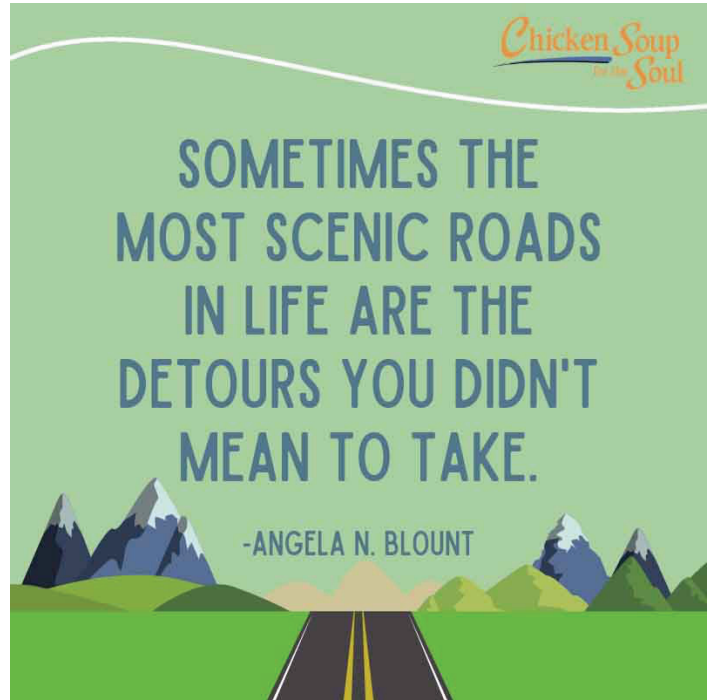


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## **CLOSED:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

## Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Swimming Pool Hours

**Open Swim Daily:** 1 p.m. to 4:50 p.m. and 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

**Fun Night** is every Friday from 6:30 p.m. to 8:50 p.m.

**Adult Water Aerobics:** Monday through Thursday: 8 a.m. to 8:45 a.m. and 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 pm

**Adult Lap Swim:** Monday through Friday: 7 a.m. to 8 a.m.; Monday through Thursday: 5:30 p.m. to 6:15 p.m.; Friday-Sunday: 4:50 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

**Swimming Lessons:** First Session: June 17-27

### Wednesday, June 19

5:30 p.m.: Junior Teeners at Hamlin, (DH)

5:30 p.m.: U12 Midgets at Huron, (DH)

6:00 p.m.: U10 Pee Wees host Wahlburg, (DH) (W,B)

Olive Grove: Kid's Golf Lessons from 10 a.m. to 10:45 a.m. and 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; Men's League at 6 p.m.

### Thursday, June 20

6:00 p.m.: Legion hosts Northville, (DH)

6:00 p.m.: U8 Pee Wees vs. Jacobson at Manor Park, (DH) (R)

Softball hosts Mellette (U8 at 5 p.m. (1 game), U10 at 6 p.m. (2 games), U14 at 6 p.m. (2 games))

### Friday, June 21

6:00 p.m.: U12 Midgets at Britton, (DH)

6:00 p.m.: U10 Pee Wees at Britton, (DH) (R,W)

6:00 p.m.: T-Ball Scrimmage, Nelson Field (both)

Olive Grove Golf Course: Groton Area Businesses Tournament (former Chamber), 18 holes, Noon Shotgun Start.

**THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WAY  
TO START AND END A DAY IS  
WITH A Grateful Heart**

*It's Wednesday*



*Good Morning*

## 5th and Washington to be a 4-way stop

There was discussion on putting the stop signs back up on West Fifth Avenue at Washington St. going east and west. The Groton City Council approved to make that intersection a four-way stop at its meeting Tuesday evening.

Members present were Jay Peterson, David McGannon, Shirley Wells, David Blackmun on the phone and Mayor Scott Hanlon. Absent were Karyn Babcock and Burt Glover.

Jay Peterson was sworn in to fill the vacancy in Ward I. He will serve a one-year term. Peterson previously held the position.

The council cashed out a CD worth \$200,000 which will be used for the water tower expense.

Finance Officer Hope Block informed the council to get in their budget requests for next year. There was discussion on getting two permanent speed signs along SD37. Mayor Scott Hanlon said there is a grant opportunity for up to \$4,000. Someone would have to go to Chicago in October for the grant program.

Councilman David Blackmun suggested that the players of the State Junior Legion Tournament have their player pass be good as a pool pass for that weekend as well. The council decided that in all future state tournaments, the player pass would work as a pool pass as well for the respective weekends.

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**The Spike and Helen Nehls yard at 905 N. 3rd St., Groton, was chosen as this week's Yard of the Week by the members of the Groton Garden Club.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## Construction on Highway's 212 & 15 to Minnesota Boarder

Watertown, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Transportation says construction on Highway 212 from Highway 15 junction to the Minnesota border located at MRM 397 to MRM 412 will begin Monday, June 17.

This project includes Mill & PCCP Overlay Pipe Work, Replace Structure (RCBC), and Approach Grading.

On Monday, June 24th, the contractor will begin replacement of a box culvert located at MRM 402, and will divert traffic onto a temporary gravel traffic route. Upon completion of the box culvert the contractor will close the road to begin working on the mill and PCCP overlay. The road closure is anticipated to occur July 17th.

The overall completion date is scheduled for October 18, 2019.

The prime contractor of this \$13.8 million is KNIFE RIVER MIDWEST LLC, of Sioux City, Iowa.

For complete road construction information, visit [www.safetravelusa.com](http://www.safetravelusa.com) or dial 511.

## Construction on Highway's 212 & 15 to Minnesota Boarder

WASHINGTON – U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) today released the following statement regarding news that his wife, Jean, will begin cancer treatment:

“Many families have successfully dealt with this and we are no different. Jean is resilient and strong, we have the support of friends and family, and Jean will receive treatment from a highly-qualified team of doctors. However, prayer has the power a human hand does not. To the countless South Dakotans who have generously asked how they can help, we are grateful for prayers for Jean and for our family as Jean begins cancer treatment.”

After numerous tests over the course of several weeks, Jean was diagnosed with having a malignant high-grade aggressive tumor near her sciatic nerve. Following consultation with her doctors in South Dakota, Mike and Jean will travel to Rochester, Minnesota, this week to begin her treatment at The Mayo Clinic. Specific treatment is unknown at this time.

## THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

### Senators Release Disturbing Report on America's Nursing Homes

By Trudy Lieberman, Rural Health News Service

The Senate Special Committee on Aging has just released one of the most damning <https://www.aging.senate.gov/press-releases/casey-toomey-secure-cms-commitment-to-publicly-release-monthly-list-of-underperforming-nursing-facilities-> reports on the nation's nursing homes that I've seen in a long time. The short document should be required reading for any family thinking of moving a relative to a nursing facility.

Pennsylvania Senator Robert Casey, a Democrat, who is the ranking member on the committee along with Pennsylvania's other senator Patrick J. Toomey, a Republican, recently revealed a special but unpublicized program to flag and monitor the worst nursing homes in the country.

Bad nursing homes, it seems, have always been part of the fabric of America, and back in the Reagan administration Congress passed a tough law to improve care for those who have to live in them. The additional oversight, known as the federal Special Focus Facility program, is supposed to increase oversight of nursing facilities that have repeated deficiencies as documented by state survey agencies. The agencies conduct the inspections for the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

The existence of the program has largely been hidden from the public.

This special program divides the worst of the worst into two groups – those called “participants” receiving additional oversight and those called “candidates,” which are nursing facilities that might move up to the participant list someday. Right now the government has identified 88 nursing homes across the country as “participants” and about 400 facilities as “candidates.” Until now, though, the candidate list has not been available to the public.

Just about every state has some facilities on one or the other list. For example, there are 34 homes from California on the candidate list, 17 in Indiana, six in North Dakota, five in South Dakota, and six in Kentucky.

Facilities listed as participants are supposed to get more frequent inspections and government oversight than other homes, which are inspected every 12 to 15 months by state inspectors working on behalf of the federal government.

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A facility on the candidate list may move into the participant column if conditions in the home warrant more oversight but only if space allows. In 2013 CMS reduced the number of the participants from 152 to 62 because the agency didn't have enough budget and staff to cover more. The number of facilities has increased a bit since then.

The names on the participant list are public, but as the senators point out in their report, CMS doesn't make it easy to identify them. On the CMS website these problematic facilities are not given star ratings as are most other facilities. Instead they are designated with a small yellow triangle that looks like a caution traffic sign.

The senators concluded this designation "is not readily transparent or easily understood among would-be residents and their families."

It's even worse with the 400 or so facilities on the candidate list. Until now the list has not been made public. Nor do these facilities receive more frequent inspections the way those in the participant group do.

Families should think twice before sending a relative to a facility in either group.

The Aging Committee has now listed the names of those "candidate" facilities on its website. <https://www.aging.senate.gov/imo/media/doc/SFF%20List%20with%20Cover%20Letter%20051419%20-%20Casey.pdf> CMS said last week it will now make that list public.

There is more "buyer beware" advice in the report. Senators flagged trouble with the star ratings CMS uses to help families select nursing homes. Many families rely on them to choose a facility. So do hospital discharge planners.

But the stars are misleading and may not always direct families to the best nursing facilities. That's something I've observed for years as I've reported on problems with the nation's nursing homes.

The senators examined star ratings for a sample of facilities on the candidate list and found that almost half of them had a quality rating of three stars or better. Five is best. Remember homes on that candidate list are only one step away from being subject to more frequent inspections because of what the government considers poor track records caring for patients.

Even more astonishing is that nine facilities on the candidate list had perfect staffing and quality scores.

With results like those how can any family rely on the CMS ratings? They can't.

My advice: Look at which facilities are on the participant and candidate lists and avoid them. If they are the only game in town, then proceed with caution and keep a very close eye on any relative you send to one of them.

What has been your experience with nursing homes? Write to trudy at [trudy.lieberman@gmail.com](mailto:trudy.lieberman@gmail.com).

## Today in Weather History

June 19, 1894: A tornado moved NNE, passing 12 miles northwest of Bowdle, ending in extreme south-eastern Campbell County. A child was killed, and the mother and four other children were severely injured. A man was killed in another home, and his wife was injured. Fourteen homes were damaged or destroyed. Clothes were said to be torn to shreds and scattered for miles. This tornado was estimated to be an F3.

June 19, 1931: A tornado moved east from just south of St. Lawrence, passing south of Wessington. Buildings were destroyed on eight farms. Two farms were said to be wiped out, house and all. A woman was injured as she tried to rescue chickens. Cattle, horses, and over 100 hogs were killed. This tornado had an estimated strength of an F3.

June 19, 2013: Slow moving thunderstorms brought some large hail along with very heavy rains and flash flooding to parts of northeast South Dakota. One thunderstorm produced quarter hail and winds over 50 mph, which caused significant damage to a bean field along with damaging the siding of the house south of Wilmot in Roberts County. Several roads in Wilmot had water running over them for several hours. Over three inches of rain caused water to go over a part of Highway 123 south of Wilmot. The heavy rain of three to four inches brought many flooded roads in and around Veblen in Marshall County.

1794: A violent tornado commenced west of the Hudson River in New York. The tornado traveled through Poughkeepsie then crossed the border into Connecticut where it went through the towns of New Milford, Waterbury, North Haven, and Branford. It then continued into Long Island Sound. The tornado did extensive damage, and the funnel was reported by one observer to look like the "aurora borealis."

1835 - A tornado tore through the center of New Brunswick NJ killing five persons and scattering debris as far as Manhattan Island. The tornado provided the first opportunity for scientists to study firsthand the track of such a storm. (David Ludlum)

1938 - A cloudburst near Custer Creek, MT, (near Miles City) caused a train wreck killing forty-eight persons. An estimated four to seven inches of rain deluged the head of the creek that evening, and water flowing through the creek weakened the bridge. As a result, a locomotive and seven passenger cars plunged into the swollen creek. One car, a tourist sleeper, was completely submerged. (David Ludlum)

1972 - Hurricane Agnes moved onshore near Cape San Blas FL with wind gusts to 80 mph, and exited Maine on the 26th. There were 117 deaths, mainly due to flooding from North Carolina to New York State, and total damage was estimated at more than three billion dollars. Up to 19 inches of rain deluged western Schuylkill County PA. The rains of Hurricane Agnes resulted in one of the greatest natural disasters in U.S. history. Agnes caused more damage than all other tropical cyclones in the previous six years combined (which included Celia and Camille). (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - It was a warm June day, with plenty of thunderstorms east of the Rockies. Lightning knocked out power at Throckmorton, TX, and ignited an oil tank battery. A woman in Knox City TX was struck by lightning while in her car, and a man was struck by lightning near his home in Manatee County FL. Strong thunderstorm winds overturned several outhouses near Bixby OK, but no injuries were reported. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Temperatures soared above 100 degrees in the central U.S. for Father's Day. Fifteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date. Severe thunderstorms in Minnesota and Wisconsin produced softball size hail near River Falls WI, and wind gusts to 80 mph at Menomonie WI. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)






1989 - Fourteen cities reported record high temperatures for the date as searing heat spread from the southwestern deserts into the High Plains Region. Record highs included 98 degrees at Billings, MT, 107 degrees at Valentine, NE, and 112 degrees at Tucson, AZ. (The National Weather Summary)

2004: Annette Island, Alaska set an all-time record high temperature of 93 degrees. Since record keeping began in 1941, Annette Island has seen 90-degree temperatures four times.

2006 - Up to 11 inches of rain fell in the Houston, Texas area, causing widespread flash flooding. The Houston Fire Department rescued more than 500 people from flood waters, but no serious injuries or fatalities were reported.

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Today	Tonight	Thursday	Thursday Night	Friday
				
60%	70%	80%	40%	60%
T-storms Likely	T-storms Likely	T-storms	Partly Cloudy then Chance T-storms	T-storms Likely
High: 73 °F	Low: 57 °F	High: 76 °F	Low: 56 °F	High: 77 °F

## MARGINAL RISK of Severe T-Storms

### WHAT

Isolated severe storms possible. The strongest storms could produce hail up to quarter size and wind gusts up to 60 mph.

### WHERE

Across western and central South Dakota, including Mobridge, Pierre, Faulkton and Miller.

