service was held was adorned with symbols of his passion for science, the outdoors and his faith.

His father, John Castillo, said it was no surprise to him and his wife, Maria, that their son acted as he did

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on May 7, when he and two classmates disarmed one of the suspects. He urged those in attendance to be more like his son and put love and compassion for others first.

"We love our community," Castillo said. "We're a family of three and a little dog, but you know, I feel the love of thousands."

Speaker after speaker praised the young man, focusing on his character and the accomplishments of his short life. References to the shooting were few, including one by Dakota Mann, who was on the school robotics team with Castillo.

"He died for us. Now it's time for us to live for him," Mann said.

Earlier Wednesday, the Castillos attended court hearings for the two teenagers accused of killing their son and wounding eight other students. Investigators say the accused assailants, 18-year-old Devon Erickson and 16-year-old Alec McKinney, opened fire with handguns. They were arrested at the school.

Erickson and McKinney appeared in court to face dozens of criminal charges that include murder, attempted murder, arson and theft.

While court documents are sealed, the charges against the teenagers were listed in electronic court records. Prosecutors said both will be tried as adults. McKinney's attorney, Ara Ohanian, said he would seek to move McKinney's case back to juvenile court.

Judge Theresa Slade denied the prosecution's request to make some of the documents public but said she would address the issue at the next hearing on June 7.

Erickson appeared more involved in Wednesday's proceedings compared with his initial court appearance last week. His face was visible, and he looked forward toward the judge while attorneys discussed the case.

He wore a jail uniform and was kept shackled at his wrists and ankles after the judge denied a request to remove them.

McKinney appeared in court after Erickson. He glanced back several times during the hearing toward the bench where his mother was sitting.

Castillo's father stared at both defendants during their hearings.

"It would have been easy for them to say, 'I'm not going to make it to court today because in less than two hours we're going to have a memorial service for our son,'" District Attorney George Brauchler said of Castillo's parents. "But from the word go they have made it clear that our intention is to be here for every single hearing."

Brauchler also revealed that he has asked an outside prosecutor to investigate whether charges should be filed against a private security guard who has been credited with apprehending one of the suspects in a hallway.

Brauchler did not explain why the security guard would face charges. A law enforcement official told The Associated Press last week that the guard, a former Marine who has not been named, fired his weapon during the shooting.

Two news organizations citing anonymous sources reported that authorities are investigating whether the guard mistakenly fired at a responding sheriff's deputy and may have wounded a student.

Brauchler did not directly address those reports.

"This is a witness in the case, and I felt like in the abundance of caution that a decision about the facts related to the security guard needed to be addressed by a separate prosecutor," Brauchler said.

The security guard's attorney, Robert Burk, said last week that his client acted to protect the children at the school. Burk did not immediately respond to an email seeking comment on Wednesday.

Castillo and classmates Brendan Bialy and Joshua Jones were credited with helping minimize the bloodshed by charging at one of the suspects in a classroom.

According to Bialy, Castillo sprang into action against the shooter "and immediately was on top of him with complete disregard for his own safety." Jones said he was shot twice in the leg during the ordeal. Bialy said he was able to take the attacker's weapon.

Jones, 18, said Tuesday that he is recovering quickly from his wounds, but said emotionally he's "still in a bit of a funk."

All of the wounded students have been released from hospitals.

The shooting happened nearly three weeks after the neighboring town of Littleton marked the 20th anniversary of the Columbine High School attack that killed 13 people. The two schools are separated by about 7 miles (11 kilometers) south of Denver.

Associated Press writer Thomas Peipert contributed to this report.

Abortion ban aims for high court, but won't get there soon

By MARK SHERMAN and DAVID CRARY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alabama's virtual ban on abortion is the latest and most far-reaching state law seemingly designed to prod the Supreme Court to reconsider a constitutional right it announced 46 years ago in the landmark Roe v. Wade decision.

But Chief Justice John Roberts may prefer a more incremental approach to reining in abortion rights than the frontal attack Alabama's new law or the "fetal heartbeat" measures enacted by other states present.

The passage of abortion restrictions in Republican-led states and a corresponding push to buttress abortion rights where Democrats are in power stem from the same place: Changes in the composition of the high court. The retirement of abortion-rights supporter Justice Anthony Kennedy and the addition of President Donald Trump's appointees, Brett Kavanaugh and Neil Gorsuch, may make the court more willing to cut back on the right to abortion, if not take it away altogether.

Several state restrictions already are pending before the justices, and it seems likely that at least one abortion case will be on the court's calendar next term, with a decision likely in the midst of the 2020 presidential campaign.

Some questions and answers on the legal fight over abortion rights and how the Supreme Court could respond:

HOW QUICKLY COULD THE ALABAMA LAW GET TO THE SUPREME COURT?

Not that quickly. The law is certain to be challenged in federal court in Alabama and almost surely will be blocked because it plainly conflicts with Supreme Court precedent. Review by the federal appeals court in Atlanta would come next, and only then would the Supreme Court be asked to weigh in. Emergency appeals by either side could put the issue before the justices sooner, but that would not be a full-blown review of the law.

WHAT ABORTION CASES MIGHT REACH THE HIGH COURT SOONER?

Indiana has appealed lower court rulings blocking provisions prohibiting abortions over race, sex or disability, regulating the burial of fetal remains and requiring a pregnant woman to undergo an ultrasound at least 18 hours before an abortion. The first two of those issues have been pending at the Supreme Court for months with no explanation.

Separately, Roberts and the liberal justices blocked a Louisiana law regulating abortion clinics from taking effect in February, making the chances good that the court will review the law next term and issue a decision by June 2020.

Alabama has appealed a ruling invalidating a law prohibiting the most common method of abortion in the second trimester.

Four other states — Mississippi, Kentucky, Ohio and Georgia — enacted laws this year banning abortion once a fetal heartbeat is detected, which can occur as early as the sixth week of pregnancy. None of those laws has yet taken effect, and lawsuits have been filed or are planned to block all of them.

ISN'T IT RISKY FOR ABORTION-RIGHTS ADVOCATES TO CHALLENGE THESE LAWS IN COURT?

Abortion-rights activists say they have no alternative but to file lawsuits challenging every tough abortion ban passed.

"Were we not to challenge them, they would go into effect," said Jennifer Dalven, director of the ACLU's

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Reproductive Freedom Project. "There's no strategy of 'Maybe we leave this one and challenge that one.'"

The ACLU and its allies expect lower-level federal courts to honor Roe by blocking the abortion bans. The ultimate question, Dalven said, is whether the Supreme Court will decide to revisit Roe by agreeing to hear an appeal from one or more of the states whose ban was blocked.

"It would be an extraordinary thing for the Supreme Court to take away an individual constitutional right," she said.

Anti-abortion activists hope the high court will be willing to reconsider Roe.

"It is clearer than ever that Roe is far from being settled law in the eyes and hearts of the American people, and this is increasingly reflected in state legislatures," said Marjorie Dannenfelser, president of the anti-abortion Susan B. Anthony List. "The American people want a fresh debate and a new direction."

HOW MIGHT CHANGES ON THE COURT AFFECT RULINGS ON ABORTION?

Kennedy's retirement and Kavanaugh's confirmation in October leave the four liberal justices playing defense, or trying to prevent the court from undoing earlier decisions. Kennedy was a key part of the court majority that reaffirmed abortion rights in 1992 in a decision that measures restrictions on abortion by whether they place an "undue burden" on a woman's right to have one.

The justices don't overturn precedent often, even when it's a decision they disagree with. And when they do, it's usually because an earlier decision is "egregiously wrong," as Kavanaugh put it earlier this term.

Justice Stephen Breyer offered the latest recognition of the difficulty his liberal side of the court faces in a dissent in a case unrelated to abortion that the court decided Monday, one in which the five conservatives voted to overturn a 1979 decision.

Breyer, joined by liberal colleagues Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor, cited the 1992 abortion decision in *Planned Parenthood of Southeastern Pennsylvania v. Casey* in a dissent that concluded: "Today's decision can only cause one to wonder which cases the court will overrule next."

Justice Clarence Thomas is the only member on record as supporting overruling the court's abortion precedents. In his most recent comments on the topic in February, also in a case unrelated to abortion, Thomas likened Roe to the court's 1857 *Dred Scott* decision, which said African Americans weren't citizens. Both, he wrote, were "notoriously incorrect."

WHY MIGHT ROBERTS HOLD THE KEY?

With Kennedy gone, Roberts is now the justice closest to the court's center. The chief justice also has a track record of preferring smaller bites before making significant changes in constitutional law.

"You do see consistently in the chief justice's career a willingness to go incrementally and only decide what the court needs to resolve in the case before it," said Michael Moreland, a Villanova University law professor.

Roberts also is aware of the questions the court would face if a conservative majority of justices, all appointed by Republican presidents, were to reverse the abortion decisions, Moreland said.

Still, Roberts has, with one exception, favored abortion restrictions. His provisional vote to block the Louisiana clinic law was the only time he voted in support of abortions rights in more than 13 years on the court.

Crary reported from New York.

Profiles of victims from deadly Alaska mid-air collision

By RACHEL D'ORO and MORGAN SMITH Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — A newly married couple, a pilot who used his family's savings to buy his own plane, a devoted family man from Australia and an office manager at an insurance company with a vivacious personality and a heart of gold were among the six victims in this week's deadly midair collision of two sightseeing planes in Alaska.

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Ten others survived the Monday crash over an inlet in southeast Alaska near the cruise ship port community of Ketchikan. All 14 passengers were off the cruise ship Royal Princess, which is on a seven-day trip in Alaska.

Alaska State Troopers identified the passengers who died as 46-year-old Louis Botha of San Diego, 56-year-old Simon Bodie from Tempe, New South Wales, Australia, 62-year-old Cassandra Webb from St. Louis, 39-year-old Ryan Wilk from Utah and 37-year-old Elsa Wilk of Richmond, British Columbia, Canada. Also killed was the pilot of one of the planes, 46-year-old Randy Sullivan of Ketchikan.

Responders have begun to recover the wreckage of planes, according to federal accident investigators. The larger of the floatplanes was recovered and put on a barge to be transported to Ketchikan, National Transportation Safety Board member Jennifer Homendy said Wednesday. The NTSB has a team of investigators from Washington, D.C., at the scene.

The recovery of the smaller plane has begun and will take longer because of the large debris field from that aircraft, Homendy said.

Here's a closer look at the victims:

SIMON BODIE

Simon Bodie, 56, was a businessman from Tempe, New South Wales, Australia, and described in Australian media as a "devoted family man."

Bodie, a father of two, is believed to have taken the fateful flight with his wife of 31 years, Stephanie, The Australian newspaper reported.

"Simon was a unique beautiful person and a devoted family man. He will be greatly missed by all that knew him," his family said in a statement issued through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

RANDY SULLIVAN

Randy Sullivan knew the perils of flying in southeast Alaska, where weather is always a challenge.

"The danger," Sullivan told the Los Angeles Times in a profile in 2015, "it's on people's minds. Always."

His wife, Julie, also knew the risks.

She kissed him before each flight as a gesture of good luck and love.

The Sullivans owned and operated Mountain Air Service, a flight service specializing in Misty Fjords National Monument tours, bear viewing and glacier tours, according to the company website. It says Sullivan grew up in Ketchikan, spending time as a child in remote logging camps.

He received aviation training at Spartan College of Aeronautics and Technology in Tulsa, Oklahoma, before returning to Ketchikan. He flew in the Ketchikan area for 14 years, according to the website.

"After countless hours of flying, he has become extremely well respected and known to be 'one of the best' in his field," the page states.

He spent his family's \$500,000 savings on a 1952 Beaver airplane, he told the Los Angeles newspaper. It wasn't clear if that aircraft was the doomed plane.

Julie Sullivan has been given legal advice not to speak to reporters, said her father, Bud Kenyon.

"We're shocked, you know. We're just in disbelief about all this. It's hard to understand this. It's tough for us, you know," he said, his voice breaking. "It's a roller coaster."

RYAN and ELSA WILK

Ryan and Elsa Wilk planned to move from British Columbia to their new home in a Salt Lake City suburb. They were killed in Monday's crash.

Ryan Wilk, 39, was a cybersecurity expert who had been featured in a number of articles, including in the New York Times.

He was a vice president for the Canadian firm NuData Security, a division of MasterCard.

Friends and colleagues remember Wilk as an intelligent, witty man who cherished good beer and long conversations.

"I can tell you my brother was an amazing man, son, husband, brother and uncle. We are completely devastated," his sister, Shannon Wilk, told Salt Lake City television station KSL.

"Ryan was a very kind man with a fun personality. I loved how much we laughed together," Daniela Veliz Llaguno, Wilk's first wife, told The Associated Press.

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His free time was spent camping, watching college football and listening to the Grateful Dead, she added. Friends remembered Elsa Wilk, 37, as a kind, dedicated friend looking forward to the next stage of her life. Mark Pashley, who knew Elsa through their taekwondo practice, said Wilk was a fierce competitor in the studio and a social butterfly who loved to joke with friends in her free time.

Wilk had worked as a marketing director for different tech companies in Vancouver and held a black belt in taekwondo. She traveled around the world to compete in the sport.

Pashley said the couple hoped to start a family together in Salt Lake City.

"Everyone knew them as a wonderful couple, they were totally in love," he added.

Shannon Wilk told KSL that another victim, Louis Botha of San Diego, was Elsa Wilk's brother. Attempts by The Associated Press to reach the Botha family were not immediately successful.

CASSANDRA WEBB

Cassandra Webb, 62, liked to be called Cassie and was looking forward to retirement, getting a little travel time in ahead of that by taking trips with friends who have already ended their careers.

The Alaska trip was one she was really looking forward to, said Kevin Epperson, her boss and a co-worker in St. Louis for 30 years.

Webb and her friends spent three days in Vancouver, British Columbia, and then planned to be on the Royal Princess cruise in Alaska for seven days before ending the trip with a seven-day rail trip across Canada.

"Cassie was just an absolutely amazing person," Epperson said. "I mean, she was, you know, just a hoot to be around, she was a lot of fun. She always had a positive outlook on everything, had a heart of gold."

Epperson said he was in shock when he got the news. "The last thing you expect when somebody goes on a vacation, that they're going to perish," he said.

He will feel her absence every day at his insurance firm where she was the office manager.

"It's a loss that she's not going to be sitting across from me anymore. I'm not going to get to see her and talk to her every day," he said. "She was like a second mom to me."

Among her survivors are two sons, Dustin and Caleb.

Smith reported from Salt Lake City. Associated Press journalists Mark Thiessen in Anchorage and Michelle A. Monroe in Phoenix, and Associated Press researcher Rhonda Shafner contributed to this report.

Officials: PG&E equipment sparked deadly California wildfire

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Pacific Gas & Electric Corp. power lines sparked a Northern California blaze that killed 85 people last year, making it the deadliest U.S. wildfire in a century, state fire officials said Wednesday.

Cal Fire said transmission lines owned and operated by the San Francisco-based utility started the Nov. 8 fire that nearly destroyed the town of Paradise in the Sierra Nevada foothills.

The fire wiped out nearly 15,000 homes. Many of those killed were elderly or disabled. The oldest was 99.

"Investigators determined there were violations of law," Cal Fire deputy director Mike Mohler said. He said he hadn't read the report and didn't know the nature of the violations.

Cal Fire did not release its full investigative report, saying it had been forwarded to the Butte County district attorney's office, which is considering criminal charges against the utility.

The investigation also identified a second nearby ignition site involving PG&E's electrical distribution lines that had come into contact with vegetation. The second fire was quickly consumed by the initial fire.

The disclosures came on the same day the utility's new chief executive was testifying before a legislative committee in Sacramento. Bill Johnson told the state Assembly Utilities and Energy Committee he had expected the utility would be blamed for the fire.

"I have made the assumption when I got here that PG&E equipment caused the fire," he said, noting the utility had said that was probable in recent filings. "It's a disappointment that this happened. Let's not do it again."

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Butte County District Attorney Mike Ramsey said in a statement that he is still weighing possible criminal charges against the utility, a decision that could take months. He called Cal Fire's decision to forward its report to Butte County "strictly symbolic." because it has been long known that PG&E's equipment caused the fire.

State fire investigators have determined that PG&E caused 18 wildfires in 2017. They referred 12 for possible criminal prosecution.

Attorney Mike Danko, who represents 2,000 victims of the fire, said he was encouraged by the fact that Cal Fire sent its latest report to the district attorney, which could mean it has evidence that the utility was negligent on safety issues.

"We know from our work that PG&E knew its towers in the area were corroded and were at risk of failing," Danko said.

The utility, which filed for bankruptcy protection in January, said in February it was "probable" that one of its transmission lines sparked the blaze. PG&E has estimated its total liability from the Paradise fire and 2017 wildfires could top \$30 billion.

The Paradise fire spread rapidly, burning into the communities of Concow and Magalia and the outskirts of Chico. Authorities said it was like no fire they had seen before. Strong wind gusts blew hot embers a mile or more, creating multiple fires.

"The tinder dry vegetation and red flag conditions consisting of strong winds, low humidity and warm temperatures promoted this fire and caused extreme rates of spread," Cal fire said in its release.

The utility previously acknowledged that the Caribou-Palermo transmission line lost power right before the fire and was later found to be damaged.

Paradise Mayor Jody Jones said she was not surprised to hear Pacific Gas & Electric power lines sparked the blaze that decimated her town and she hopes the findings help the city's legal case against the utility.

"It's nice to have a definite answer," Jones said.

Paradise sued PG&E in January seeking damages for the loss of infrastructure, land, property, trees, public and natural resources, and lost taxpayer resources.

The suit alleges the blaze started when electrical infrastructure owned, operated and maintained by PG&E failed, causing a spark that ignited the blaze.

The suit also alleges that PG&E had planned to de-energize power lines as a precaution against starting a fire but canceled those plans despite windy conditions.

PG&E has proposed a dramatic expansion of planned electrical outages as part of a wildfire mitigation plan submitted to the California Public Utilities Commission in February. It has also proposed to cover overhead wiring, install more fire-resistant power poles and put some power lines underground.

The findings Wednesday "certainly brings even greater urgency to our need to inspect, repair, have a power safety shut off plan," Johnson told reporters outside the legislative hearing.

PG&E's bankruptcy reorganization plan is due by the end of May, but it has requested an extension until November.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom said in a Wednesday filing that PG&E shouldn't get an extra six months to reorganize. He said the utility's request continues to show it lacks an urgent focus on improving safety.

Newsom and lawmakers are working on proposals related to utility liability for wildfires that could affect the bankruptcy.

Associated Press writers Adam Beam and Kathleen Ronayne in Sacramento, and Paul Elias and Olga R. Rodriguez in San Francisco contributed to this story.

Trump to launch new immigration overhaul push

By JILL COLVIN and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After years of setbacks and stalemates, President Donald Trump will lay out yet another immigration plan on Thursday as he tries to convince the American public and lawmakers that the nation's legal immigration system should be overhauled.

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The latest effort, spearheaded by Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, Jared Kushner, focuses on beefing up border security and rethinking the green card system so that it would favor people with high-level skills, degrees and job offers instead of relatives of those already in the country.

A shift to a more merit-based system prioritizing high-skilled workers would mark a dramatic departure from the nation's largely family-based approach, which officials said gives roughly 66% of green cards to those with family ties and only 12% based on skills.

But the plan, which has yet to be embraced by Trump's own party — let alone Democrats — faces an uphill battle in Congress, where efforts to overhaul the immigration system have gone nowhere for three decades amid deeply divided Republicans and Democrats. Prospects for an agreement seem especially bleak as the 2020 elections near, though the plan could give Trump and the GOP a proposal to rally behind, even if talks with Democrats go nowhere.

The plan does not address what to do about the millions of immigrants already living in the country illegally, including hundreds of thousands of young "Dreamers" brought to the U.S. as children — a top priority for Democrats. Nor does it reduce overall rates of immigration, as many conservative Republicans would like to see.