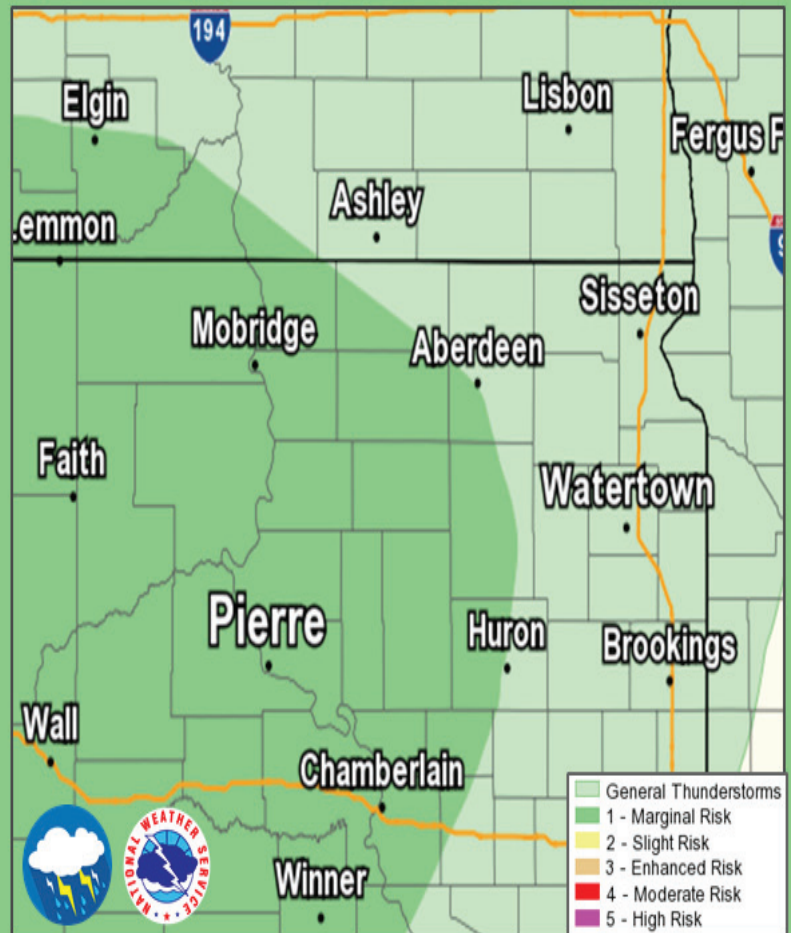
### WHEN

This afternoon through tonight. The highest risk period will be from 1 pm – 9 pm. Another round of storms possible very late tonight.

### ACTION

Monitor the weather and have a plan of action if severe weather approaches your area.

ISSUED: 5:41 AM - Wednesday, June 19, 2019



Published on: 06/19/2019 at 6:46AM

An area of low pressure will move across the region today and be responsible for a few strong to perhaps severe storms across western and central South Dakota. The best chance for this will be this afternoon and into the evening hours. An unsettled weather pattern will continue through the end of the work week, with good chances for showers and storms tonight and through the day Thursday. Strong to severe storms are possible again Friday afternoon over far eastern South Dakota into west central Minnesota.

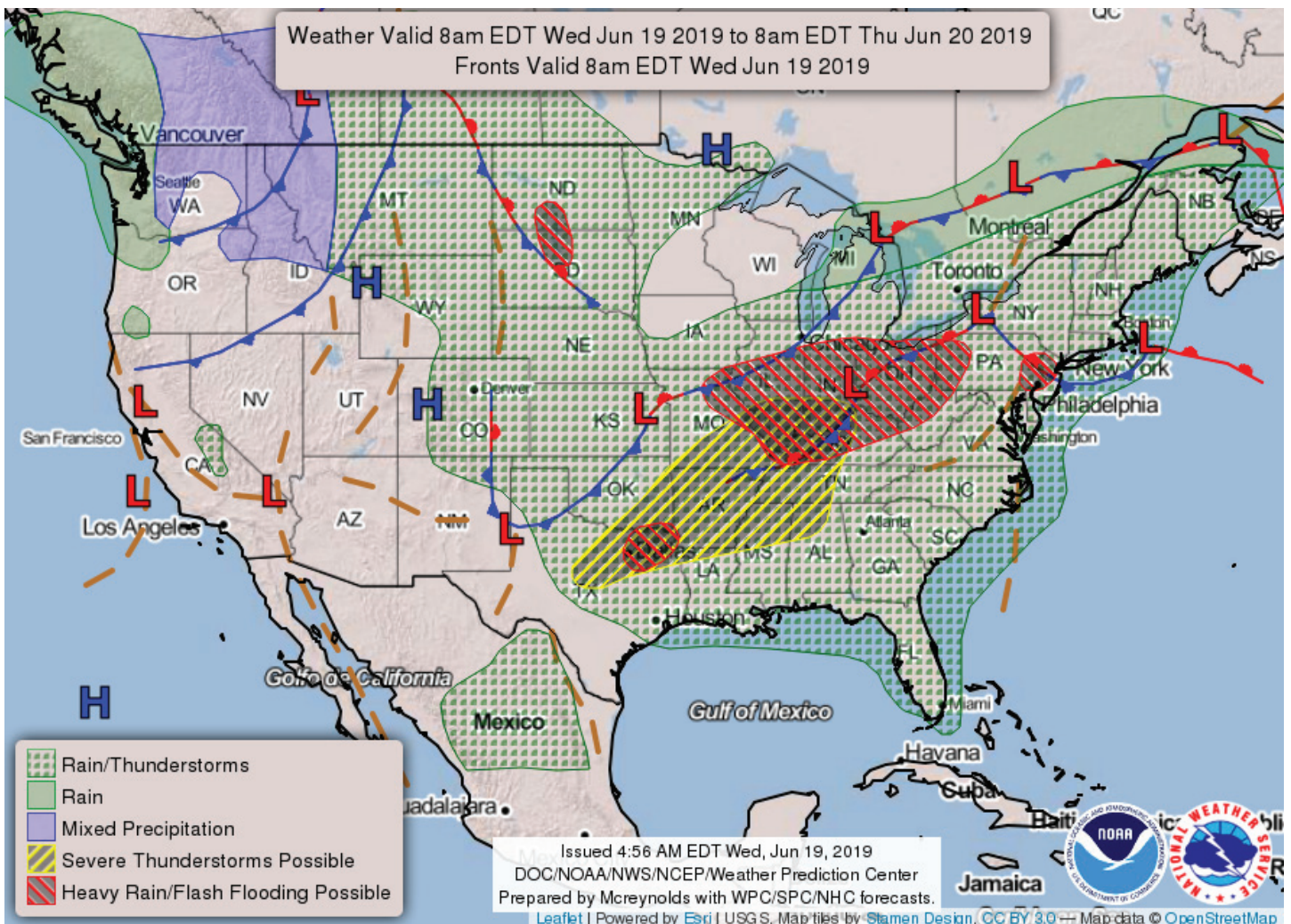
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp:** 76 °F at 6:18 PM  
**Low Temp:** 50 °F at 6:12 AM  
**Wind:** 13 mph at 2:44 PM  
**Day Rain:** 0.00

**Record High:** 108° in 1933  
**Record Low:** 38° in 1948, 1940  
**Average High:** 79°F  
**Average Low:** 55°F  
**Average Precip in June.:** 2.20  
**Precip to date in June.:** 0.88  
**Average Precip to date:** 9.34  
**Precip Year to Date:** 8.66  
**Sunset Tonight:** 9:25 p.m.  
**Sunrise Tomorrow:** 5:45 a.m.

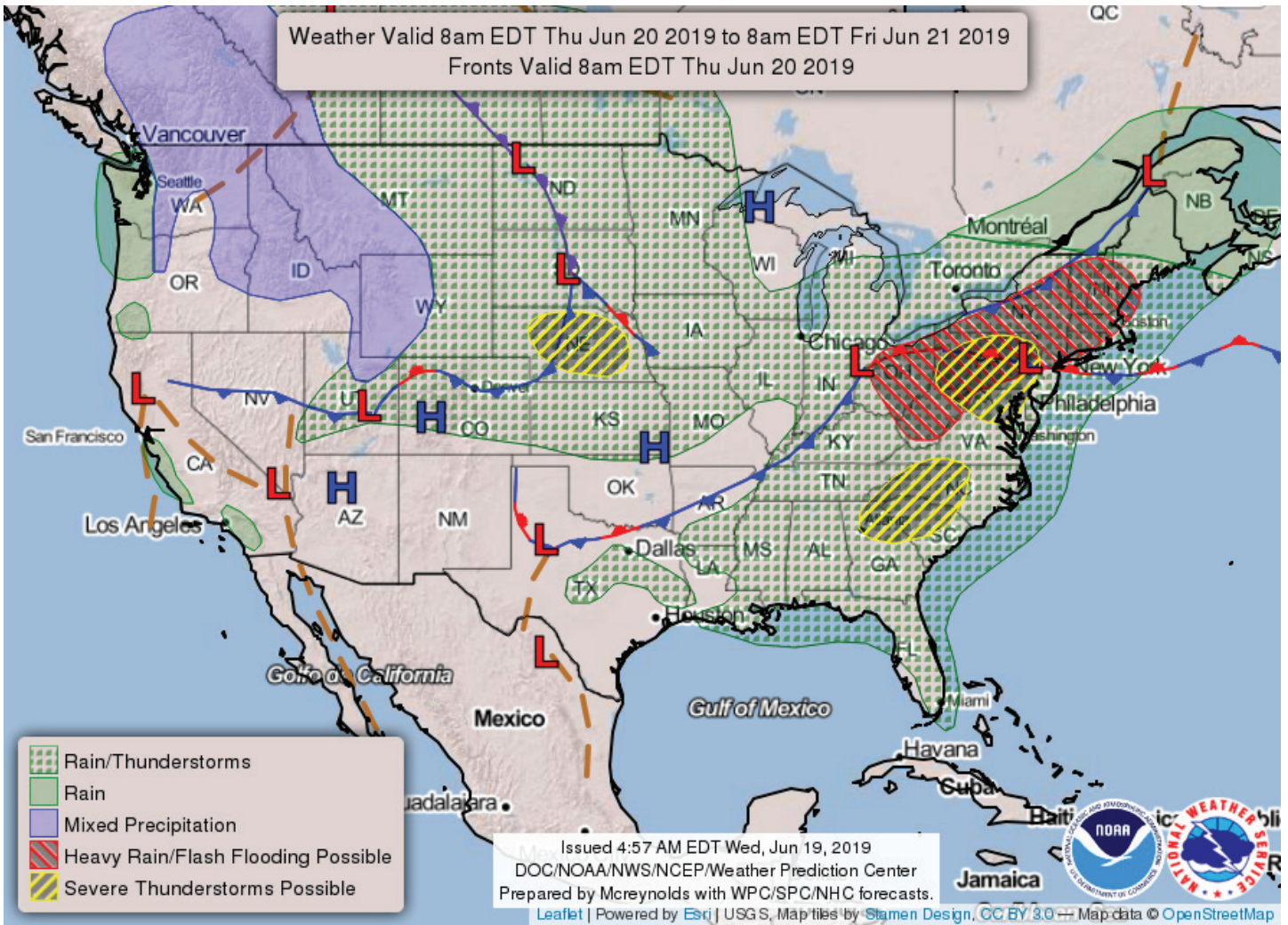




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## Tomorrow's Weather Map



Issued 4:57 AM EDT Wed, Jun 19, 2019  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts.

Leaflet | Powered by Esri | USGS, Map tiles by Stamen Design, CC BY 3.0 | Map data © OpenStreetMap

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## LOVE, LIKE, AND FRIENDSHIP

Years ago I read a book entitled, *A Friend is Someone Who Likes You*. Never mind the word love in the title of the book or in the mind of the author. The message the author wanted his readers to understand is that love is an obligation for Christians - but to like someone, well, that's a choice.

The book makes it clear that we all do things that are difficult for others to accept - especially those who know us best. But to get above strange differences and ugly habits and accept others as they are - that is true friendship. And, when things go awry, it doesn't matter. They are to be overlooked. A friend willingly overlooks the worst in a friend and is always ready to lend a hand, give a hug, or share words of encouragement.

Is that not the way we Christians are to treat each other? I recently heard someone say, Well, I love them enough to get into heaven, but that does not mean I have to love them for the way they are and how they act. Oh yes, it does.

There are different ways of understanding what Solomon meant when he wrote: A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. In the Hebrew text One who loves at all times comes first and is then followed by friend. The idea that Solomon wants us to understand and accept is that friends, by choice, can do what is right and to be expected among and between friends, at all times. Or, Only that one who loves at all times is a friend.

When we enter into times of adversity, when one's world is turned upside down and inside out, when life no longer makes sense, strong human relationships true friendships - are critical. And, a true friend loves us through it all, no matter what.

Prayer: Father, help us to cultivate friends who will be with us through it all and like us as well as love us. Help us to be a friend to someone today. In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 17:17 A friend loves at all times, and a brother is born for adversity.

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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

### **Day care license suspended after child wanders away twice**

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Officials say a decision on the status of a Sioux Falls day care center's license will be made after a police investigation is complete.

The state Department of Social Services temporarily suspended the Child Center's license last week after a child twice wandered away from the facility. Police say they received calls on June 10 and June 12 about a child found wandering about five blocks from the center.

Social services spokeswoman Tia Kafka tells the Argus Leader the department can suspend a license if officials find that public health, safety or welfare require emergency action.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says the case is still under investigation.

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

### **SD Lottery**

**By The Associated Press**

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

Mega Millions

12-14-22-24-48, Mega Ball: 21, Megaplier: 2

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

Estimated jackpot: \$50 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$92 million

### **Motorcyclist killed near Watertown was Canadian woman**

WATERTOWN, S.D. (AP) — The motorcyclist who died last week in a crash with a pickup truck north of Watertown has been identified as a Canadian woman.

Authorities say 67-year-old Vivian Kenderdine of Sifton, Manitoba, was riding a motorcycle on southbound Interstate 29, and was trailing two other motorcycles when she was rear-ended by a pickup truck.

Kenderdine was thrown from motorcycle and into the interstate median. She was wearing a helmet, but was pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the pickup truck was not hurt.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is still investigating.

### **Jean Rounds, wife of Sen. Mike Rounds, has cancer**

**By The Associated Press**

South Dakota U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds says his wife Jean is beginning treatment for cancer.

Rounds, a Republican, said in a prepared statement Tuesday that Jean Rounds was diagnosed with "a malignant high-grade aggressive tumor" after tests over several weeks. The statement said Jean Rounds' tumor was near her sciatic nerve.

The statement said Jean Rounds, 62, will undergo treatment at Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minnesota, starting this week.

Rounds said Jean Rounds is "resilient and strong" and that the family is grateful for prayers in her behalf.

Rounds is up for re-election in 2020.

## Investigators crack cold case murder of South Dakota woman

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The murder of a pharmacist who was raped and strangled in her home in a South Dakota city more than half a century ago has been solved with the use of DNA technology and genealogy databases, police said.

Investigators believe Eugene Carroll Field killed 60-year-old Gwen Miller in 1968 when he was a 25-year-old living in Rapid City, Detective Wayne Keefe said at a news conference Monday. He said there was enough evidence to charge Field with first-degree murder, but that he died in 2009.

It is "a little surreal" to finally identify the killer after 51 years and up to 5,000 hours of work, Keefe said.

"Today, there's a slight celebratory mood because the case has been solved," Police Chief Karl Jegeris said. "But I assure you, the fact of how horrific this crime was wears heavy on each and every one of our hearts."