Trump will nonetheless deliver a Rose Garden speech Thursday throwing his weight behind the plan, which has thus far received mixed reviews from Republicans in the Senate.

In briefings Wednesday that attracted dozens of journalists, administration officials said the plan would create a points-based visa system, similar to those used by Canada and other countries.

The officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity to outline the plan before Trump's announcement, said the U.S. would award the same number of green cards as it now does. But far more would go to exceptional students so they can remain in the country after graduation, professionals and people with high-level and vocational degrees. Factors such as age, English language ability and employment offers would also be taken into account.

Far fewer green cards would be given to people with relatives already in the U.S. and 57% versus the current 12% would be awarded based on merit. The diversity visa lottery, which offers green cards to citizens of countries with historically low rates of immigration to the U.S., would be eliminated. Officials insisted diversity would be addressed in other ways.

The officials offered fewer specifics on border security, which is expected to remain a key focus for Trump as he campaigns for reelection. Trump has been furiously railing against the spike in Central American migrant families trying to enter the country, and he forced a government shutdown in a failed effort to fulfill his 2016 promise to build a southern border wall.

As part of the plan, officials want to shore up ports of entry to ensure all vehicles and people are screened and to create a self-sustaining fund, paid for with increased fees, to modernize ports of entry.

The plan also calls for building border wall in targeted locations and continues to push for an overhaul to the U.S. asylum system, with the goal of processing fewer applications and removing people who don't qualify faster.

While the officials insisted their effort was not a "political" plan, they nonetheless framed it as one they hoped Republicans would unite behind, making clear to voters what the party is "for."

"I don't think it's designed to get Democratic support as much as it is to unify the Republican Party around border security, a negotiating position," said Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a close ally of the White House.

Indeed, the plan drew immediate criticism from Democrats as well as immigration activists, who remain deeply skeptical of Trump after past negotiation failures.

Democrats and some Republicans tried crafting a compromise with Trump last year that would have helped young Dreamer immigrants and added money for border security. But those talks collapsed over White House demands to curb legal immigration and a dramatic Senate showdown in which lawmakers rejected three rival proposals that aligned with the "four pillars" immigration plan Trump unveiled that year.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer criticized the White House for failing to engage in talks with Democrats over the latest proposal.

"Don't come up with a plan that Stephen Miller rubber stamps and say, 'Now, pass it.' It's not going to

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happen," Schumer, D-N.Y., said, referring to Trump's hard-line policy adviser.

Lisa Koop, director of legal services at the National Immigrant Justice Center, also criticized the various planks of the proposal, including its failure to address those brought to the U.S. illegally as children who are currently protected from deportation by the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals policy, or DACA, which Trump has tried to end.

"A plan that forces families apart, limits access to asylum and other humanitarian relief, and doesn't contemplate a path to citizenship for DACA recipients and other undocumented community members is clearly a political stunt intended to posture rather than problem-solve," she said.

Mark Krikorian, executive director of the Center for Immigration Studies, which advocates for lower immigration rates, applauded a "very positive effort" on legal immigration, but said it was "undermined by the embrace of the current very high level of immigration."

Republicans on the Hill, too, voiced skepticism, even as administration officials insisted the plan had been embraced by those who briefed on it. A PowerPoint presentation shared with reporters Wednesday referred to the plan as "The Republican Proposal," even though many GOP members had yet to see it.

Graham, who rolled out his own proposal Wednesday to address the recent flood of migrants seeking asylum at the U.S.-Mexico border, said he had advised Trump to try to cut a new deal with Democrats and believed Trump was open to that.

"I am urging the president to lead us to a solution," he said.

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Trump's Iran moves trigger warnings, demands from Congress

By LISA MASCARO and SUSANNAH GEORGE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Lawmakers from both parties in Congress demanded more information on the White House's claims of rising threats in the Middle East, warning President Donald Trump off a dangerous escalation with Iran.

The top leaders in Congress — the so-called Gang of Eight — are to receive a classified briefing from the administration on Thursday. But House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said the White House has resisted a wider presentation for all lawmakers, part of what Democrats say is a pattern of stonewalling. Some Republicans, including Utah Sen. Mitt Romney, sought out their own briefings as the administration called U.S. personnel home from Iraq and sent military might to the Persian Gulf, claiming unspecified threats linked to Iran.

Pelosi said Trump has "no business" moving toward a Middle East confrontation without approval from Congress.

"We have to avoid any war with Iran," she told fellow Democrats in a meeting, according to a person in the room who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss comments from the private gathering.

On Wednesday, the U.S. ordered all nonessential personnel to leave Iraq, and last week an aircraft carrier group and other resources were shifted to the Persian Gulf region. In public and in private, officials are sticking by the administration's warnings of serious threats from Iranian-backed forces in the region, yet they reject the idea that the U.S. moves are a prelude to war. Trump himself denied a report Tuesday that the administration had reviewed a plan to send 120,000 troops.

Still, the actions are exposing skepticism in the U.S. and among foreign allies, a legacy of the 2003 invasion of Iraq that was based on false intelligence. U.S. officials have not publicly provided any evidence to back up claims of an increased Iranian threat.

"Congress has not authorized war with Iran, and the administration, if it were contemplating military action with Iran, must come to Congress to seek approval," said Sen. Bob Menendez of New Jersey, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He said he had never seen anything like the "non-answers" coming from the administration.

Republicans — and even some Democrats — who have been briefed said the threats are legitimate.

The chairman of Foreign Relations Committee, Sen. Jim Risch of Idaho, said that based on the informa-

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tion he received he supports the administration actions, including the repositioning of the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier to the Gulf.

"The threat is real," said Democrat Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia, the ranking member of the Senate Intelligence Committee. But, he said, "The administration is doing a dreadful job of consulting with Congress and keeping the vast majority of members of Congress informed about what's happening."

And Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida said the information he's seen shows "by far the single most imminent potential conflict of this significance" in his eight years in Congress. He said, "The intelligence is unmistakable and clear, and it's backed by observable movement on the ground."

Still, Romney expressed support for the Senate Democrats' request for more information in a classified briefing, and Risch said a broader briefing for senators, perhaps next week, was "in the works."

Romney said it's "inconceivable" that Trump would start a conflict with Iran. "There's no appetite for going to war in the Middle East," he told reporters.

State Department officials said threats in the region were credible and based on intelligence showing Iranian-backed militias had been moving personnel and weaponry as well as stepping up surveillance of U.S. and U.S.-affiliated facilities in Iraq and other parts of the Middle East. The officials were not authorized to comment publicly by name and spoke only on condition of anonymity.

They pushed back against speculation that the decision to bring nonessential personnel home from Iraq was a prelude to military conflict. There is no U.S. desire for war, said one official, who had returned earlier Wednesday from Europe with Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

Several Democrats pinned the sudden moves in part on national security adviser John Bolton, known for his hawkish views. Some have suggested Pompeo and Bolton don't see eye-to-eye on the U.S. strategy, and Trump found it necessary to comment on that.

"There is no infighting whatsoever," he tweeted Wednesday. "All sides, views, and policies are covered," and he reserves the "decisive and final decision," he said.

"I'm sure that Iran will want to talk soon," he said, without elaboration.

Earlier this year, Congress forced Trump into the first veto of his administration over a resolution that passed the House and Senate to halt U.S. involvement in the Saudi-led war against Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen.

Rep. Jim Himes, D-Conn., a senior member of the House Intelligence Committee said, "The people inside the administration who are trying to start a war know that if they have this conversation in an open and transparent way, there will be very substantial pushback from both parties and both houses of Congress."

Republican Rep. Will Hurd of Texas, who is a former CIA officer, said the administration's information on Iran is highly sensitive and by nature cannot be shared with a wide audience.

"When you get such credible intelligence that leads to major decisions like rerouting aircraft carriers, it's important that the way the information is collected is not damaged," Hurd said. "You need to protect sources and methods."

Pelosi warned that the administration cannot rely on the most recent use-of-force authorization approved by Congress nearly 20 years ago for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"They have no business declaring a war without the consent of Congress," she said.

Since last week, House leaders have been asking for a classified session for lawmakers on the situation with Iran, but Pelosi said the administration indicated it couldn't come together "that fast."

An administration official said they have no plans for a wider briefing at this point.

"The bigger problem is, so what if you get a briefing?" said Rep. Karen Bass, D-Calif., a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee who raised broader questions of Trump's foreign policy. "What does my briefing mean if he comes out and tweets something?"

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Matthew Lee, Padmananda Rama, Laurie Kellman and Zeke J. Miller contributed to this report.

Alabama law moves abortion to the center of 2020 campaign

By ELANA SCHOR, ZEKE MILLER and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Alabama's new law restricting abortion in nearly every circumstance has moved one of the most polarizing issues in American politics to the center of the 2020 presidential campaign.

The state's legislation — the toughest of several anti-abortion measures that have passed recently, with the only exception being a serious risk to the woman's health — prompted an outcry from Democratic presidential candidates, who warned that conservatives were laying the groundwork to undermine the landmark Roe v. Wade decision. The White House, meanwhile, didn't comment on the Alabama bill, signed into law Wednesday by Republican Gov. Kay Ivey, as President Donald Trump tries to balance his conservative base against the potential of antagonizing women who are already skeptical of his presidency.

The furor over abortion quickly took over on the Democratic campaign trail. Rallying supporters in New Hampshire, Sen. Kamala Harris said she would back a legal challenge to Alabama and Georgia's restrictive abortion laws. She also vowed to make a commitment to upholding the Roe decision a "significant factor" in any Supreme Court nominees she might choose as president, though she declined to go as far as presidential rival Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, who has promised to only nominate judges ready to preserve the 1973 ruling that established a woman's constitutional right to an abortion.

"I respect every woman's right to make a decision about what's in the best interest of herself and her family," Harris said.

Kentucky, Mississippi, Ohio and Georgia have approved abortion bans once a fetal heartbeat is detected, which can occur in about the sixth week of pregnancy. None of these laws are yet in force, either because of later effective dates or legal challenges that have blocked them. But supporters have openly predicted that the laws could spark court fights that will eventually lead the Supreme Court to revisit its Roe decision.