Miller had no children and worked as a pharmacist at a Rapid City hospital. After she didn't show up to work Feb. 29, 1968, two co-workers went to her house, where they found a broken window in the back, Keefe said. The coroner found she had been raped, suffered broken neck and rib bones, and died by strangulation.

Last year, Keefe sent a DNA profile of semen from the crime scene to forensic genealogist Colleen Fitzpatrick, who used public genealogy websites to identify Field's brother. Keefe then searched for the family's name in old phone directories to determine that the suspect had lived near the victim.

Field was a ticketing agent for Western Airlines at the Rapid City airport, which Miller frequented. Keefe also determined that Field had rented a room in the house next door to Miller for several months in 1963. The detective interviewed two women who had been married to Field. Both said he had abused them. He also contacted Field's brother and only sibling, who provided a DNA sample that showed a 99.23 percent probability of being from a full sibling of the killer.

Field has no known connections to any other cold case and does not seem to have previously been a suspect in Miller's death, Keefe said.

The Associated Press was not immediately able to locate Field's survivors Tuesday, and police declined to provide contact information.

Kay Miller-Temple, of Grand Forks, North Dakota, said her great-aunt was a "very independent and confident" person, especially for a single woman in the mid-1900s. She said her family members, who came from across South Dakota and as far away as Arizona to attend the news conference, wanted their experience to give hope to other families with cold cases.

"The family of Gwen Vivian Miller offers you our gratitude and our appreciation," she said through tears. "Thank you for giving us an answer."



**This 2008 drivers license photo released by the Rapid City Police Department shows Eugene Carroll Field. Police say they believe they've solved the murder of a pharmacist who was raped and strangled over 50 years ago in her South Dakota home. Detective Wayne Keefe said Monday, June 17, 2019 that investigators used DNA and genealogy databases to identify Eugene Carroll Field as the person who killed 60-year-old Gwen Miller in Rapid City in 1968. Field died in 2009.** (Courtesy of The Rapid City Police

Department via AP)

## Appeals court upholds decision against Sanford acquisition

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A federal appeals court has affirmed a decision by a North Dakota judge who blocked a merger between Sanford Health and a private physicians group.

Sanford, headquartered in Sioux Falls, wanted to acquire Mid Dakota Clinic, but the Federal Trade Commission and the North Dakota Attorney General's Office objected to the merger.

The Argus Leader says Judge Alice Senechal granted a preliminary hearing halting the deal and Sanford appealed to the Eighth District Court of Appeals. A three-judge panel upheld Senechal's ruling late last week.

Mid Dakota's practice includes 23 primary care physicians, six pediatricians, eight OB/GYN physicians and five general surgeons. If a merger were allowed Sanford would have 84 to 99 percent of the market share in the Bismarck-Mandan area.

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

## UN expert urges probe of Saudi prince over Khashoggi killing

By JAMEY KEATEN and AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — An independent U.N. report into the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi said Wednesday there is "credible evidence" to warrant further investigation into the possible role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, and suggested sanctions on his personal assets.

The scathing probe is likely to further harden opinion against the crown prince in Washington and other Western capitals, where critics say an operation of this magnitude would have required the powerful prince's knowledge and involvement.

The 33-year-old Saudi prince, who continues to have the support of his father, King Salman, denies any involvement in the killing, and the kingdom has blamed rogue Saudi agents for carrying out the operation. U.S. President Donald Trump has defended U.S.-Saudi ties in the face of international outcry after the Oct. 2 slaying.

The 101-page report released by Agnes Callamard stated that the kingdom of Saudi Arabia is responsible for Khashoggi's killing.

Khashoggi, a critic of the crown prince who wrote columns in The Washington Post, was killed, and believed to have been dismembered, inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul by Saudi agents. His remains have never been found. Before his death, he had been living in self-imposed exile following a crackdown on activists and anyone voicing dissent inside the kingdom.

Callamard said her investigation had "determined that there is credible evidence, warranting further investigation of high-level Saudi officials' individual liability, including the Crown Prince's."



**FILE - In this Dec. 15, 2014 file photo, Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi speaks during a press conference in Manama, Bahrain. An independent U.N. human rights expert investigating the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi is recommending an investigation into the possible role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, citing "credible evidence."** (AP Photo/Hasan Jamali, File)

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There was also “credible evidence pointing to the crime scenes (in Turkey) having been thoroughly, even forensically, cleaned.” The report said this indicates that the “Saudi investigation was not conducted in good faith, and that it may amount to obstructing justice.”

It added there was “no reason why sanctions should not be applied against the Crown Prince and his personal assets” — noting that sanctions regimes have been put in place in the past even before guilt was determined.

The report also offers a chilling minute-by-minute account of the events surrounding the killing based on audio shared by Turkish authorities, and cites sounds of a buzzing saw that could have been used to dismember Khashoggi’s body.

It noted the “extreme sensitivity” of considering the criminal responsibility of the crown prince and his former adviser Saud al-Qahtani. Neither man has been charged in the slaying.

“No conclusion is made as to guilt,” Callamard wrote of the two men. “The only conclusion made is that there is credible evidence meriting further investigation, by a proper authority, as to whether the threshold of criminal responsibility has been met.”

Still, she played down the focus on a single person, writing: “The search for justice and accountability is not singularly dependent on finding a ‘smoking gun’ or the person holding it.”

She wrote that her focus was mainly on identifying those who may have failed in or abused their positions of authority.

The report also identified by name 15 suspects, of which 11 are on trial in Saudi Arabia. Five of those on trial may face execution under Saudi law.

The kingdom had not disclosed the the names of those on trial and has kept trial proceedings largely secret.

The U.N. probe said the current trial of the 11 suspects in Saudi Arabia should be suspended because it fails to meet procedural and substantive standards. Callamard noted the trial is being held behind closed doors, and at least one of those identified as responsible for the planning and organizing of the execution of Khashoggi has not been charged.

While some diplomats have been allowed to attend some of the hearings, they were barred from disclosing their observations, she noted.

She added that she had received information about a “financial package” offered to Khashoggi’s children, “but it is questionable whether such package amounts to compensation under international human rights law.”

Callamard noted limitations on her inquiry, which began in January. She received no response to her request to travel to Saudi Arabia. She wrote that she had received only a total of 45 minutes of tapes recorded within the consulate around the time of the killing, while Turkish intelligence had referenced some 7 hours of recordings.

Based on “credible information”, Callamard concluded there was insufficient evidence to suggest that either Turkey or the United States knew, or ought to have known, of a real and imminent or foreseeable threat to Khashoggi’s life. There had been some speculation as to whether the CIA had known of a threat against Khashoggi and had failed to alert him, as is required by law.

The U.S. State Department has publicly designated 16 people for their roles in the killing of Khashoggi. Many U.S. lawmakers have criticized President Donald Trump for not condemning Saudi Arabia for the journalist’s killing.

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Batrawy reported from Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

## The Latest: Iran minister slams US footage of tanker attack

BAGHDAD (AP) — The Latest on developments in the Persian Gulf region amid rising tensions between Iran and the U.S. (all times local):

2:30 p.m.

Iranian Defense Minister Gen. Amir Hatami dismissed allegations about his country's involvement in last week's attack on two oil tankers near the Strait of Hormuz, describing them as an unfair accusation meant to tarnish Iran's image.

The semi-official Fars news agency on Wednesday quoted the minister as saying that "the accusation against Iran is totally a lie and I dismiss it firmly."

Hatami extolled Iranian military, saying it has "played a significant role in the establishment of security in the region and in international waterways."

He responded to questions about footage released by the U.S. purporting to show Iranian forces removing an unexploded limpet mine from one

of the stricken tankers, saying "the date and the location shown in the footage have not been authenticated."

The minister also added that Iranian vessels carried out a rescue operation when they arrived at the location of the tankers. He says the Americans "can show any footage ... but it cannot be used as evidence."

2:05 p.m.

A U.S. Navy explosives expert says the limpet mine used on a Japanese-owned oil tanker last week "bears a striking resemblance" to similar Iranian mines. Iran has denied being involved in the attack.

Cmdr. Sean Kido of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet also said on Wednesday that damage done to tanker Kokuka Courageous was "not consistent with an external flying object hitting the ship."

That contradicts the ship's owner, which said eyewitnesses aboard saw "flying objects" before the June 13 attack in the Gulf of Oman.

Kido added that Navy investigators have recovered fingerprints and a hand print from the side of the ship after the attack.

Kido made the comment to journalists gathered at the U.S. Navy 5th Fleet base near Fujairah, the United Arab Emirates. Reporters also saw what officials described as evidence recovered from the ship.

12:30 p.m.

Israel is holding its largest military drill in years, with thousands of troops from the army, navy and air force simulating a future war with Lebanese Hezbollah militants.

The military says it's wrapping up the four-day exercise on Wednesday. The drill focused on the immersion off all military branches against threats on Israel from the north. It includes the first deployment of F-35 stealth fighter jet planes in such a drill.



**U.S. Navy patrol boats carrying journalists to see damaged oil tankers leaves a U.S. Navy 5th Fleet base near Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, June 19, 2019. The limpet mines used to attack a Japanese-owned oil tanker near the Strait of Hormuz bore "a striking resemblance" to similar mines displayed by Iran, a U.S. Navy explosives expert said Wednesday. Iran has denied being involved.** (AP Photo/Kamran Jebreili)



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The exercise was planned long in advance but comes amid growing tensions in the Persian Gulf between Iran and the United States.

Israeli officials fear Iran may try to mobilize proxies like Hezbollah against it, as part of the conflict. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attended the drill and warned Israel's enemies: "Don't test us."

12:20 p.m.

Kuwait's emir has arrived in Iraq for a rare official visit to the neighboring country amid rising tensions in the Persian Gulf between Washington and Tehran.

Iraq's President Barham Saleh received Emir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah at Baghdad's airport on Wednesday.

Kuwait news agency KUNA said the visit, the first since 2012, will focus on regional developments in the wake of attacks on oil tankers last week near the strategic Strait of Hormuz.

Washington, which has accused Iran of carrying out the attacks on the oil tankers, has dispatched warships and bombers to the region and is sending 1,000 more troops to the Mideast. Iran denies it is behind the attacks.

10:05 a.m.

Iraqi officials say a rocket hit an oil-drilling site in southern Basra province, striking a camp housing energy giant Exxon Mobil and wounding three local workers, one seriously.

Security official Mahdi Raykan says a Katyusha rocket landed early Wednesday in the Zubair and Rumeila oil fields camp, operated by the Iraqi Drilling company, where Exxon Mobil has workers' caravans.

Exxon Mobil, based in Irving, Texas, didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. In May, it evacuated staff from the West Qurna 1 oil field in Basra province.

As tensions escalate between Iran and the U.S., there're concerns Iraq could once again get caught in the middle. The country hosts more than 5,000 U.S. troops, and is home to powerful Iranian-backed militias, some of whom want those U.S. forces to leave.

## Trump, in 2020 campaign mode, calls Democrats 'radical'

By JILL COLVIN, JONATHAN LEMIRE and MICHAEL SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump jabbed at the press and poked the political establishment he ran against in 2016 as he kicked off his reelection campaign with a grievance-filled rally that focused more on settling scores than laying out his agenda for a possible second term.

Addressing a crowd of thousands at Orlando's Amway Center on Tuesday night, Trump complained he was "under assault from the very first day" of his presidency by a "fake news media" and an "illegal witch hunt" that had tried to keep him and his supporters down.

He painted a disturbing picture of what life would look like if he loses in 2020, accusing his critics of "un-American conduct" and saying Democrats "want to destroy you and they want to destroy our country as we know it."

"A vote for any Democrat in 2020 is a vote for the rise of radical socialism and the destruction of the American dream," he said. Trump made only passing mention of any of the Democrats running to replace him even as he tossed out "radical" and "unhinged" to describe the rival party.

Trump has long railed against the special counsel's investigation into Russian meddling in the 2016 election and the ongoing probes by House Democrats in the aftermath of Robert Mueller's report.

The apocalyptic language and finger-pointing made clear that Trump's 2020 campaign will probably look a whole lot like his run three years ago. Even after two-and-a-half years in the Oval Office, Trump remains focused on energizing his base and offering himself as a political outsider running against Washington.

In his speech, Trump spent considerably more time focused on former Democratic rival Hillary Clinton than on his current 2020 challengers, even though she is not on the ballot.

Thousands of Trump supporters began gathering outside the arena on Monday.

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"Trump has been the best president we've ever had," said Ron Freitas, a retired Merchant Marine and registered Democrat from Orlando.

Hundreds of anti-Trump protesters clapped and took photos when a 20-foot (6-meter) blimp of a snarling Trump baby in a diaper was inflated. Some members of the far-right hate group Proud Boys were also spotted marching in Orlando outside the rally.

Trump aides scheduled the kickoff near the four-year anniversary of the day when the former reality television star and New York tabloid fixture launched his longshot campaign for president with a famous escalator ride in front of a crowd that included paid actors.

Trump spoke fondly of his 2016 race, calling it "a defining moment in American history." He said that in the years since, he had upended Washington, staring down "a corrupt and broken political establishment" and restoring a government "of, for and by the people."

He never has really stopped running. He filed for re-election on Jan. 20, 2017, the day of his inauguration, and held his first 2020 rally in February, 2017, in nearby Melbourne. He has continued holding his signature "Make America Great Again" rallies in the months since.

Trump asked the crowd whether he should stick with "Make America Great Again" or upgrade his slogan. His new one — "Keep America Great" — was greeted with boisterous cheers.

Trump is hoping to replicate the dynamics that allowed him to take charge of the Republican Party and then the presidency as an insurgent intent on disrupting the status quo. In 2016, he successfully appealed to disaffected voters who felt left behind by economic dislocation and demographic shifts. He has no intention of abandoning that mantle, even if he is the face of the institutions he looks to disrupt.

The president underscored that on the eve of the rally in must-win Florida, returning to the hardline immigration themes of his first campaign by tweeting that next week, Immigration and Customs Enforcement "will begin the process of removing the millions of illegal aliens who have illicitly found their way into the United States."

That promise, which came with no details and sparked Democratic condemnation, seemed to offer a peek into a campaign that will largely be fought along the same lines as his first bid, with very few new policy proposals for a second term.

Early Democratic front-runner Joe Biden said Trump's politics are "all about dividing us" in ways that are "dangerous — truly, truly dangerous."

Another leading Democratic contender, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, said Trump had delivered "an hour-and-a-half speech of lies, distortions and total, absolute nonsense."

But those involved in the president's reelection effort believe that his version of populism, combined with his mantra to "Drain the Swamp," still resonates, despite his administration's ties with lobbyists and corporations and the Trump family's apparent efforts to profit off the presidency.

Advisers believe that, in an age of extreme polarization, many Trump backers view their support for the president as part of their identity, one not easily shaken. They point to his seemingly unmovable support



**President Donald Trump speaks during his re-election kickoff rally at the Amway Center, Tuesday, June 18, 2019, in Orlando, Fla.** (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

with his base supporters as evidence that he is still viewed the same way he was as a candidate: a political rebel.

Trump tried to make the case that he had made good on his 2016 promises, including cracking down on illegal immigration and boosting jobs.

Near the end of the rally, Trump ran through a list of promises for a second term, pledging a new immigration system, new trade deals, a health care overhaul and a cure for cancer and "many diseases," including the eradication of AIDS in America.

Lemire reported from New York. Associated Press writers Kevin Freking, Josh Replogle, Zeke Miller and Juana Summers contributed to this report.

## US Navy expert: Tanker attack mine resembles Iranian mines

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

U.S. NAVY 5TH FLEET BASE NEAR FUJAIRAH, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The limpet mines used to attack a Japanese-owned oil tanker near the Strait of Hormuz last week bore "a striking resemblance" to similar mines displayed by Iran, a U.S. Navy explosives expert said Wednesday, stopping short of directly blaming Tehran for the assault.

Iran has denied being involved in the attack last Thursday that hit the Japanese tanker *Kokuka Courageous* and also the Norwegian-owned *Front Altair*.

The comments by Cmdr. Sean Kido came as the Navy showed reporters pieces of debris and a magnet they say Iran's Revolutionary Guard left behind when they spirited away an unexploded limpet mine after the June 13 attack in the Gulf of Oman. Iran has also not acknowledged taking the mine.

Kido also stressed that the damage done to the *Kokuka Courageous* was "not consistent with an external flying object hitting the ship," despite the ship's owner blaming "flying objects" for the damage in the attack.

Meanwhile, a rocket hit an oil-drilling site in Iraq's southern Basra province early on Wednesday, striking inside a compound housing energy giant Exxon Mobil and other foreign oil companies and wounding three local workers, one seriously, Iraqi officials said.

The attack on the oil tankers came against the backdrop of heightened tensions between the U.S. and Iran that take root in President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers a year ago.

Iran recently has quadrupled its production of low-enriched uranium and threatened to boost its enrichment closer to weapons-grade levels, trying to pressure Europe for new terms to the 2015 deal.

In recent weeks, the U.S. has sped an aircraft carrier to the Mideast and deployed additional troops to



**Cmdr. Sean Kido of the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet talks to journalists at a 5th Fleet Base near Fujairah, United Arab Emirates, Wednesday, June 19, 2019. Cmdr. Kido said Wednesday that damage done last week to the *Kokaku Courageous* was "not consistent with an external flying object hitting the ship."** (AP Photo/Kamran Jebreili)

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the tens of thousands already here. Mysterious attacks also have targeted oil tankers as Iranian-allied Houthi rebels launched bomb-laden drones into Saudi Arabia.

All this has raised fears that a miscalculation or further rise in tensions could push the U.S. and Iran into an open conflict, some 40 years after Tehran's Islamic Revolution.

The U.S. Navy briefed foreign journalists on Wednesday at a 5th Fleet base near Fujairah, an Emirati port city some 210 kilometers (130 miles) northeast of the capital, Abu Dhabi. There, they showed journalists debris recovered from the *Kokuka Courageous*, which they described as including aluminum and composite metals.

They also showed a magnet they described as being left behind by the Revolutionary Guard — one of six apparently used to stick the unexploded limpet mine to the ship's hull. Sailors said it took two of them and a crowbar to pry it off the ship.

Those pieces put together have U.S. sailors suspecting the limpet mine came from Iran.

They showed a picture previously shared among weapons experts of a limpet mine on display in Iran, which they said resembled the one they suspected was used on the ship. That picture showed a conical mine, some 42 kilograms (90 pounds) in weight, on display with a sign next to it identifying it as being produced by a research company affiliated with the Revolutionary Guard.

"The limpet mine that was used does bear a striking resemblance to that which has been publicly displayed in Iranian military parades," Kido said. "There are distinguishing features."

Kido declined to elaborate. Iran's mission to the U.N. did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The mines were placed above the vessel's water line. One exploded, punching through the double-hulled ship and sparking a brief fire. The placement of the mines on the vessel makes it "not appear that the intention was to sink the vessel," Kido said.

"The damage we observed is consistent with a limpet mine attack; it is not consistent with an external flying object hitting the ship," Kido said.

Authorities also recovered a hand print and fingerprints, he said. "We recovered biometric information ... which can be used to build a criminal case to hold the individuals responsible accountable." He did not offer more details.

The second vessel involved in the attack, the Norwegian-owned *Front Altair*, caught fire and sent black smoke up into the air that was visible from space by satellites. Kido did not explain why the U.S. had no immediate evidence from that vessel. Both are now anchored off the eastern coast of the United Arab Emirates.

He also declined to discuss an earlier, May 12 attack on four oil tankers off the coast of Fujairah near the U.S. base, which America similarly blames on an Iranian limpet mine attack. Analysts also believe those attacks came from limpet mines.

In Iraq on Wednesday, a Katyusha rocket landed at dawn in the Zubair and Rumeila oil fields camp, operated by the Iraqi Drilling company, where Exxon Mobil and other companies have caravans housing their workers, security official Mahdi Raykan said.

Exxon Mobil, based in Irving, Texas, did not immediately respond to a request for comment. In May, it evacuated staff from the West Qurna 1 oil field in Basra province.

As Washington-Tehran tensions escalated, there have been concerns that Iraq could once again get caught in the middle between its two top allies. The country hosts more than 5,000 U.S. troops, and is home to powerful Iranian-backed militias, some of whom want those U.S. forces to leave.

In May, the U.S. evacuated nonessential diplomatic staff from Iraq. That came before a missile landed in Baghdad's Green Zone, near the sprawling U.S. Embassy.

No one claimed responsibility for Wednesday's attack and Iraqi oil exports were unaffected.

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Associated Press writer Qassem Abdul-Zahra in Baghdad contributed to this report.

## Phoenix police chief promises change amid civil rights claim

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Police Chief Jeri Williams promised change in her department after being booed by some of hundreds of people gathered to discuss a videotaped police encounter that has caused a national outcry.

The meeting at a downtown church Tuesday night was called by the city in the wake of the release of a bystander's video of police officers who pointed their guns and shouted obscenities last month at a black family. Dravon Ames and his pregnant fiancée Iesha Harper, who was holding their 1-year-old daughter, say their 4-year-old daughter had stolen a doll from a store without their knowledge.

"Real change starts with the community," Williams said to a sometimes hostile crowd comprised mainly of blacks and Hispanics.

"Real change starts with the firing of the officers! Fire them!" one woman shouted toward the stage, where Williams, who is herself black, was seated next to Mayor Kate Gallego and other Phoenix city leaders.

Appearing frustrated at times, Williams assured those gathered that the meeting would not be the last.

"We are here to listen, we are here to make change," she said.

The couple has called for the officers to be fired.

Ames addressed the crowd briefly, drawing applause when he said he and his family were lucky to be alive after the incident.

"No one should ever try to justify what happened that day," he said.

"We matter," said Harper, holding the couple's 1-year-old.

The father of Jacob Harris, a black 19-year-old man who was shot and killed by a Phoenix officer in January following an armed robbery at a fast food restaurant, also spoke at the meeting along with others who have had loved ones killed in police-related shootings.

Earlier Tuesday, Phoenix police released surveillance video aimed at backing up their assertion that adults and not just a child were shoplifting before the incident.

The store video is difficult to follow because it has been edited and the subjects' faces are blurred. It shows a man taking something from a display rack and examining it, but it's unclear what happened to the package when he walked off camera.

Another snippet of video later shows a little girl with a doll in a box walking out of the store accompanied by adults.

A police statement last week about the incident in late May states Dravon Ames told police he threw a pair of stolen underwear out of his car. Police also say a woman traveling in a different vehicle was ar-



**Dravon Ames, holding microphone, speaks to Phoenix Police Chief Jeri Williams and Phoenix Mayor Kate Gallego, as his fiancée, Iesha Harper, right, holds 1-year-old daughter London, at a community meeting, Tuesday, June 18, 2019, in Phoenix. The community meeting stems from reaction to a videotaped encounter that surfaced recently of Ames and his pregnant fiancée, Harper, having had guns aimed at them by Phoenix police during a response to a shoplifting report, as well as the issue of recent police-involved shootings in the community.** (AP Photo/Ross D. Franklin)

rested separately for stealing aluminum foil.

A bystander's video that came to light last week shows officers aiming guns and yelling profane commands at Ames and his pregnant fiancée, Iesha Harper, as she held their 1-year-old daughter. They say their 4-year-old daughter had taken a doll from a store without their knowledge.

The store decided not to prosecute and no charges have been filed.

The couple filed a \$10 million claim against the city alleging civil rights violations as a precursor to a lawsuit. The race of the officers is not known.

Ames has a pending case on charges of aggravated assault of a police officer in an unrelated case that followed a traffic accident in suburban Tempe, Arizona, last year. Court documents say Ames unsuccessfully tried to kick officers several times when they arrested him on suspicion of driving under the influence of marijuana.

One Tempe officer used a stun gun on Ames because he thought he was trying to grab the other officer's gun, according to documents.

Phoenix police have not responded to repeated questions about whether the officers in the videotaped encounter following the alleged shoplifting were aware of, or influenced by, Ames' earlier case. Civil liberties attorney Sandra Slaton said Monday the prior case was irrelevant.

The police chief has said an investigation into the officers' actions is under way. The Phoenix police union is urging calm, saying it will not express an opinion until the investigation is completed.

The bystander's video comes amid an investigation by police departments in Phoenix and other cities into a database that appears to catalog thousands of bigoted or violent social media posts by active-duty and former officers.

Williams, has moved some officers to "non-enforcement" assignments while the department looks into Facebook posts she called "embarrassing and disturbing."

The database published by Plain View Project earlier this month included nearly 180 posts tied to current Phoenix police officers that disparage Muslims, black people, transgender people and other groups.

## Dems get inside Trump inner circle with Hope Hicks interview

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The closed-door interview that House lawmakers have with Hope Hicks, a former communications director for President Donald Trump, marks the first time they are hearing from someone linked to his inner circle since the release of special counsel Robert Mueller's report.

Obtaining the testimony Wednesday from Hicks, a close and trusted former Trump aide, is a significant victory for Democrats, given that Trump has broadly stonewalled their investigations.

The House Judiciary Committee originally subpoenaed Hicks to give public testimony, but agreed to the private interview after negotiations. A transcript of the session will be released in the days afterward.

Still, it is unclear how much new information Hicks will provide.

She already cooperated extensively with Mueller's probe, and a White House lawyer who will be in the room for the interview is expected to try and block her from answering certain questions.

In a letter Tuesday to the committee chairman, Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., White House counsel Pat Cipollone wrote that Trump had directed Hicks not to answer questions "relating to the time of her service as a senior adviser to the president."

Cipollone said Hicks, as one of Trump's former senior advisers, is "absolutely immune" from compelled testimony with respect to her service to the president because of the separation of powers between the executive and legislative branches.

The White House has similarly cited executive privilege with respect to many of the Democrats' demands, using the president's power to withhold information to protect the confidentiality of the Oval Office decision-making process.

Democrats say they disagree that Hicks' answers are covered by such immunity or privilege, especially since she has already cooperated with Mueller.

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The committee has also subpoenaed Hicks for documents, but she has only partially complied. She agreed to provide some information from her work on Trump's campaign, according to the committee, but none from her time at the White House.

Testimony from witnesses such as Hicks is one step in House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's methodical approach to investigating Trump.

More than 60 lawmakers in her caucus — including almost a dozen on the Judiciary Committee — have called for opening an impeachment inquiry, but she has said she wants committees to investigate first and come to a decision on impeachment later.

While Trump has continued to block their requests, Democrats have made some minor gains in recent weeks with Hicks' appearance and the Justice Department's agreeing to make some underlying evidence from Mueller's report available to committee members.

Hicks was present for many of the key moments reviewed in the Mueller report, and her name is one of the most frequently mentioned in the document. Hicks was a key witness for Mueller, delivering important information to the special counsel's office about multiple episodes involving the president. That includes the president's role in the drafting of a misleading and incomplete statement about a 2016 Trump Tower meeting at which Trump's son, Donald Trump Jr., expected to receive dirt on Democrat Hillary Clinton.

Mueller wrote in his 448-page report released in April that there was not enough evidence to establish a criminal conspiracy between Trump's 2016 campaign and Russia, but he said he could not exonerate Trump on obstruction of justice. The report examined several situations in which Trump attempted to influence or curtail Mueller's investigation, including the drafting of that statement.

Democratic aides said they plan on asking Hicks about several of those episodes, including the drafting of the statement, efforts to remove Mueller from the investigation and the firing of FBI Director James Comey. The aides spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss their plans for the closed-door meeting.

The aides said that lawmakers plan to ask about her knowledge of hush-money payments orchestrated by former Trump lawyer Michael Cohen to two women who claimed to have had affairs with Trump — the porn actress Stormy Daniels and model Karen McDougal. Trump has denied the allegations. Cohen is now serving three years in prison partly for campaign violations related to the payments.

The Democrats plan to use some of Hicks' answers to those questions to inform a committee hearing to review Mueller's report on Thursday. It's the second in a series of hearings in which the committee is talking to expert witnesses about the report. The transcript will then be released, possibly as soon as this week, according to the aides.

Other Trump associates frequently mentioned in Mueller's report have refused to appear before the



**FILE - In this Feb. 27, 2018 photo, then-White House Communications Director Hope Hicks arrives to meet behind closed doors with the House Intelligence Committee, at the Capitol in Washington. The House Judiciary Committee will interview Hicks behind closed doors on Wednesday, June 19, 2019, the first time lawmakers will hear from a person linked to the president's inner circle since House Democrats launched investigations to review special counsel Robert Mueller's report.** (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite, File)

committee, including former White House Counsel Donald McGahn. McGahn's former chief of staff, Annie Donaldson, was also subpoenaed for documents and an interview and has declined to provide the documents, like Hicks and McGahn. It is unclear whether Donaldson will show up for a scheduled deposition next week.

Republicans have strongly criticized the investigations and say they are unnecessary after Mueller spent two years reviewing the same material and talking to the same witnesses.

Georgia Rep. Doug Collins, the top Republican on the committee, said Hicks' appearance proves that Trump is not stonewalling Congress. And he said they could have probably heard from her sooner if they hadn't taken "a scorched-earth approach to pursuing information" with subpoenas.

## 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. US NAVY SAYS MINE FROM TANKER ATTACK RESEMBLES IRANIAN ONES

The limpet mines used to attack a Japanese-owned oil tanker near the Strait of Hormuz last week bore "a striking resemblance" to similar mines displayed by Iran, a Navy explosives expert says, stopping short of directly blaming Tehran for the assault.