Gillibrand plans to fly to Atlanta on Thursday to meet with women protesting Georgia's state law.

Sen. Cory Booker told The Associated Press that backers of the Alabama measure are "saying that they designed this bill with certain provisions — like not having any exceptions for rape or incest — specifically designed so that they can lead a fight to the Supreme Court" to "undermine other freedoms and liberties of women to control their own bodies."

Booker said it's not enough to hope that Roe will be upheld, adding: "We cannot wait to see if this gets worse."

Several Democratic presidential candidates sought to use their high-profile positions to boost organizing against the state-level abortion laws. Harris emailed her campaign supporters offering to "split a donation" to four advocacy groups working to defend abortion rights. Pete Buttigieg, mayor of South Bend, Indiana, directed his supporters by email to the abortion-rights group NARAL.

Among the other Democratic candidates who took to Twitter to blast Alabama's law and other state-level restrictions were Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, as well as former Vice President Joe Biden and former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke.

Ilyse Hogue, the president of NARAL, lauded the Democrats for their support. But she urged them to go further than pro-abortion-rights rhetoric, calling instead for "articulated plans about how we're going to address and get out of this crisis."

The Democratic pushback comes as Trump makes his selection of conservative judges a centerpiece of his political stump speech, part of a long-running courtship of social conservatives whose support he needs to win reelection next year. Republicans have long believed that the politics of abortion have shifted somewhat in their favor in recent years. But the near-absolutist nature of the most recent bills has sparked some concern among the president's team that it could energize Trump critics and female voters, with whom the president has long struggled.

Polling suggests that the issue of abortion has the potential to stoke political engagement among both parties. The General Social Survey released last year found 64% of Democrats, but just 35% of Republicans, saying a woman should be able to have an abortion for any reason.

Other surveys have found majority support for legalized abortion in "all or most cases." A Pew Research

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Center survey in September 2018 found 58% of Americans saying abortion should be legal in at least most cases, compared with 37% who said it should be illegal in all or most cases.

Trump won the White House in 2016 in part because of strong support from socially conservative Republicans who wanted to ensure that a conservative justice got named to the Supreme Court seat that had been occupied by Antonin Scalia — a seat held open by the GOP's refusal to confirm President Barack Obama's pick for the lifetime post. Since his first campaign began, Trump has supported a ban on abortions at the point that a fetus is believed to feel pain and publicly released a list of conservative judges from which he would select a nominee for the nation's highest court.

The president's selection of Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh to the Supreme Court has emboldened conservative allies of the White House who believe the time is ripe for a court case to challenge Roe v. Wade. Kavanaugh assured senators before his confirmation last year that he viewed Roe as precedent, but Democratic senators pointed to a 2003 memo he wrote that suggested it wasn't necessary to call the landmark abortion-rights ruling "settled law" because the "Court can always overrule its precedent."

The Trump campaign deferred to the White House on whether Trump supported the Alabama measure or other restrictive bills passed by other states. White House deputy press secretary Judd Deere touted Trump's record on abortion, noting that he "is protecting our most innocent and vulnerable, defending the dignity of life, and called on Congress to prohibit late-term abortions."

Associated Press writers Hunter Woodall in Nashua, N.H., and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

FAA chief defends handling of Boeing Max safety approval

By DAVID KOENIG, MARCY GORDON and TOM KRISHER

WASHINGTON (AP) — The acting chief of the Federal Aviation Administration defended his agency's safety certification of the Boeing 737 Max jetliner, the plane involved in two deadly crashes, and the FAA's decision not to ground the jet until other regulators around the world had already done so.

During a congressional hearing Wednesday, the FAA official, Daniel Elwell, also stood by the agency's decades-old policy of using employees of aircraft manufacturers like Boeing to conduct inspections on their own companies' work.

Boeing is updating an automated flight-control system that has been implicated in the two crashes involving the 737 Max. Elwell said he expects Boeing to complete its work "in the next week or so," after which the FAA will analyze the software changes and conduct test flights.

"In the U.S., the 737 Max will return to service only when the FAA's analysis of the facts and technical data indicate that it is safe to do so," Elwell said.

Meanwhile, the Senate Commerce Committee held a short hearing for President Donald Trump's choice to take over the FAA: Stephen Dickson, a former Delta Air Lines pilot and executive.

During the two-hour questioning of Elwell by the House aviation subcommittee, lawmakers pressed him on the FAA's reliance on designated Boeing employees during the planes' certification process.

Rep. Dina Titus, D-Nev., told Elwell that the public believes "you were in bed with those you were supposed to be regulating, and that's why it took so long" to ground the planes.

"The FAA has a credibility problem," declared the subcommittee chairman, Rick Larsen, D-Wash.

The 737 Max is Boeing's best-selling plane and it is built in his home state of Washington. Larsen said Congress must help make the public feel safe about flying because "if they don't fly, airlines don't need to buy airplanes," and "then there will be no jobs" in aircraft manufacturing.

Other lawmakers defended the FAA and Boeing and suggested that the Oct. 29 crash of a Lion Air jet off Indonesia and the March 10 crash of an Ethiopian Airlines Max were due at least partly to pilot error. A total of 346 people were killed in the crashes.

"It bothers me that we continue to tear down our system based on what has happened in two other countries," said Rep. Sam Graves, R-Mo.

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Boeing is already the subject of a criminal investigation by the Justice Department. Boeing customers Southwest Airlines and American Airlines and their pilot unions have received subpoenas related to that investigation; United Airlines, which also flew the Max until it was grounded in March, declined to comment, although its pilot union confirmed that it too has received a subpoena.

Congressional investigations into the FAA's relationship with Boeing are in the early stages. Rep. Peter DeFazio, D-Ore., who heads the full Transportation Committee, said he and Larsen have been frustrated after seeking information from Boeing.

"Boeing has yet to provide a single document," he said. "We've got to get to the bottom of this."

Elwell defended FAA's practice of designating employees of Boeing and other aerospace manufacturers to do some inspection work, saying it takes advantage of industry expertise, and "when done right, is indispensable to the health and safety of our system."

At a Senate hearing in March, Elwell said it would cost \$1.8 billion a year if FAA did all the work done by designees at companies regulated by the agency.

On Wednesday, the acting chief defended the FAA's 2017 approval of the Max including its new automated flight-control system that can push the nose of the plane down if a single sensor detects that the plane could be nearing an aerodynamic stall.

That system, called MCAS, was triggered on both fatal flights by faulty sensor readings, and pilots were not able to regain control of the planes as they plunged to Earth. Airlines and pilots were not told about MCAS until after the October crash.

"When I first heard of this, (I) thought that the MCAS should have been more adequately explained in the ops manual and the flight manual," Elwell said.

Boeing is changing MCAS to make it less powerful, and to link the system to two sensors instead of one. And it will include more explanation of the system, Elwell said, "to make pilots more aware and respond better to an anomaly."

American Airlines pilots pressed Boeing in November — shortly after the first Max crash — to fix the software quickly.

"We don't want to rush and do a crappy job of fixing things," a Boeing official responded, according to a recording of the meeting. "We also don't want to fix the wrong things."

The Boeing representative called the Lion Air crash a tragedy, adding, "an even worse thing would be another one." He promised a software update in six weeks.

The update was still not done when the Ethiopian crash occurred more than three months later.

"Boeing did not treat the 737 Max 8 situation like the emergency it was," said Daniel Carey, president of the American Airlines pilots' union, which has filed public records related to the matter. Carey said his pilots are seeking "proper oversight" of Boeing, the FAA and airlines including their own.

Boeing representatives were not invited to Wednesday's hearing.

Nadia Milleron, whose daughter, Samya Stumo, was on the Ethiopian Airlines plane, was in the audience. She said FAA seems to be rushing to approve Boeing's fixes to the Max even before the accident investigations are finished — something that could take many months.

"It is possible that these planes should never go back in the air," she said.

Milleron, whose family is suing Boeing and Ethiopian Airlines, said travelers hold the final power to ground the plane.

"The only thing that is going to stop this is the public," Milleron said in an interview. "If the public is concerned and if the Boeing 737 Max 8 ... becomes toxic ... that's going to make a change."

Across Capitol Hill, the Senate Commerce Committee held a relatively placid hearing for Dickson, the nominee to replace Elwell, FAA's acting administrator since January 2018.

Dickson promised that if he is confirmed by the full Senate, he would not hesitate to take enforcement action against companies and FAA would not be captive to the industry it regulates.

U.S. aviation has an enviable safety record over the past decade, Dickson said, but the industry is only as good as the last takeoff or landing.

Koenig reported from Dallas, Krisher from Detroit.

Happy 130th birthday, Eiffel Tower: Laser show for Iron Lady

PARIS (AP) — Paris wished the Eiffel Tower a happy birthday Wednesday with an elaborate nighttime laser show retracing the monument's 130-year history.

Earlier in the day, the monument invited 1,300 children to a giant "snack time" beneath the tower known as the Iron Lady.

After nightfall, a 12-minute laser display began flashing across the facade in shows that will run through Friday night. Professional climbers scaled the monument to mount the lights for the unprecedented show.

Around 6 million people go up the tower every year, in addition to the crowds who just come to look at Gustave Eiffel's creation, designed for the 1889 World's Fair. It was the world's tallest monument at the time, and thanks to strict urban planning rules, it still looms large above the Paris skyline.

The Eiffel Tower opened to the public for the first time on May 15, 1889, several days after its inauguration at the World's Fair.

Less fat, more fruit may cut risk of dying of breast cancer

By **MARILYNN MARCHIONE** AP Chief Medical Writer

For the first time, a large experiment suggests that trimming dietary fat and eating more fruits and vegetables may lower a woman's risk of dying of breast cancer.

The results are notable because they come from a rigorous test involving 49,000 women over two decades rather than other studies that try to draw health conclusions from observations about how people eat.

Healthy women who modified their diets for at least eight years and who later developed breast cancer had a 21% lower risk of dying of the disease compared to others who continued to eat as usual.