### 2. TRUMP AIRS FAMILIAR GRIEVANCES IN 2020 LAUNCH

The president kicks off his reelection campaign with blistering attacks at a rally in Orlando that focused more on settling scores than laying out his agenda for a second term.

### 3. UN EYES PROBE OF SAUDI PRINCE OVER SLAYING

An independent U.N. human rights expert investigating the killing of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi recommends an investigation into the possible role of Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, citing "credible evidence."

### 4. XI: NORTH KOREA TAKING 'RIGHT DIRECTION' POLITICALLY

On the eve of a two-day visit to Pyongyang, the Chinese president didn't mention the stalled nuclear weapons talks between Washington officials and Kim Jong Un.

### 5. WHERE LOCAL NEWS IS GETTING A REAL CHANCE

A small newspaper in western Massachusetts hires more reporters, adds sections and begins hosting community events to kick-start circulation.

### 6. UN SEES RECORD RISE IN REFUGEES

A U.N. agency says a record 71 million people have now been displaced worldwide by war, persecution and other violence.

### 7. EPA ROLLING BACK ENVIRONMENTAL RULE

An announcement is expected soon on a replacement for an Obama-era regulation that sought to limit coal-fired plants in the nation's electrical grid.



**President Donald Trump and first lady Melania Trump greet supporters at a rally where the president formally announced his 2020 re-election bid Tuesday, June 18, 2019, in Orlando, Fla.** (AP Photo/John Raoux)



## 8. CASE FOR REPARATIONS RETURNS TO CAPITOL HILL

This time amid a growing discussion among Democrats about what the country might owe to the descendants of slaves in the U.S.

## 9. 'DEMOCRACY VOUCHER' PROGRAM A HIT

A first-of-its-kind public campaign finance program in Seattle is giving voters vouchers worth \$100 so they can make donations to candidates.

## 10. LAWMAKERS TO HEAR FROM PILOTS CRITICAL OF BOEING

The president of the pilots' union at American Airlines says the aviation giant made mistakes in its design of the 737 Max and not telling pilots about new flight-control software on the plane.

## House panel set to debate idea of reparations for slavery

By ERRIN HAINES WHACK AP National Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — After more than a decade's absence, the case for reparations is returning to Capitol Hill, this time amid a growing discussion in the Democratic Party about what the country might owe to the descendants of slaves in the United States.

Actor and activist Danny Glover and writer Ta-Nehisi Coates are among the witnesses expected to testify at a hearing Wednesday of a House Judiciary subcommittee. The stated purpose is "to examine, through open and constructive discourse, the legacy of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, its continuing impact on the community and the path to restorative justice."

Coates triggered fresh public debate about reparations with his essay "The Case for Reparations," published in The Atlantic magazine in 2014. He said in an interview he was reluctant to testify but felt "some responsibility to make that case before Congress."

"One of the things I was trying to do when I wrote that was to get people to stop laughing," Coates said. "Right now, this is a moment. I think folks are really clear about that right now. That doesn't mean it's going to get fixed next week."

Reparations has been moving toward the mainstream of the Democratic Party after long being treated as a fringe issue. Several of the party's presidential candidates have endorsed looking at the idea, though they have stopped short of endorsing direct payouts for African Americans. Yet the idea remains far from widely accepted, both among Democrats and the public at large.

In a Point Taken-Marist poll conducted in 2016, 68 percent of Americans said the country should not pay cash reparations to African American descendants of slaves to make up for the harm caused by slavery and racial discrimination. About 8 in 10 white Americans said they were opposed to reparations, while about 6 in 10 black Americans said they were in favor.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday that he opposes reparations, telling reporters: "I don't want reparations for something that happened 150 years ago. . We've tried to deal with the original



**In this June 18m 2019, photo, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., speaks at the Capitol in Washington. After more than a decade's absence, the case for reparations for slavery is returning to Capitol Hill. McConnell said Tuesday that he opposes reparations.** (AP Photo/J. Scott

Applewhite)

sin of slavery by passing civil rights legislation” and electing an African American president, Barack Obama. “It would be hard to figure out who to compensate” for slavery, the Kentucky Republican said, and added: “No one currently alive was responsible for that.”

Republicans have invited two witnesses to Wednesday’s hearing. One is Coleman Hughes, a young columnist who has rejected reparations and affirmative action. The other is Burgess Owens, a former Oakland Raiders football player and Super Bowl champion, who recently wrote a Wall Street Journal editorial eschewing reparations. “Proponents of reparations act as though black Americans are incapable of carrying their own burdens, while white Americans must bear the sins of those who came before,” he wrote.

The debate over reparations for black Americans began not long after the end of the Civil War, and was long defined as financial compensation for ex-slaves and their descendants. Opponents of reparations often frame the issue as an unfair solution that places the blame or burden of the legacy of slavery on white Americans who were not alive at the time and were therefore not responsible.

Supporters point to racial disparities across Americans society as proof that while whites living today were not responsible for what came before, they have nonetheless benefited, just as black Americans have experienced the lingering effects of the slave system.

Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey, who is among the Democratic presidential candidates, will be among the witnesses at Wednesday’s hearing. In his prepared testimony, he says the U.S. has yet to “truly acknowledge and grapple with the racism and white supremacy that tainted this country’s founding and continues to cause persistent and deep racial disparities and inequality.”

Booker said it’s time to develop proposals to “right these historical wrongs and balance the scales of economic justice.”

A resolution to study reparations was first proposed in 1989 by Democratic Rep. John Conyers of Michigan. He proposed the resolution year after year, though it gained little traction. After Conyers’ resignation in 2017, Texas Democratic Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee picked up the torch and reintroduced the resolution.

Lee also pushed for Wednesday’s hearing, the first in Congress on reparations since 2007. It coincides with Juneteenth, a cultural holiday commemorating the emancipation of enslaved black people in the United States.

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

## Trump EPA close to gutting Obama rule on coal power plants

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is close to completing one of its biggest rollbacks of environmental rules, replacing a landmark Obama-era effort that sought to wean the nation’s electrical grid off coal-fired power plants and their climate-damaging pollution.

The final Trump administration replacement rule, expected as soon as this week, instead would give individual states wide discretion to decide whether to require limited efficiency upgrades at individual coal-fired power plants.

The Environmental Protection Agency said Administrator Andrew Wheeler would have a major policy announcement Wednesday but did not disclose the topic. Democrats, environmentalists, industry representatives and others, however, expect the final rule on coal plants.

Joseph Goffman, an EPA official under President Barack Obama, said he feared that the Trump administration was trying to set a legal precedent that the Clean Air Act gives the federal government “next to no authority to do anything” about climate-changing emissions from the country’s power grid. The Obama rule, adopted in 2015, sought to reshape the country’s power system by encouraging utilities to rely less on dirtier-burning coal-fired power plants and more on electricity from natural gas, solar, wind and other lower or no-carbon sources.

Burning of fossil fuels for electricity, transportation and heat is the main human source of heat-trapping

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carbon emissions.

Supporters of the revised rule say the Obama-era plan overstepped the EPA's authority.

"This action is recalibrating EPA so it aligns with being the agency to protect public health and the environment in a way that respects the limits of the law," said Mandy Gunasekara, a former senior official at the EPA who helped write the replacement rule. She now runs a nonprofit, Energy45, that supports President Donald Trump's energy initiatives.

"The Clean Power Plan was designed largely to put coal out of business," Gunasekara said. Trump's overhaul is meant to let states "figure out what is best for their mission in terms of meeting modern environmental standards" and providing affordable energy, she said.

Democrats and environmentalists say the Trump administration has repeatedly sought to use the power of government to protect the sagging U.S. coal industry from competition against cheaper, cleaner-burning natural gas and solar and wind power while ignoring scientific warnings about climate change.

With coal miners at his side, Trump signed an order in March 2017 directing the EPA to scrap the Obama rule. It was one of the first acts of his presidency.

His pledge to roll back regulation for the coal industry helped cement support from owners and workers in the coal industry, and others. Despite his promise, market forces have frustrated Trump's efforts. Competition from cheaper natural gas and renewable fuel has continued a yearslong trend driving U.S. coal plant closings to near-record levels last year, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

The final rule is expected to closely follow the draft released in August.

By encouraging utilities to consider spending money to upgrade aging coal plants, environmental groups argue, the Trump rule could prompt the companies to run existing coal plants harder and longer rather than retiring them.

"It's a rule to increase emissions because it's a rule to extend the life of coal plants," said Conrad Schneider, advocacy director of the Clean Air Task Force. "You invest in updating an old coal plant, it makes it more economic" to run it more to pay off that investment.

An Associated Press analysis Tuesday of federal air data showed U.S. progress on cleaning the air may be stagnating after decades of improvement. There were 15% more days with unhealthy air in America both last year and the year before than there were on average from 2013 through 2016, the four years when America had its fewest number of those days since at least 1980.

Trump has repeatedly claimed just the opposite, saying earlier this month in Ireland: "We have the cleanest air in the world, in the United States, and it's gotten better since I'm president."

Along with an initiative requiring tougher mileage standards for cars and light trucks, the Clean Power Plan was one of Obama's two legacy efforts to slow climate change. The Trump administration also is



**FILE - In this July 27, 2018, file photo, the Dave Johnson coal-fired power plant is silhouetted against the morning sun in Glenrock, Wyo. The Trump administration is close to completing one of the biggest of its dozens of rollbacks of environmental rules, replacing a landmark effort to wean the nation's electrical grid off coal-fired power plants and their climate-changing smokestack emissions.** (AP Photo/J. David Ake)

proposing to roll back the Obama-era mileage standards, with a final rule expected shortly. Environmental groups promise court challenges to both rollbacks.

Trump has rejected scientific warnings on climate change, including a report this year from scientists at more than a dozen federal agencies noting that global warming from fossil fuels “presents growing challenges to human health and quality of life.”

EPA’s own regulatory analysis last year estimated that Trump’s replacement ACE rule would kill an extra 300 to 1,500 people each year by 2030, owing to additional air pollution from the power grid.

## UN: Nearly 71 million now displaced by war, violence at home

By JAMEY KEATEN Associated Press

GENEVA (AP) — A record 71 million people have been displaced worldwide by war, persecution and other violence, the U.N. refugee agency said Wednesday, an increase of more than 2 million from a year earlier — and an overall total that would amount to the world’s 20th most populous country.

The annual “Global Trends” report released by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees counts the number of the world’s refugees, asylum-seekers and internally displaced people at the end of 2018.

The figures, coming on the eve of World Refugee Day on Thursday, are bound to add fuel to a debate at the intersection of international law, human rights and domestic politics, especially the movement in some countries, including the U.S., against immigrants and refugees.

Launching the report, the high commissioner, Filippo Grandi, had a message for U.S. President Donald Trump and other world leaders, calling it “damaging” to depict migrants and refugees as threats to jobs and security in host countries. Often, they are fleeing insecurity and danger themselves, he said.

The report also puts a statistical skeleton onto often-poignant individual stories of people struggling to survive by crossing rivers, deserts, seas, fences and other barriers, natural and man-made, to escape government oppression, gang killings, sexual abuse, militia murders and other such violence at home.

UNHCR said 70.8 million people were forcibly displaced at the end of last year, up from about 68.5 million in 2017 — and nearly a 65% increase from a decade ago. Among them, nearly three in five people — or more than 41 million — are displaced within their home countries.

“The global trends, once again unfortunately, go in what I would say is the wrong direction,” Grandi told



**FILE - In this Aug. 31, 2018 file photo, Venezuelan migrants line up for free bread and coffee, donated by a Colombian family from their car, at a gas station in Pamplona, Colombia. A record 71 million people have been displaced worldwide from war, persecution and other violence, the U.N. refugee agency said Wednesday, June 18, 2019, an increase of more than 2 million from last year and an overall total that would amount to the world’s 20th most populous country. Amid runaway inflation and political turmoil at home, Venezuelans for the first time accounted for the largest number of new asylum-seekers in 2018, with more than 340,000, or more than one in five worldwide last year.** (AP Photo/Ariana Cubillos)

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reporters in Geneva. "There are new conflicts, new situations, producing refugees, adding themselves to the old ones. The old ones never get resolved."

The phenomenon is growing in both size and duration. Some four-fifths of the "displacement situations" have lasted more than five years. After eight years of war in Syria, for instance, its people continue to make up the largest population of forcibly displaced people, at some 13 million.

Amid runaway inflation and political turmoil at home, Venezuelans for the first time accounted for the largest number of new asylum-seekers in 2018, totaling more than 340,000 — or more than one in five worldwide last year. Asylum-seekers receive international protection as they await acceptance or rejection of their requests for refugee status.

UNHCR said that its figures are "conservative" and that Venezuela masks a potentially longer-term trend. Some 4 million people are known to have left the South American country in recent years. Many of those have traveled freely to Peru, Colombia and Brazil, but only about one-eighth have sought formal international protection, and the outflow continues, suggesting the strains on the welcoming countries could worsen.

Grandi predicted a continued "exodus" from Venezuela and appealed for donors to provide more development assistance to the region.

"Otherwise these countries will not bear the pressure anymore and then they have to resort to measures that will damage refugees," he said. "We are in a very dangerous situation."

The United States, meanwhile, remains the "largest supporter of refugees" in the world, Grandi said in an interview. The U.S. is the biggest single donor to UNHCR. He also credited local communities and advocacy groups in the United States for helping refugees and asylum-seekers in the country.

But the refugee agency chief noted long-term administrative shortcomings that have given the United States the world's biggest backlog of asylum claims, at nearly 719,000. More than a quarter-million claims were added last year.

He also decried recent rhetoric that has been hostile to migrants and refugees.

"In America, just like in Europe actually and in other parts of the world, what we are witnessing is an identification of refugees — but not just refugees, migrants as well — with people that take away jobs, that threaten our security, our values," Grandi said. "And I want to say to the U.S. administration — to the president — but also to the leaders around the world: This is damaging."

He said many people leaving Honduras, Guatemala and El Salvador through Mexico have faced violence by gangs and suffered from "the inability of these governments to protect their own citizens."

At more than 1.5 million, Ethiopians comprised the largest population of newly displaced people — nearly all internally — last year, prompting the head of the Norwegian Refugee Council to decry a "forgotten crisis" in the east African country.

"We need a 180-degree shift in attitudes," said NRC Secretary-General Jan Egeland. "Wealthier nations must share the heavy-lifting, dig deep and support generous countries like Ethiopia to ease the human suffering of millions fleeing from conflict worldwide."

The UNHCR report noted that, by far, the most refugees are taken in the developing world, not wealthy countries.

The figures marked the seventh consecutive year in which the numbers of forcibly displaced rose.

"Yet another year, another dreadful record has been beaten," said Jon Cerezo of British charity Oxfam. "Behind these figures, people like you and me are making dangerous trips that they never wanted to make, because of threats to their safety and most basic rights."

## Xi supports North Korea's direction on issues ahead of visit

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping praised North Korea for moving in the “right direction” by politically resolving issues on the Korean Peninsula in an essay published in both countries’ official media Wednesday on the eve of Xi’s visit to Pyongyang to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Un.

Xi had nothing to say on the biggest outside worry about North Korea — stalled nuclear weapons talks between Washington and Pyongyang — in the article published on the front page of North Korea’s main newspaper, Rodong Sinmun, and by China’s Xinhua news agency. But experts believe he could use his summit with Kim, which the North is calling a state visit, to endorse North Korean calls for an incremental disarmament process in which every action Pyongyang takes is met with U.S. concessions on sanctions and security issues.

Much of the article focused on lauding the neighbors’ seven-decade relationship. Xi said his visit on Thursday and Friday will “strengthen strategic communication and exchange” between the traditional, though sometimes strained, allies. The nations fought together in the 1950-53 Korean War against the United States, South Korea and their allies, but there has



**FILE - In this Jan. 8, 2019, file photo provided by the North Korean government, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un, left, and Chinese President Xi Jinping attend a welcome ceremony at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing. Xi said North Korea is taking the “right direction” by politically resolving issues on the Korean Peninsula in a rare op-ed published by a North Korean state newspaper Wednesday, June 19, 2019, a day before Xi visits Pyongyang to meet Kim.** (Korean Central News Agency/Korea

News Service via AP, File)

been friction in recent years, especially over the North’s relentless push for nuclear bombs.

Xi, who is locked in a bitter trade war with President Donald Trump, will likely meet with the U.S. leader at the G-20 meetings in Japan. He may try to use his summit with Kim as leverage, by reminding Trump of Beijing’s influence with Pyongyang, which could either help or disrupt the U.S.-North Korea diplomacy, experts say.

Kim also wants to strengthen his own position against Trump and is obviously seeking to cement China, the North’s only major ally and economic lifeline, as a major player in the process.

“China supports how (North Korea) is maintaining the right direction to politically resolve the issues on the Korean Peninsula and supports efforts to find a solution (to serve North Korea’s) rational interests through dialogue,” Xi wrote on Rodong Sinmun.

Lee Sang-min, spokesman for Seoul’s Unification Ministry, said the Rodong Sinmun op-ed wasn’t the first a Chinese leader wrote in North Korean state media. The newspaper also published statements by former Chinese leaders Zhang Zemin and Hu Jintao when they visited the North in 2001 and 2005, respectively, the ministry said. Chinese state media has published essays from Xi ahead of his visits to other countries.

Nuclear negotiations between the United States and North Korea have been at a standstill since February when a summit between Kim and Trump collapsed over what the Americans described as excessive North

Korean demands for sanctions relief in exchange for only a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Kim has said he would seek a "new way" if the United States persists with sanctions and pressure against North Korea. The Trump administration has said sanctions will remain in place until the North commits to fully and verifiably relinquishing its nuclear and missile program upfront.

Kim met Xi four times in China last year during a diplomatic outreach that also included meetings with Trump, South Korean President Moon Jae-in and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

While Kim is trying to leverage his nuclear weapons and missiles for economic and security benefits, there are doubts about whether he will ever fully deal away an arsenal he may see as his strongest guarantee for survival.

Kim during his summits with Trump and Moon signed vague statements on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, but the North for decades has pushed a concept of denuclearization that bears no resemblance to the American definition, vowing to pursue nuclear development until the United States removes its troops and the nuclear umbrella defending South Korea and Japan.

Some experts say Kim's moves to make sure China is a major player in the process have been seen as a sign that the North's traditional stance essentially remains. During previous periods of tension, Beijing has called for "dual suspension" of the North's nuclear and missile activities and of the large-scale military exercises between the U.S. and South Korea.

## New England newspaper owner fights to save local journalism

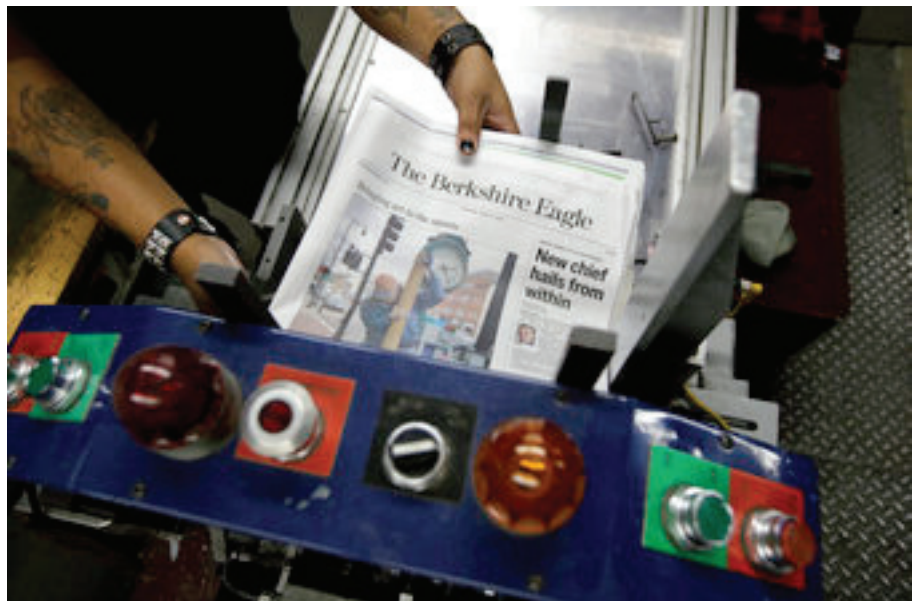
By ALEXANDRA OLSON Associated Press

PITTSFIELD, Mass. (AP) — The Berkshire Eagle has an expanded investigative team. There's a new 12-page lifestyle section for the Eagle's Sunday editions. There's a new monthly magazine focusing on the area's culinary and natural charms. There is an advisory board that includes cellist Yo-Yo Ma and Pulitzer-winning writer Elizabeth Kolbert.

The newspaper is wider, its paper thicker. There's even a second daily crossword puzzle.

A hiring flurry, driven by new owners, has brought more than 50 new jobs to the western Massachusetts daily and its three sister papers in Vermont. The idea: Investing in the newsroom will translate into more paying readers.

It's a leap of faith at a time of relentlessly bad news for the local news industry: Newsroom employment down by nearly half over the past 15 years. Waves of layoffs continuing to hit both traditional newspaper chains and digital news startups. Some cities and towns so denuded of coverage



**In this Thursday, April 11, 2019 photo, copies of The Berkshire Eagle newspaper are placed in a machine before being bundled for distribution, in Pittsfield, Mass. The paper now features a new 12-page lifestyle section for Sunday editions, a reconstituted editorial board, a new monthly magazine, and the newspaper print edition is wider. That level of expansion is stunning in an era where U.S. newspaper newsroom employment has shrunk by nearly half over the past 15 years.** (AP Photo/Steven Senne)

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that they're described as "news deserts."

Three years ago, Fredric Rutberg, a retired local district judge, pulled together a group of local investors who bought the small newspaper company from a hedge fund-backed media chain with a reputation for cost-cutting and layoffs.

So far, readers have trickled, not flocked, back to the flagship Berkshire Eagle, the only daily newspaper in the hilly westernmost region of Massachusetts, where 130,000 people are scattered across 30-plus towns and villages.

"Our business plan was simply to increase the quality of the content and attract new readers," Rutberg said. "We've made more than a bona fide effort at the first part. We are in the second right now, and the jury's out."

Rutberg, 73, is relishing the challenge.

He hosts gatherings around town called "Coffee with the President," promoting the Eagle's award-winning stories while mollifying readers who grumble if the newspaper is delivered late. He regularly visits the Vermont newspapers and pursues strategies for revenue diversification, including a planned in-house ad-agency.

For executive editor Kevin Moran, this level of involvement is a thrilling contrast to the Eagle's former corporate owners. During a rare visit from them in 2015, the agenda was mostly budget cuts.

Shortly afterward, Moran said, he oversaw the layoffs of 19 people at the four newspapers, one of his lowest moments in a two-decade career spent rising through the ranks of the Eagle and its affiliated newspapers. The year before, 18 positions had already been cut.

Rutberg and his three partners seized a short window of opportunity when Alden Global Capital was putting several of its newspapers up for sale following failed negotiations to sell off the company's media properties, known as Digital First Media, to a private equity firm.

Through a spokeswoman, Molly Curry, Digital First declined to comment for this story. In the past, Digital First has countered criticism of its tactics, saying it runs "newspapers profitably and sustainably so that they can continue to serve their local communities."

Advertising and circulation declines have ravaged the newspaper industry generally for more than a decade. It remains to be seen how sustainable the expanded Eagle will be under its new owners.

But if they fail, it won't be for lack of effort.

They swiftly set out to transform the paper, down to replacing thin newsprint that curled in humid weather. They wanted a "world-class" arts and culture section, worthy of a region that boasts the Boston Symphony Orchestra's summer home and a theater scene that lures Hollywood stars.

Popular with New York tourists and second-home owners, the Berkshire region has struggled with an exodus of its working-age population, particularly since top employer General Electric packed up and left in the 1980s and 90s.

The Eagle's reporters delve into the troubles of communities overshadowed by New York City to the south and Boston to the east. They have won awards for investigations into the decaying state of bridges and the struggle to bring broadband internet to rural areas.

The hard part is persuading the people of the Berkshires to pay for such coverage.

The Eagle's overall paid circulation fell more than 20 percent during the first year under new ownership. Rutberg counts it as an achievement that circulation remained mostly stable the second year, at more than 15,000 on weekdays and nearly 18,000 on Sundays, still half what it was a decade ago.

On the bright side, digital subscriptions are ticking up.

Like many newspapers, the Eagle increasingly relies on revenue from paid subscriptions, as major advertisers migrate to online giants such as Facebook and Google.

The paper charges \$13 a month for a digital-only subscription, letting people read three articles online before hitting the paywall. Social media drives a third of the newspaper's digital traffic, but many readers bristle at being asked to pay for content they see on Facebook.

"I just don't have time to sit down and read an entire newspaper. I'm on Facebook 10 minutes a day. I'm not going to get \$13 worth of news," said Jenna Lanphear, a 40-year-old Pittsfield beauty salon owner.



A recent Pew Research Center study found this to be typical. Only 14% of American adults said they had paid for local news within the past year, via subscription, donation or membership.

Lanphear did sign up her 13-year-old daughter for a summit of high school journalists organized by the Eagle's education reporter, Jenn Smith. The summit is one of many community events the newspaper has started to host to restore itself as the center of civic life.

In January, Rutberg wrote a column in the Eagle appealing for several hundred new subscribers. "We are going to stick with this," he said. "This is our commitment as long as humanly possible."

Follow Alexandra Olson at <https://twitter.com/Alexolson99>

## Fed could signal a policy shift toward future rate cuts

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve seems poised to pivot from keeping interest rates steady to holding out the option of cutting rates if it were to decide that the economic expansion needs support.

The Fed isn't considered ready to announce that it's reducing rates for the first time in more than a decade. But when it ends its latest policy meeting Wednesday, the central bank is expected to signal an inclination to ease credit sometime within the next several months. What it won't likely do is indicate when that might happen.

"I think the Fed is going to send the markets a clear signal that they are ready to lower rates in the very near future," said Brian Bethune, an economics lecturer at Tufts University.

Bethune said he thinks the first rate cut will occur when the Fed next meets at the end of July and then a second one at its subsequent meeting in mid-September.

"I will be looking for two rate cuts to have an impact," Bethune said.

Other Fed watchers have said they aren't sure rates will be cut anytime soon. Many think the policymakers want at least to see whether a meeting that Presidents Donald Trump and Xi Jinping are to hold at the end of the month produces any breakthrough in the U.S.-China trade war.

The Fed will announce its decisions Wednesday in a policy statement after its meeting, followed by a news conference with Chairman Jerome Powell. The central bank will also update its forecasts for economic growth, employment, inflation and interest rates.

If investors are hoping for clarity about the Fed's policy plans for the coming months, they're likely to be disappointed. Some analysts think Powell will merely echo the theme he struck in a speech earlier this month: That the Fed will act if it thinks the Trump administration's trade conflicts are threatening the economic expansion. That comment signaled a shift from holding rates steady to at least the hint of rate cuts, and it ignited a stock market rally.



**FILE - In this June 4, 2019, file photo Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell speaks at a conference involving its review of its interest-rate policy strategy and communications in Chicago. On Wednesday, June 19, the Federal Reserve releases its latest monetary policy statement and updated economic projections.** (AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato, File)

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Economists say when — or even whether — the Fed eases credit this year will depend on a host of factors that are hard to predict. Will Trump's trade wars be resolved before they inflict real damage on the economy? Will the job market remain resilient even as growth slows? Will inflation finally edge close to the Fed's target level?

Many analysts think the Fed will wait until September at the earliest to announce its first drop in its benchmark short-term rate since 2008 and might not cut again in 2019. A few Fed watchers foresee no rate cut at all this year, especially if the United States and China reach some tentative resolution to the trade war.

Complicating the timing of possible rate cuts is an escalation of public attacks on the Fed by Trump as he gears up for his 2020 re-election campaign. Trump's public criticism, a highly unusual action for a president, has raised concern that he is undermining the Fed's independence as a central bank. The president has asserted that under Powell's leadership, the Fed hurt the economy by tightening credit too much last year and by failing to lower rates since then.

On Tuesday, Trump was asked about a news report that the White House in February had explored whether the president had the authority to demote Powell as chairman while leaving him on the Fed's board.

"Let's see what he does," Trump said Tuesday of Powell. "They're going to be making an announcement very soon. So we'll see what happens."

The president has previously explored firing Powell. But under the law, a Fed board member, like Powell, can be fired only for cause.

The Fed is meeting at a time when the U.S.-China trade war, with its escalating tariffs and counter-tariffs on each other's products, has magnified concern and uncertainty for businesses and investors about whether and how much the economy will suffer. The U.S. manufacturing sector is already showing signs of weakness.

In some encouraging news, Trump tweeted Tuesday that he had spoken by phone with Xi and that the two leaders plan "an extended meeting" at a Group of 20 nations summit in Japan late next week. Trump also said that before his meeting with Xi, negotiators for the two sides will resume talks.

Also Tuesday, Mario Draghi, head of the European Central Bank, said the ECB was ready to provide further stimulus if the eurozone economy doesn't strengthen soon.

"Further cuts in policy rates," Draghi said, "remain part of our tools."

Draghi's comments sent the value of the euro tumbling against the dollar, prompting an angry tweet from Trump accusing the ECB leader of acting to weaken the euro to gain a competitive trade advantage against the United States.

Some Fed watchers think that in its policy statement Wednesday, the central bank will replace a reference to being "patient" about rate changes to some new phrasing that would hint at a forthcoming rate cut should it decide the economy needs it. When the Fed adjusts its key short-term rate, it influences rates on everything from mortgages to credit cards to home equity lines of credit and can help stimulate the economy.