However, that risk was small to start with and diet's effect was not huge, so it took 20 years for the difference between the groups to appear. The diet change also did not lower the risk of developing breast cancer, which was the study's main goal.

Still, doctors say the results show a way women might improve their odds of survival.

"Patients are eager for things that they can do," said Dr. Jennifer Ligibel of the Dana-Farber Cancer Institute in Boston. "It really suggests that changing your diet, losing weight, exercising, could actually be a treatment."

She had no role in the study, led by Dr. Rowan Chlebowski of Los Angeles Biomedical Research Institute at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center. He gave results Wednesday in a telephone news conference held by the American Society of Clinical Oncology ahead of its annual meeting later this month.

"We need to take this very seriously" because of the quality of the study, said Dr. Lidia Schapira, a breast cancer expert at Stanford University and spokeswoman for the oncology society. "What we eat matters."

The results come from the Women's Health Initiative, a big federally funded study that previously overturned longtime advice on hormone therapy for menopause symptoms.

The diet part of the study enrolled 48,835 women ages 50 to 79 without breast cancer in the 1990s. At the start, they were getting one third of calories from fat. One group was given regular counseling sessions and told to limit fat to 20% of calories and to eat more vegetables, fruits and grains. The rest continued their usual eating habits.

The group aiming for low fat missed the target, but cut fat intake to 24% after one year and about 30% after eight years — still lower than where they started. Fat intake in the comparison group stayed about the same.

The study previously showed that there were fewer deaths from all causes among women in the lower fat group who later developed breast cancer. Now, after 20 years, there's also a difference in deaths from that disease. However, only 383 women died of breast cancer, so the benefit in absolute terms was small.

Was it trimming fat or increasing vegetables, fruits and grains that helped?

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"Diet is complicated. If somebody is eating more of one food, they're eating less of another," and it's hard to say which change is doing what, Ligibel said. Eating too many starchy foods isn't good either, and researchers now know that the type of fat matters, and that some fats such as olive oil are better than others.

"Our view of diet has evolved since this study was designed," she said.

Ligibel is leading a study to see whether losing weight improves survival for women with early-stage breast cancer. Chlebowski is working on another study to see whether women who are obese or have certain other health risks get the biggest benefit from trimming dietary fat. Results from this study suggest they might.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed at @MMarchioneAP

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Want a bridge? Trump blurs line between governing, campaign

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was an Oprah-worthy moment: President Donald Trump stood before a Louisiana crowd at an official taxpayer-funded event and tossed out an enticing promise. "If we win this election, which is just 16 months away, we're giving you a brand new I-10 bridge."

Trump's commitment during a visit to a liquefied natural gas export facility on Tuesday drew cheers from his audience. But it generated immediate criticism from ethics experts who have already sounded alarms about Trump's apparent willingness to put the federal bureaucracy to work for his own political gain.

All presidents benefit from the trappings of the office. But as Trump heads into a turbulent re-election campaign, historians and observers are wondering just how far the president might be willing to go in using the levers of presidential power, from the Pentagon to the Justice Department, to energize his supporters and help bolster his election chances, especially if the polls are tilting against him.

"I think there's no limit to what Donald Trump will do to get re-elected," said historian Douglas Brinkley. "When painted into a corner in an election season," he said Trump has shown a willingness to take "extraordinary leaps to frighten people into voting for him" or make grand infrastructure promises that may never come to pass.

Such accusations, however, are nothing new.

President George W. Bush's administration "used every favor they had," including well-timed grants, to help candidates who "needed a little push," said Paul Light, a professor of public service at New York University. And President Barack Obama was accused of making a political play just months before the 2012 election when he took executive action to create new protections for so-called Dreamer immigrants brought to the country illegally as children.

While the White House has pushed back on the notion, Trump made clear in the lead-up to the 2018 midterm elections that he was willing to use his office as a campaign asset.

As he tried to help Republicans hang on to the Senate and minimize losses in the House, Trump turned to his go-to issue — immigration — and made dire warnings from the White House about an "invasion" of Central American migrants, even though the caravan he warned against was still hundreds of miles from the U.S.-Mexico border and dwindling.

Then Trump mobilized the U.S. military, deploying thousands of troops to the southern border. While the White House said Trump was responding to a legitimate humanitarian and national security crisis and doing his duty to protect the nation, many saw the move as a political stunt. In the weeks ahead of the election, Trump also threatened to end the constitutional right to birthright citizenship and promised a new, 10% tax cut for the middle class that has yet to materialize six months later.

Dave Levinthal, federal politics editor at the Center for Public Integrity, a nonprofit news organization

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specializing in investigative journalism, said Trump's unprecedented mixing of government and campaigning began when he launched his reelection effort on Inauguration Day.

"That's really changed the game in a significant way, in that Donald Trump has more or less created a true, permanent presidential campaign," Levinthal said. "It may have felt like that before but now it really is reality."

Since then, Trump has been steadily raising money and holding political rallies, along with staging official government events that often have the feel of campaign functions.

Indeed, on Tuesday, Trump used his event in Louisiana to size up his 2020 Democratic opponents and dismiss their prospects, before drawing a standing ovation as he promised to rebuild the Calcasieu River Bridge.

"We'll have it all set to go Day One, right after the election, OK?" Trump told the crowd.

The day before, Trump was offering up new federal cash for the crucial battleground states of Florida and Michigan, asking Congress for \$200 million for Army Corps of Engineers work in the Florida Everglades, an extra \$1.6 billion for NASA and \$300 million for Great Lakes restoration work.

Trump's original budget plan had proposed slashing the Great Lakes money, but the president announced he was reversing that during a March rally in Grand Rapids, Michigan. He also promised a swift infusion of federal aid to the hurricane-battered Florida Panhandle during a rally there last week.

"He's already put Florida pork projects into play to make sure he holds that state," said Brinkley, adding that, while all politicians make such promises, "no president will use fearmongering and hyperbole to the degree that Trump will to drive a wedge issue home."

Federal law prohibits the promising of favors or other benefits in exchange for supporting a candidate, said Virginia Canter, chief ethics counsel at the Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington, a nonprofit government watchdog group.

The White House, however, pushed back on that notion. "The President of the United States must be able to speak to the American people about important policies like rebuilding the military, infrastructure and immigration regardless of whether it's January 2017 or November 2020 - and the notion that would be considered unlawful is ludicrous," said spokesman Steven Groves.

Beyond typical promises of pork and pandering, there is also concern that Trump might be willing to cross other lines.

"I do think a lesson that he probably took from the midterms is his ability to put things in motion as president that he can do to affect the electorate — especially his base," said David Lapan, the former Department of Homeland Security press secretary under Trump and longtime Defense Department spokesman and adviser.

Lapan said he worried that sending troops to the border without a legitimate national security threat before the midterms had politicized the military and left Trump vulnerable to accusations that potential future deployments are being driven by politics.

"If you start using those powers for political reasons, then you raise questions about your motives," he said, asking: "If it came down to some type of confrontation with Iran, is the public going to believe that the actions were taken because of the military threat or to advance a partisan political agenda?"

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Many online climate change lessons are actually junk

By MICHAEL MELIA Associated Press

When science teacher Diana Allen set out to teach climate change, a subject she'd never learned in school, she fell into a rabbit's hole of misinformation: Many resources presented online as educational material were actually junk.

"It is a pretty scary topic to take on," said Allen, a teacher at Sanford Junior High School, in southern Maine. "There are some pretty tricky websites out there. You kind of have to be an expert to be able to

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see through that like, 'Oh, no, these guys aren't telling you the truth.'"

There are materials produced by climate change doubters, lesson plans developed by the oil industry, and countless other sites with misleading or outdated information. The Climate Literacy and Energy Awareness Network, funded by federal grants, reviewed more than 30,000 free online resources and found only 700 acceptable for use in schools.

"There's a lot of information that's out there that is broken, old, misleading, not scientifically sound, not sound technically," said Frank Niepold, a climate education coordinator at the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

The Heartland Institute, an Illinois-based group that dismisses climate change, in 2017 sent thousands of science teachers copies of a book titled "Why Scientists Disagree About Global Warming" The book, attributed to the group's Nongovernmental International Panel on Climate Change, misrepresents the near-universal consensus of scientists and the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change that global warming is real and man-made.

Another resource, a set of six lesson plans on understanding climate change, is available online from the Canada-based Fraser Institute, which counts the Charles Koch Foundation among its financial supporters. The lessons claim that mainstream climate scientists have made selective use of data and that it's a matter of debate whether human-generated carbon dioxide emissions have contributed to climate change, saying "the issues are far from settled."

"Our history is full of examples where 'common knowledge' was discarded in favor of more correct hypotheses," the lesson plans say. Among them, it lists, "Are diseases caused by evil spirits? Are natural disasters caused by angry gods?"

And: "Does smoking pose a threat to your health?"

Also vying for educators' attention are classroom-ready materials made available by the oil companies. ExxonMobil, Chevron, Shell and other companies have invested heavily in promoting science, technology, engineering and math education in K-12 schools. Such materials are used widely to teach topics related to energy, but critics say they can mislead by not addressing the role of burning fossil fuels in global warming.

For teachers in cash-strapped schools, it can be hard to pass up the free handout materials.

Melissa Lau, a sixth-grade teacher in Piedmont, Oklahoma, attended one of the training sessions put on regularly for teachers by the Oklahoma Energy Resource Bureau, which is funded by the oil and gas companies. She kept the \$50 stipend and the tub full of science equipment she got from the group but she tossed its illustrated lesson plans featuring the character "Petro Pete."

In a book available online, Petro Pete has a nightmare about everything that would be missing from his life if there were no petroleum products, from his toothbrush to his school bus.

"I get free beakers and cool things like that," Lau said. "But the curriculum itself is borderline propaganda."

A spokeswoman for the industry group, Dara McBee, said their materials align with Oklahoma standards, which do not reference climate change, and they are intended to supplement what students learn in school.