## As Hong Kong protests quiet down, what's next?

By ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — All but a handful of protesters in Hong Kong have gone home, but the crisis that brought hundreds of thousands into the streets to oppose an extradition bill is far from over.

The way forward for both Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam and her opponents is uncertain because of the limits built into the city's "one country, two systems" arrangement with Beijing after Britain ceded control of the former colony in 1997.

The public is wary of seeing Communist Party-ruled Beijing wield still greater influence that would imperil civil liberties such as independent courts and the freedom to speak out against the local government, privileges not enjoyed in the mainland. Officials in Beijing back the unpopular extradition legislation. Lam is stuck in the middle.

A look at some possibilities for the key players in this drama.

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**THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE:** Many analysts expect Lam will eventually step down to take responsibility for the mess resulting from her effort to fast-track the extradition bill, which would allow some suspects in Hong Kong to be tried in mainland Chinese courts. On Tuesday, she apologized and said she needed to do better, but also insisted she wants to finish her 5-year term. Too abrupt a departure by the Beijing-appointed career bureaucrat would be a loss of face for China's leadership. If her opponents keep up the pressure and she does leave, she might opt to spend more time with her husband and children, who are British citizens and live elsewhere.



**In this Monday, June 17, 2019, photo, a protester holds a placard baring an image of Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam as they gather near the Legislative Council to continue protest against the unpopular extradition bill in Hong Kong. The various pro-democracy groups that helped drive and organize the protests are pushing for Lam's resignation and the permanent scrapping of what they call the "evil" extradition bill.** (AP Photo/Kin Cheung)

**THE PROTESTERS:** The various pro-democracy groups that helped drive and organize the protests are pushing for Lam's resignation and the permanent scrapping of what they call the "evil" extradition bill. Differences over strategy have emerged, but the groups dismissed Lam's latest apology, saying she failed to respond to their demands. Some vowed to stage acts of resistance, perhaps using measures such as delaying subway trains, if their demands are not met by Thursday evening. But the protests have dwindled from the masses that turned out on Sunday to a handful of die-hard demonstrators. They could resume, especially on the July 1 anniversary of Hong Kong's handover to China.

**THE POLICE:** At a late-night news conference on Monday, Hong Kong Police Commissioner Stephen Lo Wai-chung sought to soothe anger over the use of forceful measures during clashes with protesters on June 12. He said only five of 32 people arrested in or around the protests were accused of rioting, a serious charge that can result in a prison term of up to 10 years. Local lawmakers were due to question the city's secretary for security on Wednesday, and some are calling for an independent inquiry into complaints that police tactics were too aggressive.

**THE EXTRADITION BILL:** The proposed changes to Hong Kong law would expand the scope of transfers of criminal suspects to include mainland China, Taiwan and Macau. Lam said the legislation is needed to prevent Hong Kong from becoming a haven for fugitives and improve the ability to fight crimes including money laundering. China has been excluded from Hong Kong's extradition agreements because of concerns over the independence of its courts and its human rights record. Since Lam has bowed to public pressure in shelving the bill indefinitely, it's unlikely to become law anytime soon.

**THE LEADERS IN BEIJING:** China promised when it took control of Hong Kong from Britain to allow it to keep its civil liberties and independent legal system for 50 years. That special status has been compromised in a number of cases. Prosecutions of activists, detentions without trial of five Hong Kong book

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publishers and the illegal seizure in Hong Kong by mainland agents of at least one mainland businessman are among moves in recent years that have unnerved many in the city of 7 million. Beijing backed the extradition bill and said it fully supported Lam. It appears to have now bowed to public pressure. But analysts say both Lam and China are playing a game of "attrition," betting that protesters will eventually grow weary of their struggle for greater democracy in a former colony that has never fully determined its own future.

Shanahan drops bid to lead Pentagon, citing 'painful' past

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan stepped down Tuesday before his formal nomination ever went to the Senate, citing a "painful" family situation that would hurt his children and reopen "wounds we have worked years to heal."

President Donald Trump announced Shanahan's departure in a tweet, and said Army Secretary Mark Esper would be the new acting Pentagon chief.

"I believe my continuing in the confirmation process would force my three children to relive a traumatic chapter in our family's life and reopen wounds we have worked years to heal," Shanahan said in a statement. "Ultimately, their safety and well-being is my highest priority."

His withdrawal from one of the most critical positions in the government comes at a time of escalating tensions in the Middle East, a day after the U.S. authorized sending additional troops to the region, and after months of unexplained delays in the confirmation process.

The acting defense secretary did not provide specifics, but court records show a volatile family history around the time of his 2011 divorce. The couple had been married since 1986.

His ex-wife, Kimberley, was arrested several times on charges that included burglary, property damage and assault. The assault charge was a misdemeanor for domestic violence in August 2010 when, according to police records, she hit Shanahan a number of times, giving him a bloody nose and black eye. The police report said she was not injured, and he was not charged.

There was also a separate November 2011 incident in which the couple's son, who was 17 at the time, struck his mother with a baseball bat in the home where he lived with her in Sarasota, Florida, according to court records. He pleaded guilty to battery and was sentenced to four years of probation.

In an interview with The Washington Post shortly before Trump announced that Shanahan was withdrawing his nomination, Shanahan spoke about the circumstances surrounding his 2011 divorce and said he didn't want to drag his children through the experience again.

"Bad things can happen to good families ... and this is a tragedy, really," Shanahan told the Post.

In his statement, Shanahan said he asked to be withdrawn from the nomination process and would work on an "appropriate transition."

The Pentagon, in a statement, said Esper will take over the job at midnight Sunday. Esper and Shanahan



**FILE - In this Feb. 14, 2019 file photo, acting Secretary of Defense Patrick Shanahan speaks about the situation in the Persian Gulf region during a meeting with Portuguese Minister of National Defense Joao Cravinho, at the Pentagon. President Donald Trump announced on June 18 that Shanahan will not move forward with the confirmation process to be Defense Secretary.** (AP Photo/Manuel Balce Ceneta, File)

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met at length Tuesday to begin transition planning.

In his tweet, Trump simply said Shanahan had done "a wonderful job" but would step aside to "devote more time to his family." Later, Trump told reporters at the White House that he heard about the problems for the first time Monday.

"I didn't ask him to withdraw, but he walked in this morning," said Trump. "He said it's going to be a rough time for him because of obviously what happened."

In noting Esper's move, Trump added, "I know Mark, and have no doubt he will do a fantastic job!" He said it's "most likely" he will nominate Esper for the job "pretty soon."

The post atop the Pentagon has not been filled permanently since retired Gen. James Mattis abruptly stepped down in December after delivering a blunt letter to Trump outlining a list of foreign policy differences and a warning that the administration should not allow relations with allies to fray.

Shanahan was put in place as acting secretary, but it wasn't until May that Trump announced he would nominate Shanahan. That formal nomination has never come, inexplicably delaying the Senate process.

On Capitol Hill, the Shanahan news was met with mixed reactions.

Top Democrats said his sudden withdrawal underscores the shortcomings of White House vetting for key Trump administration jobs.

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer said Tuesday that "this Shanahan fiasco" shows that the administration's national security policy is "a shambles."

Senators said they were largely unaware of allegations involving Shanahan's family situation when he was confirmed as deputy defense secretary in 2017.

Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal raised the possibility that Shanahan deliberately concealed the domestic problems, and he called for an investigation by the Defense Department's inspector general. Shanahan, he said, "had an obligation to reveal it himself. This is potentially a violation of law."

Trump defended the vetting process, calling it "great," and said the Shanahan issues were "very unfortunate," and they "came up a little bit over the last short period of time."

Sen. James Inhofe, the Oklahoma Republican who is chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said Trump called him about Shanahan on Tuesday. The president didn't offer any specifics, Inhofe said, but mentioned "allegations that would be very uncomfortable and really not worth making sacrifices for."

Shanahan, a former Boeing executive, has been leading the Pentagon as acting secretary since Jan. 1, a highly unusual arrangement for arguably the most sensitive Cabinet position.

His prospects for confirmation have been spotty due in large part to questions about his lengthy work as former Boeing executive and persistent questions about possible conflicts of interest.

The Defense Department's Inspector General cleared Shanahan of any wrongdoing in connection with accusations he had shown favoritism toward Boeing during his time as deputy defense secretary, while disparaging Boeing competitors.

In Shanahan's tenure at the department he's had to deal with a wide array of international hotspots, ranging from missile launches by North Korea to the sudden shift of military ships and aircraft to the Middle East to deal with potential threats from Iran.

Shanahan, 56, had extensive of experience in the defense industry but little in government. In more than six months as the acting secretary, he emphasized a shift from the resources and tactics required to fight small wars against extremist groups to what Shanahan called "great power" competition with China and Russia.

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Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro and Matthew Daly in Washington; Gene Johnson in Seattle; and Curt Anderson in Miami contributed to this report.

## Asian shares up on trade optimism as Trump hints of Xi talks

By YURI KAGEYAMA  
AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mostly higher Wednesday on optimism about trade after President Donald Trump said he will talk with the Chinese leader later this month in Japan.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 added 1.7% to 21,321.17 in early trading. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 rose 1.0% to 6,637.70. South Korea's Kospi was also up 1.0% at 2,119.80. Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 2.4% to 28,158.85, while the Shanghai Composite added 1.2% to 2,925.68.

Markets also got a boost after the head of the European Central Bank said it was ready to cut interest rates and provide additional economic stimulus if necessary.

The remarks put the spotlight on the U.S. Federal Reserve, which has its own decision on interest rates scheduled later in the day. Many think the U.S. central bank may be headed for its first interest rate cut in over a decade sometime later this year.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 index climbed 28.08 points, or 1% to 2,917.75. The Dow gained 353.01 points, or 1.4%, to 26,465.54. The Nasdaq jumped 108.86 points, or 1.4%, to 7,953.88.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller companies added 17.48 points, or 1.1%, to 1,550.23.

It was the second straight gain for the market, extending a strong rebound for stocks in June after a steep sell-off last month.

The benchmark S&P 500 is now less than 1% below its all-time high set on April 30. The Dow is 1.4% below its record high set October 3. The Nasdaq is about 2.5% below its record close set on May 3.

Trump stirred fresh optimism among investors when he said he will hold talks with Chinese President Xi Jinping at an international summit in Japan. U.S. businesses have implored Trump to stop escalating the trade war and refrain from expanding his tariffs to \$300 billion on goods from China.

Analysts acknowledged an immediate resolution to the trade conflict isn't expected, but the confirmation that Trump and Xi plan to talk at the G-20 in Osaka was cause for some optimism while warning that risks remain.

"While this certainly is a near-term boost for markets, the question as to what can be resolved by the two leader's meeting that had not been done so despite months of discussions keeps this as a risk factor," said Jingyi Pan, market strategist at IG in Singapore.

Two weeks ago, Fed Chair Jerome Powell set off a rally on Wall Street after he signaled that the central bank is willing to cut interest rates to help stabilize the economy if the trade war between Washington and Beijing starts to crimp growth. Any continued escalations could put the brakes on what is poised to be the longest economic expansion in U.S. history.

Investors collectively envision a Fed rate cut by July and possibly further cuts after that. Some even



**Trader Neil Catania works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange, Tuesday, June 18, 2019. Stocks are opening higher on Wall Street following big gains in Europe after the head of the European Central Bank said it was ready to cut interest rates and provide more economic stimulus if necessary.** (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

expect a rate cut this week. Many economists, though, think the Fed will wait until September at the earliest to announce its first drop in its benchmark short-term interest rate since 2008 and might not cut again in 2019. A few Fed watchers foresee no rate cut at all this year.

#### ENERGY:

Benchmark crude oil rose 6 cents to \$53.96 a barrel. It rose 3.8% to \$53.90 a barrel Tuesday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, fell 4 cents to \$62.10 a barrel.

#### CURRENCIES:

The dollar rose to 108.48 yen from 108.27 yen on Tuesday. The euro weakened to \$1.1193 from \$1.1191.

AP Business Writers Damian J. Troise and Alex Veiga contributed to this report.

## PG&E to pay \$1 billion to governments for wildfire damage

By ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A California utility agreed Tuesday to pay \$1 billion to 14 local governments to cover damages from a series of deadly wildfires caused by its downed power lines.

The settlement is a sliver of the more than \$30 billion in potential damages Pacific Gas & Electric is facing in lawsuits filed by local governments, insurance companies and private property owners.

More than half of the \$1 billion in the agreement would go to four governments impacted by a 2018 fire that killed 85 people and destroyed nearly 14,000 homes in Northern California.

A total of \$270 million would go to Paradise, which was mostly destroyed in the blaze. The town had 26,000 residents before the fire and now has less than 3,000 people. It has lost more than 90% of its tax revenue.

"There is some relief and hope in knowing that we will have some financial stability," Paradise Town Manager Lauren Gill said. "We can't do disaster recovery and rebuild the town if we don't have people to do it."

The settlement also covers a 2015 fire in Calaveras County and a series of 2017 fires in wine country.

PG&E filed for bankruptcy in January. The agreement would resolve claims from some local governments, but it still must be approved by a bankruptcy court. That likely won't happen until lawsuits by insurance companies and private property owners are resolved.

"The bankruptcy court approval is not trivial," said Mike Danko, part of a group of attorneys who represent about 2,800 wildfire victims in a lawsuit against PG&E. Danko said they are "definitely not" close to resolving the lawsuit.

PG&E spokesman Paul Doherty called the settlement "an important first step toward an orderly, fair and



**FILE - In this Sept. 12, 2015 file photo, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation inmates stand guard as flames from the Butte Fire approach a containment line near San Andreas, Calif. Attorneys representing 14 local governments said Tuesday, June 18, 2019 that they had reached a \$1 billion settlement with California utility Pacific Gas & Electric for a series of fires dating to 2015.**

(AP Photo/Rich Pedroncelli, File)

expeditious resolution of wildfire claims.”

“We remain focused on supporting our customers and communities impacted by wildfires and helping them recover and rebuild,” he said.

High winds knocking down power lines during hot, dry weather have been blamed for starting several of the state’s most destructive wildfires.

Last month, regulators agreed to let utilities temporarily cut off electricity to possibly hundreds of thousands of customers during peak fire conditions to avoid starting more wildfires.

The outages could mean multiday blackouts for cities as large as San Francisco and San Jose, Northern California’s major power provider warned in a recent filing with the utilities commission.

“Nobody who lives in the wildfire zone should consider themselves to have reliable electricity. They should prepare accordingly,” Mike Picker, president of the California Public Utilities Commission, told the Sacramento Press Club on Tuesday.

California’s other two investor-owned utilities have also warned that wildfire liabilities could force rate increases later this year.

State lawmakers are considering legislation that would set up a fund to help utility companies pay damages related to wildfires caused by their equipment.

California state Sen. Bill Dodd, a Democrat from Napa, said the fund could total anywhere between \$24 billion and \$50 billion, mostly paid for by utilities and their shareholders.