Kevin Leineweber, a science teacher at Cascade High School in Clayton, Indiana, said he is skeptical about resources sent to him, including oil industry materials, but some colleagues are less so. At a district-wide science meeting a couple months ago one elementary school teacher expressed excitement about receiving unsolicited materials on climate change in the mail, to help introduce the topic to students. After talking it over with Leineweber, the teacher tossed the mailing of unknown origin.

"I'm just like, 'Oh, jeez,'" Leineweber said.

The oil industry materials have the effect of pushing climate change to the periphery, Charles Anderson, a professor of science education at Michigan State University.

"The school systems of the country are so fragmented and under-resourced that they have no choice but to turn to people like the oil industry who offer them free stuff," he said.

Climate change education varies across states, and often from one classroom to the next. The Next Generation Science Standards, which emphasize climate change and how humans are altering the planet, have been adopted by or served as a model for most states. But many teachers report that they shy away

from the topic not only because of issues with materials but also the political sensitivities, and uncertainty over where to introduce an issue that crosses so many disciplines.

Diana Allen, 48, said she began to see it as her duty to teach climate change even though it's not required under Maine's science education standards.

For her lesson plans on climate change, she turns primarily to other teachers, pulling resources they have vetted and shared on an email thread overseen by the National Science Teachers Association. Other teachers have turned to the National Center for Science Education, which posts free climate change lessons and has a "scientist in the classroom" program.

Many educators say that climate change as an area of instruction is still so new that textbook publishers have not caught up enough to provide useful materials.

"I have a Ph.D. from Stanford in biochemistry, and it's still hard for me to source stuff that works in my classroom right," said Kirstin Milks, an Earth science teacher at Bloomington High School South in Indiana.

Milks helps train educators on how to teach climate change. In their applications, many teachers display a sense of urgency, she said.

"I think we all are in that same boat of understanding that this might be one of the most important social justice issues of our time, one of the most important environmental issues of our time, one of the most important political issues of our time," she said.

Sometimes educators have to push back against what their students are taught in other classrooms.

Leigh Foy, a science teacher at York Suburban High School in Pennsylvania, said a social studies teacher at her school has told students for years that climate change is a hoax and he could prove it with an experiment. He would fill a cup in the classroom with ice and water, mark the water level, and show students it didn't rise as the ice melted. The problem, Foy said, is his lack of accounting for the difference between sea ice and land ice or the expansion of water as it gets warmer.

"This is just an example of what we're up against," Foy said.

Teachers who have gotten themselves up to speed on climate change often say they make it a primary goal to help their students identify untrustworthy materials.

Sarah Ott, who teaches physical science to eighth-graders in Dalton, Georgia, dedicates a section of her class to climate literacy. In one April class, she discussed how to identify misinformation, highlighting materials including a petition signed by more than 30,000 purported scientists that dismisses the dangers of global warming.

"These people are fake experts and this is being used to mislead people," she told her students. "So we're going to be learning about misinformation and ways for you to spot misinformation. And this is a great skill because you're not just going to use this for science. You're going to use this for all of your subjects."

Associated Press writer Sarah Blake Morgan contributed to this report from Dalton, Georgia.

Using a smartphone to sound out sign of kids' ear infections

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Researchers have created a way for a smartphone to "hear" a warning sign of ear infections — fluid buildup behind the eardrum.

If it pans out, parents might one day check their tots' ears at home simply using a phone app and "stuff you have around the house — paper, tape and scissors," said one of the lead researchers, Dr. Sharat Raju of the University of Washington.

Ear infections are one of the most common reasons for pediatrician visits. Even if there's no infection, fluid that builds up in the middle ear still can be painful and sometimes can muffle hearing enough to affect speech development.

Diagnosis is difficult. Usually a pediatrician will peek into the child's ear to see if the eardrum is inflamed, and parents can buy devices that use cameras to do the same thing. But ear specialists tend to use pricier, more complex tests that measure if the eardrum is pliable enough to vibrate correctly in response to sound,

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or is stiff from the pressure of fluid behind it.

A team of engineers and doctors at the University of Washington developed a simple smartphone approach for acoustic testing: Cut a piece of paper, fold it into a funnel shape and tape it around the phone's microphone and speakers. Aim the funnel at the ear canal to focus sound. An experimental app beams in birdlike chirps, at a specific frequency. The microphone detects sound waves bouncing off the eardrum.

The app analyzes that echo, a broad-spectrum vibration from a healthy eardrum. Pus or uninfected fluid alters the eardrum's mobility and changes the reflected sound. The app sends a text saying whether it's likely that middle-ear fluid is present — one piece of information, along with other symptoms, that might be used for diagnosis.

"This type of technology could potentially avoid needless doctor visits," said Dr. Justin Golub, a Columbia University ear specialist who wasn't involved with the research. Golub often sees patients with suspected ear infections who don't actually have one. He called the tool's accuracy "quite impressive."

Researchers tested the system on 98 ears, in children older than 18 months who were about to undergo surgery at Seattle Children's Hospital. Half were having ear tubes implanted, so doctors could tell exactly how much fluid was present to compare with the smartphone results. The system detected fluid as well or better than specialized acoustic testing devices, the team reported Wednesday in the journal *Science Translational Medicine*.

A smaller test showed similar results as young as 9 months. And in a separate experiment involving 25 kids' ears, parents used the smartphone to check for fluid just as well as doctors did.

"Examining ears is difficult," and better tools are needed for doctors, too, said Dr. Alejandro Hoberman, pediatrics chief at UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh, who also wasn't part of the research.

But just because there's fluid present doesn't mean it's infected — and Hoberman worried that at-home use of such a device "may alarm parents" and pressure doctors to prescribe unnecessary antibiotics.

Dr. Randall Bly, a University of Washington ear specialist and study co-author, says the smartphone approach is a bit like using a thermometer in deciding when to call a doctor. If it finds no sign of fluid, "then you can be pretty confident the fever or whatever is probably not related to an ear infection," he explained.

But lots of children have persistent ear fluid without infections — and they're supposed to be tracked for months in deciding if they need ear tubes. At-home monitoring would be easier and cheaper than repeated doctor visits just for an ear test, added Raju, a surgical resident.

That's one reason the American Academy of Otolaryngology in 2016 called for development of at-home strategies to detect fluid buildup in the ears.

The research was funded in part by the National Science Foundation and National Institutes of Health. The university filed for a patent, and the researchers are seeking Food and Drug Administration approval to sell the app.

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Help coming on blocking scam calls for robocall-plagued US

By TALI ARBEL AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — New measures by U.S. regulators could help thwart some of the billions of robocalls received in the U.S.

The Federal Communications Commission said Wednesday that it will vote in June on whether to let wireless carriers block spam calls by default, which should mean that more spam calls are blocked. Right now, customers have to take the extra step of requesting tools from their carriers or downloading apps from other companies to help them weed out most unwanted calls.

The rising volume of calls in the last few years, driven by how cheap and easy it is for scammers to call millions of people as well as weak enforcement, has created pressure on Congress, regulators and phone companies to act. The volume of calls has risen to roughly 5 billion per month, according to call-blocker

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YouMail, from 2.7 billion in November 2017. That's when the government gave carriers explicit, although narrow, permission to block certain types of calls.

Many robocalls are not scam calls, though, but calls from debt collectors and telemarketers selling insurance, cruises and the like. It's not clear if carriers would automatically block those calls, too, said Margot Saunders, senior counsel for the National Consumer Law Center and an expert on robocalls.

Under the proposed rules, the agency won't require carriers to provide such services or mandate that the tools offered are free. Today, some of these apps cost extra money; others are free.

"We certainly are encouraging companies to offer this for free," FCC Chairman Ajit Pai said. He said he anticipates that companies won't charge extra because it would cost less than the headache of dealing with robocalls and customer complaints about them today. He raised the threat of regulatory action "if the companies do not take the steps necessary to protect consumers."

The agency also said Wednesday it's making clear that carriers can let customers come up with lists of numbers that they will permit to call them. That means customers could tell phone companies that any number not on their list be automatically blocked.

"There is no doubt that this can only help, that it's a good thing. My questions go to how much it helps," Saunders said, referring to whether consumers would be protected from unwanted debt-collector and telemarketing calls as well as scams.

Phone-industry group USTelecom said Pai's proposal was "big and bold" and would help stop unwanted calls from reaching consumers.

There are also bills in Congress addressing the robocall problem. A widely supported, bipartisan Senate bill would require carriers to verify that a number popping up on your caller ID is real. A big problem with robocalls is that many are "spoofed," or faked to look like they're coming from a number that matches your area code and the next three digits of your number, so you think it's a neighbor and are more likely to pick up. The industry is working on deploying this long-in-the-works system, but it's been a slow process. Pai has threatened regulatory action if it's not done this year.

The Senate bill would also give the FCC more power to fine the people responsible for spam calls and puts together federal agencies and state officials to figure out ways to pursue criminal cases against robocall scammers, not just civil ones.

Tensions over Iran show cracks in a time-tested alliance

By GREGORY KATZ and DAVID RISING Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Gone, at least for now, are the halcyon days when strong military and political ties between Britain and the United States meant that Washington could assume it had a staunch partner for standing up to a foreign foe.

Dating back to World War II and including joint actions against Kosovo, Afghanistan and the two wars against Iraq, U.S. leaders have been able to count on Britain to take part in invasions and airstrikes, and to help persuade sometimes cautious European allies to offer political and logistical support.

The Trump administration was expecting similar support over what it calls an increased threat from Iran, but this hope has been swatted down — not with anonymous whispers but by public comments from top British officials.

In an unusually blunt challenge from Britain, Maj. Gen. Chris Ghika denied the U.S. assertion of an increased threat from Iranian-backed forces in Iraq and Syria. Foreign Secretary Jeremy Hunt also warned that the heated rhetoric could lead to an "accidental" war between the U.S. and Iran.

Those remarks brought Britain closely into line with other European nations that want a focus on diplomacy, not escalation. Europe wants to salvage a nuclear containment deal with Iran, not ratchet up tensions.

The very public display of disunity comes as President Donald Trump prepares to travel to Britain and France next month to mark the 75th anniversary of the D-Day invasion, often cited as a shining example of the value of trans-Atlantic cooperation.

Peter Beyer, the German government's coordinator for trans-Atlantic relations, told The Associated Press

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on Wednesday that Germany is working closely with its European allies to “calm the situation in the Persian Gulf” before it gets out of hand.

“Our goal remains to keep the Iran nuclear deal in place,” he said, referring to the deal that world powers reached with Iran in 2015 to constrain its nuclear development. Trump has abandoned the deal, frustrating Britain, France and Germany, whose leaders believe it offers the best way to prevent nuclear proliferation in the unstable Middle East.

Beyer said Germany’s foreign minister met privately in Brussels with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo on Monday and “outlined very clearly that we do not want any type of military escalation.”

In a newspaper interview to be published Thursday, German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Germany, France and Britain are taking “a different approach” from the U.S. on Iran, adding that in this instance the three countries “have common interests” with Russia and China.

Britain’s ability to influence Trump on its own seems particularly weak at the moment because the government is in disarray over its stalled Brexit divorce plan from the EU, and Prime Minister Theresa May has said she will step down once the withdrawal becomes a reality.

Some European diplomats say privately that Pompeo was unconvincing when he met separately with several European foreign ministers and that there is little comprehension of what U.S. officials hope to achieve by putting maximum pressure on Iran at a time when its economy is already suffering under sanctions.

The meetings with Pompeo seemed to be thrown together at the last minute rather than a carefully choreographed diplomatic encounter.

German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas told lawmakers that putting intense pressure on Iran adds to the risk of an unintended escalation.

“What has happened in recent days — acts of sabotage against ships or pipelines — are indications that these dangers (of escalation) are concrete and real,” he said.

For now, the EU refuses to be drawn into the war of words. Under the nuclear agreement, which is backed by a U.N. Security Council resolution, the International Atomic Energy Agency reports every few months on whether Iran is in compliance with the terms of the deal, known as the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action.

A new report is due at the end of May, and the Europeans are waiting to see what its conclusions will be, rather than endorsing the U.S. position.

In the meantime, Europeans have been trying to keep supply lines open to Iran. They have set up a complicated barter-type system to skirt direct financial transactions with Tehran to try to evade possible U.S. sanctions.

The plan, run jointly by Britain, France and Germany, is not yet operational, but the fact that the three influential nations banded together to come up with a way to frustrate U.S. sanctions is one more sign that the alliances that helped rebuild western Europe after World War II are being tested as never before.

¹Rising reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Geir Moulson in Berlin and Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed.

CBS defends ‘Bull’ renewal after star faced misconduct claim

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — CBS defended its decision to renew the drama series “Bull” after settling a sexual harassment claim against its star Michael Weatherly, saying the actor “owned” and apologized for his on-set behavior toward actress Eliza Dushku.

Dushku said she was written off the show after complaining that Weatherly remarked on her appearance and made jokes involving sex and rape in front of cast and crew in early 2017. Last year, the allegation and a \$9.5 million confidential settlement reached with Dushku were made public in a report by The New York Times .

“We found out about it when you did,” and looked at the matter with “fresh eyes” before making a deci-

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sion on the show's future, CBS Entertainment President Kelly Kahl told a news conference held Wednesday to introduce CBS' 2019-20 schedule, which includes "Bull."

"First and foremost, what we found was Michael made a mistake in his comments. He owned that mistake. He was apologetic at the time" and apologized again when it came out, Kahl said.

In renewing Weatherly's series, CBS considered the actor's long tenure at the network, including more than a decade on "NCIS," Kahl said. There were no complaints about Weatherly before or after Dushku's, he said.

"So, when we look at the totality of the situation, we felt comfortable bringing 'Bull' back on the air," he said. Asked about the decision by Amblin Entertainment to withdraw from its work on the series following its renewal, Kahl said he couldn't answer for them.

The network has taken a number of measures to improve its handling of workplace misconduct, including enhanced training and an anonymous hotline, Kahl said.

It's an issue that has battered the company at the highest levels. Former CBS Corp. CEO Leslie Moonves, one of TV's most influential figures, was ousted in September after allegations from women who said he subjected them to mistreatment including forced oral sex, groping and retaliation if they resisted.

Moonves is fighting the company's decision to deny his \$120 million severance package.

In its December 2018 story last year reporting the Dushku matter and settlement, the Times said details including the settlement became known when the CBS Corp. board hired outside lawyers to examine misconduct claims against Moonves and to look into CBS as a whole.

Optimus Prime, Megatron remember 35 years of Transformers

By DAVID FISCHER Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — The Autobots have been waging their battle to destroy the evil forces of the Decepticons for 35 years, but there's no sign the men who voice the Transformers franchise's two most iconic characters would ever take up ion blasters or fusion cannons against each other.

Peter Cullen and Frank Welker have been heard in children's homes across the United States since the fall of 1984 as the heroic Optimus Prime and villainous Megatron respectively.

They continue to lend their voices to both live-action and animated versions of the characters, and they'll be infinitely more like to exchange jokes and old stories than deadly blows from a laser sword during appearances Thursday and Friday at MegaCon Orlando.

Transformers originated when the U.S. toy company Hasbro bought the rights to several existing Japanese toy lines that featured transforming robots and rebranded them for American children. A cartoon, "The Transformers," was developed to help market the toys.

Welker, 73, got his first major voice-acting role in 1969 as Fred, the handsome, ascot-wearing leader of Mystery Inc. in "Scooby Doo, Where Are You!" He spent more than a decade after that voicing a host of friendly and comedic characters.

"When I saw Megatron, it gave me an opportunity to play a very nasty, evil character, and it was so much fun," Welker said during a combined interview with Cullen.

Welker said he was especially impressed the first time he saw the toy of his character. It transformed into a silver and grey Walther P38 pistol. Welker said it would take him more than an hour to transform the toy, while young fans could do it in minutes.

"I was thinking this is just another job, but it's pretty darn clever," Welker said.

While the original cartoon ran just a few years, it left an indelible mark on pop culture. The toy lines continued, and a slew of spin-off cartoon series and comics were produced over the next two decades. This culminated in the launch of a multi-billion-dollar, live-action film franchise in 2007.

Before his audition, Cullen, 77, only knew that he would be reading for the part of a truck, though giving voice to a vehicle didn't seem that crazy.

"You're always auditioning for something in animation that's a little off of the norm," Cullen said.

When Cullen read about the heroic Autobot leader that turned into a red cabover semitrailer, he thought

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about his older brother, who had served as a U.S. Marine in the Vietnam War.

"He was my hero, and he certainly was the mainstay behind the character," Cullen said. "I just did an impression of Larry, and he's still alive in my mind today because every time I do Prime, there's my brother Larry."

Cullen's brother, Capt. H.L. Cullen, died in 2011 and was interred at Arlington National Cemetery.

When performing as Optimus, Cullen's warm tenor voice drops to an authoritative baritone. The voice has stayed consistent over the years, from various animated series to live-action films.

Welker said Megatron's voice, on the other hand, has changed with nearly every iteration.

"To me, it was all part of the Transformers world and is a little bit more like what Megatron might do," Welker said.

Welker's natural speaking voice is essentially the voice he's used to play Shaggy and Scooby's pal Fred for 50 years. But when he was cast as Megatron in the original cartoon series, he said he gave the evil Decepticon leader a contemptuous, mechanical rasp. When he returned to the character for a new animated series in 2010, following the success of the live-action films, he said producers wanted him to sound more human, to reflect what actor Hugo Weaving had done with the role in the live-action films. And after Weaving left the franchise, Welker said he adjusted the voice further when he took over as Megatron in the latest live-action movies.

In recent years, Cullen and Welker have been attending conventions around the country to meet with fans from multiple generations.

"It can bring tears to your eyes," Cullen said. "I'm not exaggerating."

Cullen said parents and children bond over Transformers at the conventions, with the parents sometimes getting more excited than the children. And he doubted this week would be different.

"I expect that I will run into a father with his son, and the father will more than likely get choked up," Cullen said. "And then I get choked up, and then the kid is saying 'What are these two grown men getting choked up about?'"

MegaCon Orlando runs from Thursday to Sunday.

Asian stocks mixed on trade jitters, reported tariff delay

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mixed Thursday amid worries over trade tensions, leavened by media reports that President Donald Trump may delay a decision on auto tariffs.

On Wall Street, a promising update on the Trump administration's efforts to reach a trade deal with Canada and Mexico by Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin put investors in a buying mood.

Sentiment also got a boost from reports that the White House plans to delay new tariffs on car and auto parts imports from Europe by up to six months.

Mnuchin also said he expected to travel soon to Beijing to resume talks on the trade dispute that has rattled financial markets and cast doubt over the global economic outlook.

But the rally fizzled in Asia, where Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 slipped 0.7% to 21,050.23. South Korea's Kospi lost 0.7% at 2,078.49. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 fell 0.1% to 6,290.10. Hong Kong's Hang Seng was little changed, inching up less than 0.1% to 28,284.00, while the Shanghai Composite rose nearly 0.1% to 2,941.90.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 index gained 0.6% to 2,850.96. The Dow Jones Industrial Average rose 0.5% to 25,648.02.

The Nasdaq, which is heavily weighted with technology stocks, added 1.1% to 7,822.15.

Small-company stocks lagged the market. The Russell 2000 index picked up 0.3% to 1,548.27.

Stocks have been whipsawed this week by worries over the worsening relationship between China and the U.S. and its impact on the broader global economy.

Tensions between the world's two biggest economies intensified over the last week. The Trump administration more than doubled tariffs on \$200 billion in Chinese imports and spelled out plans to target the

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\$300 billion worth that aren't already facing 25% taxes. The escalation covers everything from sneakers to toasters to billiard balls. The Chinese have retaliated by hiking tariffs on \$60 billion in U.S. imports.

"The only real piece of good news is that the U.S. has announced it will defer its decision on auto tariffs to November, perhaps aimed at placating allies such as Germany and Japan as it fights a trade war with China," said Chang Wei Liang, of the Asia & Oceania Treasury Department at Mizuho Bank in Singapore.