“It’s important that we put together a program that ratepayers aren’t the victims once again,” he said.

## **San Francisco moves closer to nation’s 1st e-cigarette ban**

**By SAMANTHA MALDONADO Associated Press**

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — San Francisco supervisors moved a step closer Tuesday to becoming the first city in the U.S. to ban all sales of electronic cigarettes to crack down on youth vaping.

Supervisors unanimously approved a ban on the sale and distribution of e-cigarettes. They also endorsed a ban on manufacturing of e-cigarettes on city property. The measures will require a subsequent vote before becoming law.

“We spent the ‘90s battling big tobacco, and now we see its new form in e-cigarettes,” Supervisor Shammann Walton said.

The supervisors acknowledged that the legislation would not entirely prevent youth vaping, but they hoped it would be a start.

“This is about thinking about the next generation of users and thinking about protecting the overall health and sending a message to the rest of the state and the country: Follow our lead,” Supervisor Ahsha Safai said.

City Attorney Dennis Herrera said young people “have almost indiscriminate access to a product that shouldn’t even be on the market.” Because the Food and Drug Administration has not yet completed a study to assess the public health consequences of e-cigarettes and approved or rejected them, he said, “it’s unfortunately falling to states and localities to step into the breach.”

Most experts agree that e-cigarettes are less harmful than the paper-and-tobacco variety because they do not produce all the cancer-causing byproducts found in cigarette smoke. But researchers say they are only beginning to understand the risks of e-cigarettes, which they think may damage the lungs and blood vessels.

Since 2014, e-cigarettes have been the most commonly used tobacco product among young people in the country. Last year, 1 in 5 U.S. high school students reported vaping in the previous month, according to a government survey .

FDA spokesman Michael Felberbaum said in a statement that the agency will continue to fight e-cigarette use, including preventing youth access to the products, acting against manufacturers and retailers who illegally market or sell the products to minors and educating young people about health risks.

Leading San Francisco-based e-cigarette company Juul frames vaping as a healthier alternative to smok-



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ing tobacco. Juul has said it has taken steps to deter children from using its products. The company said in a statement that it has made its online age-verification process more robust and shut down its Instagram and Facebook accounts to try to discourage vaping by those under 21.

"But the prohibition of vapor products for all adults in San Francisco will not effectively address underage use and will leave cigarettes on shelves as the only choice for adult smokers, even though they kill 40,000 Californians every year," Juul spokesman Ted Kwong said.

Tuesday's vote also sets the stage for a November ballot fight over e-cigarettes. Juul has already contributed \$500,000 to the Coalition for Reasonable Vaping Regulation, which is set to gather signatures to put an initiative on the issue before voters.

The American Vaping Association opposed San Francisco's proposal as well, saying adult smokers deserve access to less hazardous alternatives.

"Going after youth is a step that you can take before taking these out of the hands of adults," said the association's president, Gregory Conley.

Groups representing small businesses also opposed the measures, which they said could force stores to close.

"We need to enforce the rules that we have in place already," said Carlos Solórzano, CEO of the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of San Francisco.

Walton said he would establish a working group to support small businesses and address their concerns.

Although San Francisco's ban is unlike any other in the country, the Public Health Law Center at Mitchell Hamline School of Law reports that all but two states have at least one law restricting youth access to e-cigarettes. City voters last year approved a ban on sales of candy and fruit-flavored tobacco products.

Stanton Glantz, a professor of medicine at the University of California San Francisco Center for Tobacco Control and Research and a supporter of the measures, said e-cigarettes are associated with heart attacks, strokes and lung disease.

The presence of e-cigarettes, he said, has "completely reversed the progress we've made in youth smoking in the last few years."



**In this Monday, June 17, 2019, photo, Joshua Ni, 24, and Fritz Ramirez, 23, vape from electronic cigarettes in San Francisco. San Francisco supervisors are considering whether to move the city toward becoming the first in the United States to ban all sales of electronic cigarettes in an effort to crack down on youth vaping. The plan would ban the sale and distribution of e-cigarettes, as well as prohibit e-cigarette manufacturing on city property. (AP**

Photo/Samantha Maldonado)

## Facebook's currency Libra faces financial, privacy pushback

By RACHEL LERMAN AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Facebook is getting a taste of the regulatory pushback it will face as it creates a new digital currency with corporate partners.

Just hours after the social media giant unveiled early plans for the Libra cryptocurrency, French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire insisted that only governments can issue sovereign currencies. He said Facebook

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must ensure that Libra won't hurt consumers or be used for illegal activities.

"We will demand guarantees that such transactions cannot be diverted, for example for financing terrorism," he said on Europe-1 radio.

Facebook unveiled its much-rumored currency Tuesday and said it will launch publicly early next year with such partners as Uber, Visa, Mastercard and PayPal.

Libra could open online purchasing to millions of people who do not have access to bank accounts and could reduce the cost of sending money across borders. It's easy to see how attractive an alternative like Libra could be to people in countries beset with hyperinflation such as Venezuela.

But Facebook already faces scrutiny over its poor record on privacy and its dominance in social media, messaging and related businesses.

Libra poses new questions for the social network: Given that cryptocurrency is lightly regulated now, if at all, how will financial regulators oversee Facebook's plan? And just how much more personal data will this give the social media giant, anyway?



**FILE - In this April 4, 2013, file photo, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg walks at the company's headquarters in Menlo Park, Calif. Facebook's plan to create a digital currency used across the world is already raising concern with financial regulators and privacy experts.** (AP Photo/Marcio

Jose Sanchez, File)

## A 'RUDE AWAKENING' OVER REGULATION?

The financial industry is more heavily regulated than internet companies — especially in the U.S., where tech companies have often been given free rein.

Companies creating Libra are in for a "rude awakening" if they expect the same model of light regulation, said Karen Shaw Petrou, managing partner of Federal Financial Analytics in Washington.

She expects Libra will fall under U.S. regulations adopted in the wake of the 2008 financial crisis. Which agency will oversee the venture will depend on what the currency system does, she said.

France's Le Maire said he asked central bank chiefs from the G-7 countries to produce a report by mid-July laying out "guarantees that we must set ... to assure us that there are no risks of illicit financing or for the consumer."

In the U.S., the head of the House Financial Services Committee wants Facebook to suspend plans for a new currency until Congress and regulators are able to study it more closely.

In asking Facebook to put the Libra currency plans on hold, Rep. Maxine Waters, a California Democrat, said Facebook "is continuing its unchecked expansion and extending its reach into the lives of its users."

The senior Democrat on the Senate Banking Committee said Facebook's new digital currency will give the tech giant unfair competitive advantages in collecting data on financial transactions as well as control over fees.

"Facebook is already too big and too powerful," said Sen. Sherrod Brown of Ohio.

Brown and Waters both called on financial regulators to examine the new currency project closely.

In a statement, Facebook said, "We look forward to responding to lawmakers' questions as this process moves forward."

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One hurdle Facebook and its partners will face is the potential for criminals to use it for money laundering and fraud, given the pseudo-anonymous nature of Libra and other digital currencies.

Facebook said it will comply with all existing financial regulations, though it has not offered many details. The company said its wallet app for using Libra will walk people through a verification process to ensure they are who they say they are.

Still, Facebook is sure to face an onslaught of liability concerns when it comes to anti-money laundering and identity verification, said Nicholas Weaver, a senior researcher at the International Computer Science Institute at the University of California, Berkeley.

"I am shocked they have decided to go ahead," he said.

## PRIVACY PUSHBACK?

Facebook has been dogged with questions about users' personal data, especially since the Cambridge Analytica scandal hit last year.

That appears to be part of the reason Facebook created a nonprofit oversight association to govern Libra. It also created a subsidiary, Calibra, to work on the technology, separately from its main social media business.

"We've heard loud and clear that you don't want social and financial data commingled," Calibra head David Marcus wrote on Twitter, addressing Facebook users. "We understand we will have to earn your trust."

In some ways, privacy is the enemy in the battle against money laundering and other crimes, Weaver said. You want to know who is making transactions to keep them secure and legal, he said.

Facebook is "going to get access to a lot of financial data," Forrester analyst Aurelie L'Hostis said. "What are they going to do with that information and what are they going to put in place to safeguard that information?"

Cryptocurrencies such as Libra store all transactions on a widely distributed, encrypted ledger known as the blockchain. Libra is designed so transaction amounts are visible, but transaction participants can be anonymous — at least until they move money into real-world accounts.

Facebook said people can keep their individual transactions from appearing on the blockchain by using Calibra's wallet app, though in that case, Calibra itself would have people's data.

Calibra said it won't use financial data to target ads on Facebook. It also said it won't share financial data with Facebook, though there are exceptions that haven't been fully spelled out, including situations where data sharing would "keep people safe."

## ANTITRUST RED FLAGS?

Congress has launched an inquiry into whether Big Tech giants such as Facebook and Google have gotten too big. Regulatory bodies including the Federal Trade Commission and Justice Department are said to be considering investigations.

Adding another major business will make Facebook bigger — if Libra takes off as intended — but it may not raise major antitrust red flags, said New York University law professor Eleanor Fox.

"It is a grass-roots entry into a new field and can actually reflect an increase in innovation," she said.

Still, she said, people could be alarmed because of Facebook's use of data in the past. And Justice Department officials have hinted they may take a broader view of harm to competition to go well beyond whether a company's dominance leads to higher prices.

Sarah Miller, deputy director of Open Markets Institute, which advocates against monopolies, said it was "insanity" to trust Facebook to launch a global cryptocurrency when it is already facing regulatory scrutiny around the world over data privacy.

"The FTC needs to rein in Facebook before the corporation puts our financial information and currency systems at risk, too," she said.

Associated Press writers Mae Anderson in New York, Frank Bajak in Boston, Marcy Gordon in Washington

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D.C. and Angela Charlton in Paris contributed to this report.

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, June 19, the 170th day of 2019. There are 195 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 19, 1865, Union troops arrived in Galveston, Texas, with news that the Civil War was over, and that all remaining slaves in Texas were free — an event celebrated to this day as "Juneteenth."

On this date:

In 1775, George Washington was commissioned by the Continental Congress as commander in chief of the Continental Army.

In 1868, "Tales from the Vienna Woods," a waltz by Johann Strauss "the Younger," was first publicly performed by Strauss' orchestra.

In 1917, during World War I, King George V ordered the British royal family to dispense with German titles and surnames; the family took the name "Windsor."

In 1934, the Federal Communications Commission was created; it replaced the Federal Radio Commission.

In 1938, four dozen people were killed when a railroad bridge in Montana collapsed, sending a train known as the Olympian hurtling into Custer Creek.

In 1944, during World War II, the two-day Battle of the Philippine Sea began, resulting in a decisive victory for the Americans over the Japanese.

In 1952, the U.S. Army Special Forces, the elite unit of fighters known as the Green Berets, was established at Fort Bragg, North Carolina. The celebrity-panel game show "I've Got A Secret" debuted on CBS-TV.

In 1953, Julius Rosenberg, 35, and his wife, Ethel, 37, convicted of conspiring to pass U.S. atomic secrets to the Soviet Union, were executed at Sing Sing Prison in Ossining, New York.

In 1964, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was approved by the U.S. Senate, 73-27, after surviving a lengthy filibuster.

In 1987, the U.S. Supreme Court struck down a Louisiana law requiring any public school teaching the theory of evolution to teach creation science as well.

In 2006, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice warned North Korea it would face consequences if it test-fired a missile thought to be powerful enough to reach the West Coast of the United States.

In 2017, Otto Warmbier a 22-year-old American college student died in a Cincinnati hospital following his release by North Korea in a coma after more than a year in captivity.

Ten years ago: New York Times reporter David S. Rohde and Afghan reporter Tahir Ludin escaped from militant captors after more than seven months in captivity in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Texas billionaire R. Allen Stanford was indicted and jailed on charges his international banking empire was really just a Ponzi scheme built on lies, bluster and bribery. (Stanford was sentenced to 110 years in prison after being convicted of bilking investors in a \$7.2 billion scheme that involved the sale of fraudulent certificates of deposits.)

Five years ago: President Barack Obama announced he was dispatching 300 U.S. military advisers to Iraq to help quell a rising insurgency. Rep. Kevin McCarthy of California won election as House majority leader as Republicans shuffled their leadership in the wake of Rep. Eric Cantor's primary defeat in Virginia. Gerry Goffin, 75, a prolific and multi-dimensional lyricist who with his then-wife and songwriter partner Carole King wrote such hits as "Will You Love Me Tomorrow," "(You Make Me Feel Like) a Natural Woman," "Up On The Roof," and "The Loco-Motion," died in Los Angeles.

One year ago: The United States said it was pulling out of the United Nations' Human Rights Council, a day after the U.N. human rights chief denounced the Trump administration for separating migrant children from their parents; U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley cited longstanding U.S. complaints that the council was biased against Israel. Koko, a western lowland gorilla who was taught sign language at an early age as

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a scientific test subject and eventually learned more than 1,000 words, died at the Gorilla Foundation's preserve in California's Santa Cruz mountains at the age of 46. New York mayor Bill de Blasio said as of Sept. 1, police would start issuing summonses to people caught smoking marijuana in public rather than arresting them.

Today's Birthdays: Pop singer Tommy DeVito (The Four Seasons) is 91. Actress Gena Rowlands is 89. Hall of Fame race car driver Shirley Muldowney is 79. Singer Elaine "Spanky" McFarlane (Spanky and Our Gang) is 77. Nobel peace laureate Aung San Suu Kyi is 74. Author Sir Salman Rushdie is 72. Actress Phylicia Rashad is 71. Rock singer Ann Wilson (Heart) is 69. Musician Larry Dunn is 66. Actress Kathleen Turner is 65. Country singer Doug Stone is 63. Singer Mark DeBarge is 60. Singer-dancer-choreographer Paula Abdul is 57. Actor Andy Lauer is 56. Rock singer-musician Brian Vander Ark (Verve Pipe) is 55. Actor Samuel West is 53. Actress Mia Sara is 52. TV personality Lara Spencer is 50. Rock musician Brian "Head" Welch is 49. Actor Jean Dujardin is 47. Actress Robin Tunney is 47. Actor Bumper Robinson is 45. Actress Poppy Montgomery is 44. Alt-country singer-musician Scott Avett (The Avett Brothers) is 43. Actor Ryan Hurst is 43. Actress Zoe Saldana is 41. Former NBA star Dirk Nowitzki is 41. Actor Neil Brown Jr. is 39. Actress Lauren Lee Smith is 39. Rapper Macklemore (Macklemore and Ryan Lewis) is 37. Actor Paul Dano is 35. New York Mets pitcher Jacob DeGrom is 31. Actor Giacomo Gianniotti is 30. Actor Chuku Modu (TV: "The Good Doctor") is 29. Actor Atticus Shaffer is 21.

Thought for Today: "Exuberance is better than taste." — Gustave Flaubert, French author (1821-1880).