The U.S. and Japan also are holding trade talks, and trade issues are expected to be on the agenda at the summit of the Group of 20 industrial nations later this month in Japan.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude gained 35 cents to \$62.37 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose 0.4% to \$62.02 per barrel Wednesday. Brent crude, the international standard, added 35 cents to \$72.12 per barrel.

CURRENCIES: The dollar fell to 109.47 Japanese yen from 109.59 yen. The euro inched up to \$1.1211 from \$1.1206.

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California cafe touts its \$75 coffee as the world's priciest

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — A California cafe is brewing up what it calls the world's most expensive coffee — at \$75 a cup.

Klatch Coffee is serving the exclusive brew, the Elida Natural Geisha 803, at its branches in Southern California and San Francisco.

The 803 in the coffee's name refers to the record-breaking \$803 per pound the organic beans sold for at a recent auction after winning the Best of Panama coffee competition, said Bo Thiara, co-owner of the Klatch branch in San Francisco. He calls the annual competition the coffee world's equivalent of the Oscars.

Only 100 pounds (45 kilograms) of the beans were available for purchase, and most went to Japan, China and Taiwan, Thiara said. Klatch secured 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) and is the only chain in North America to have it.

The coffee's high quality and limited supply set off a bidding war that determined its astronomical price, topping last year's winning beans that sold for \$601 per pound, Thiara said.

Klatch describes the coffee as a rare variety of Arabica from Panama that has a floral, tea-like flavor with hints of jasmine and berries. The 10 pounds of beans will produce about 80 cups of coffee, Thiara said.

A few lucky coffee lovers got to try free samples Wednesday at the San Francisco branch, where promotional signs are on display advertising, "World's Most Expensive Coffee."

One of them was San Francisco resident Lauren Svensson, who said it was "very different" from any coffee she'd ever tasted.

"My mind was a little blown about the fact that a \$75 cup of coffee even exists," she said, "but it was shockingly good."

Her friend, Charlie Sinhaseni, also gave his free sample a positive review.

"When I first looked at it, I thought it would be hyper pretentious, and I would think of all the different notes for the coffee, but I was too busy enjoying it," he said.

Falco, Perrette, Chuck Lorre sitcom set for new CBS season

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Broadcaster CBS is pushing the boundaries — gently — next season, as it and other networks navigate the rise of streaming. A change-of-pace sitcom from "The Big Bang Theory" creator Chuck Lorre and a drama starring Edie Falco of "The Sopranos" glory will join a lineup that also brings former CBS stars back into the fold.

Among the comeback kids is Billy Gardell, who played opposite Melissa McCarthy in CBS' "Mike & Molly"

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and stars this fall in Lorre's "Bob Hearts Abishola." Gardell plays a Detroit compression sock salesman who falls for his Nigerian-born cardiac nurse. His co-star is Nigerian actress Folake Olowofoyeku, whose credits include "Transparent."

CBS Corp. executive David Nevins described the sitcom as "a different flavor" for Lorre but true to his brand, which includes CBS' "Mom" as well "The Big Bang Theory," which departs Thursday after 12 seasons.

"Bob Hearts Abishola" is about "two adults in middle-age who are sort of unexpected," Nevins said, and resonates with what he called "Norman Lear-ish themes," a reference to the groundbreaking producer of "All in the Family."

"When it comes to finding new voices, CBS will take a chance on anyone who is already on CBS," the network's late-night host Stephen Colbert joked in a brief set for ad buyers who gathered Wednesday for a presentation of the 2019-20 schedule.

"As you can see, despite Lindsey Graham's advice, I honored my subpoena to be here today," he said, throwing one of the political barbs that are a regular feature of his top-rated "Late Show."

Other familiar CBS faces: Pauley Perrette, a former "NCIS" fan favorite, goes for laughs in the midseason sitcom "Broke"; Patricia Heaton ("Everybody Loves Raymond") stars as a late-blooming medical intern in the comedy "Carol's Second Act," and Marg Helgenberger ("CSI: Crime Scene Investigation") is part of the courthouse drama "All Rise."

The latter two are fall entries, along with "The Unicorn," a comedy about a widower (Walton Goggins) who's stepping gingerly into dating.

Falco, who played a mobster's wife in "The Sopranos" and a drug addict in "Nurse Jackie," shifts gears in midseason's "Tommy," playing a former NYPD officer who becomes the first female police chief in Los Angeles.

HOUSEHOLD NAME PRODUCERS

Lorre isn't the only high-profile producer contributing to CBS' lineup next season.

Fall drama "Evil" is from Michelle and Robert King, the husband-and-wife team behind former CBS hit "The Good Wife" and the CBS All Access series "The Good Fight." The psychological mystery examines the root of evil "along the dividing line between science and religion," the network said.

Producer Dick Wolf, who supplies a veritable warehouse of shows to NBC with his "Chicago" franchise and "Law & Order: SVU," could be trying for the same at CBS. He's following up the drama "FBI" with midseason's "FBI: Most Wanted," with stars including Alana De La Garza and Keisha Castle-Hughes.

SAY GOODBYE

Not every revival sticks the landing. "Murphy Brown" with Candice Bergen was one season and done, and joining canceled series that include "Happy Together," "Fam" and "Life in Pieces."

It remains to be seen whether the end of "Murphy," a hit for CBS back in the '80s and '90s, puts a damper on the revival-reboot trend. Among its successes are "Will & Grace" and "The Conners," salvaged from the "Roseanne" reboot put into jeopardy by its namesake star's racist tweet.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, May 16, the 136th day of 2019. There are 229 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On May 16, 1966, China launched the Cultural Revolution, a radical as well as deadly reform movement aimed at purging the country of "counter-revolutionaries."

On this date:

In 1770, Marie Antoinette, age 14, married the future King Louis XVI of France, who was 15.

In 1868, at the U.S. Senate impeachment trial of President Andrew Johnson, 35 out of 54 senators voted to find Johnson guilty of "high crimes and misdemeanors" over his attempted dismissal of Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, falling one vote short of the two-thirds majority needed to convict; the trial ended

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10 days later after two other articles of impeachment went down to defeat as well.

In 1919, pianist Liberace was born in West Allis, Wisconsin.

In 1920, Joan of Arc was canonized by Pope Benedict XV.

In 1939, the federal government began its first food stamp program in Rochester, New York.

In 1943, the nearly month-long Warsaw Ghetto Uprising came to an end as German forces crushed the Jewish resistance and blew up the Great Synagogue.

In 1953, Associated Press correspondent William N. Oatis was released by Communist authorities in Czechoslovakia, where he had been imprisoned for two years after being forced to confess to espionage while working as the AP's Prague bureau chief.

In 1975, Japanese climber Junko Tabei became the first woman to reach the summit of Mount Everest.

In 1988, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *California v. Greenwood*, ruled that police could search discarded garbage without a search warrant. Surgeon General C. Everett Koop released a report declaring nicotine was addictive in ways similar to heroin and cocaine.

In 1991, Queen Elizabeth II became the first British monarch to address the United States Congress as she lauded U.S.-British cooperation in the Persian Gulf War.

In 1997, President Bill Clinton publicly apologized for the notorious Tuskegee experiment, in which government scientists deliberately allowed black men to weaken and die of treatable syphilis.

In 2007, anti-war Democrats in the Senate failed in an attempt to cut off funds for the Iraq war.

Ten years ago: The ruling Congress party swept to a resounding victory in India's mammoth national elections. Rachel Alexandra became the first filly to win the Preakness Stakes since 1924, holding off a late charge by Kentucky Derby winner Mine That Bird to capture the middle jewel of the Triple Crown by a length.

Five years ago: Federal safety regulators slapped General Motors with a record \$35 million fine for taking more than a decade to disclose an ignition-switch defect in millions of cars linked at that point to at least 13 deaths (the figure later rose to 90). U.S. Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel pledged to Israeli leaders that the U.S. would "do what we must" to prevent the Jewish state's greatest fear of a nuclear-armed Iran from being realized.

One year ago: Officials at Michigan State University said they had agreed to pay \$500 million to settle claims from more than 300 women and girls who said they were assaulted by sports doctor Larry Nassar.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Rep John Conyers, D-Mich., is 90. Former U.S. Senator and Connecticut Governor Lowell Weicker is 88. Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats is 76. Jazz musician Billy Cobham is 75. Actor Danny Trejo is 75. Actor Bill Smitrovich is 72. Actor Pierce Brosnan is 66. Actress Debra Winger is 64. Olympic gold medal gymnast Olga Korbut is 64. Olympic gold medal marathon runner Joan Benoit Samuelson is 62. Actress Mare Winningham is 60. Rock musician Boyd Tinsley (The Dave Matthews Band) is 55. Rock musician Krist Novoselic (noh-voh-SEL'-ik) is 54. Singer Janet Jackson is 53. Country singer Scott Reeves (Blue County) is 53. Actor Brian (BREE'-un) F. O'Byrne is 52. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ralph Tresvant (New Edition) is 51. Actor David Boreanaz is 50. Political correspondent Tucker Carlson is 50. Actress Tracey Gold is 50. International Tennis Hall of Famer Gabriela Sabatini is 49. Country singer Rick Trevino is 48. Musician Simon Katz is 48. TV personality Bill Rancic is 48. Actor Khary Payton is 47. Rapper Special Ed is 47. Actress Tori Spelling is 46. Actor Sean Carrigan is 45. Singer-rapper B. Slade (formerly known as Tonex) is 44. Actress Lynn Collins is 42. Actress Melanie Lynskey is 42. Actor Jim Sturgess is 41. Actor Joseph Morgan is 38. DJ Alex Pall (The Chainsmokers) is 34. Actress Megan Fox is 33. Actor Drew Roy is 33. Actor Jacob Zachar is 33. Actor-comedian Jermaine Fowler is 31. Actor Thomas Brodie-Sangster is 29. Actor Marc John Jefferies is 29. Olympic bronze medal figure skater Ashley Wagner is 28. Actor Miles Heizer is 25.

Thought for Today: "The enemy of the conventional wisdom is not ideas but the march of events." — John Kenneth Galbraith, American economist, diplomat and author (1908-2006).

(Above Advance for Use Thursday, May 16)

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