

Groton Daily Independent

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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

Tomorrow's Edition

I am not sure if I will be able to publish a paper on Saturday. Julianna and I are both going on the World Classroom Trip to Washington, D.C. There are about 50 of us from Groton attending the trip. We will be leaving at 9:45 p.m. today on a charter bus to Minneapolis where we will catch a flight to Washington, D.C.



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.

Saturday, June 22

Junior Legion Round Robin in Groton

2:00 p.m.: Groton vs. Wessington Springs

4:00 p.m.: Faulkton vs. Wessington Springs

6:00 p.m.: Faulkton vs. Lennox

8:00 p.m.: Groton vs. Lennox

Junior Teeners at Milbank Tournament

11:00 a.m.: Lake Norden vs. Groton

3:00 p.m.: Groton vs. Sisseton

Allison Weber named to spring Deans' List/honor roll at Nebraska

Allison Weber of Groton has been named to the Deans' List/Explore Center List of Distinguished Students at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln for the spring semester of the 2018-19 academic year.

Weber, a senior management and marketing major, was named to the Dean's List for the College of Business.

More than 5,100 students at Nebraska have been named to the Deans' List for the spring semester.

Qualifications for the Deans' List varies among the eight undergraduate colleges. Listed below are the minimum requirements for each entity and the name of its respective dean or director. All qualifying grade-point averages are based on a four-point scale and a minimum of 12 graded semester hours. Students can be on the Deans' List for more than one college.

College of Agricultural Sciences and Natural Resources, 3.75; Dean Tiffany Heng-Moss.

College of Architecture, top 10 percent of the students in the college; Dean Katherine S. Ankerson.

College of Arts and Sciences, 3.7; Interim Dean Elizabeth Theiss-Morse.

College of Business, 3.6; Dean Kathy Farrell.

College of Education and Human Sciences, 3.75; Interim Dean Beth Doll.

College of Engineering, 3.5; Dean Lance C. Perez.

College of Journalism and Mass Communications, 3.7; Interim Dean Amy Struthers.

Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, 3.7; Dean Charles O'Connor.

Explore Center for undeclared, pre-engineering, pre-health and pre-law students, 3.6; Senior Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Undergraduate Education Amy Goodburn.



Bohnenkamp Wins AZ Nurse of the Year

Susie Bohnenkamp (MS, RN, ACNS-BC, CCM) of Tucson, AZ, was named Arizona's Distinguished Nurse of the Year by the March of Dimes at their annual Gala held at Chateau Luxe in Phoenix on June 14th. This is the highest honor presented at their Annual Nurse of the Year banquet. She was selected among top finalists in all categories.

Susie is a 1982 graduate of Groton High School and a 1986 graduate of SDSU. She is the daughter of Les & Carol Dohman of Groton and daughter in law of the late John & Willa Bohnenkamp of Gettysburg.



CONGRESSMAN
DUSTY JOHNSON
Representing **SOUTH DAKOTA** at large



The Minnesota Millionaire

Our national debt is higher than ever at \$22 trillion. I am a conservative for a few reasons, which include keeping the government small and taxes low. If those reasons are to ring true, then we must limit our spending and ensure our tax dollars are being spent wisely. Neglecting our values gave us the deficit we have today.

This week, I got a clear picture of how government waste contributes to our debt during an Agriculture subcommittee hearing on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility. I met with Rob Undersander, a millionaire from Minnesota, who successfully applied for and received SNAP benefits from his state. Mr. Undersander is retired, so technically he has no monthly stream of wages. However, he has millions in assets and because of a flaw in our system, he was able to qualify for food stamps.

Mr. Undersander didn't lie on his forms, and in fact, he donated the funds he received from food stamps to charity. He wasn't trying to scam the system – he was exposing a flaw in a well-intentioned system. It is not his fault the SNAP eligibility system failed to flag his application. Even though Mr. Undersander's intentions were good, there are undoubtedly many who abuse the system for their own benefit. Congress has some work to do.

Provisions intended to streamline delivery of the welfare program have opened a loophole abused by too many states. In states like Vermont, you can be eligible for SNAP benefits by simply receiving a pamphlet for a different welfare program in the mail. This isn't responsible and it's not good government.

I'm not heartless and it's no secret that while growing up, my family relied on food assistance at times. I want a safety net that truly helps people, and it's not burdensome for someone to fill out a form and provide legitimate information to receive SNAP funds. Receiving a check shouldn't be easier than applying for a job.

Closing this loophole could reduce administrative costs by \$660 million per year. Some might say \$660 million is a drop in the bucket, but we must start somewhere – and starting with waste, fraud and abuse seems like a pretty good first step.

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Junior Teeners

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	R	H	E
GRTN	3	0	1	0	0	3	3	10	8	2
14HM	0	0	0	3	0	2	4	9	11	2

Hits

3

C. Sauder, 14HM

D. Arbach, 14HM 3

C. Larson, GRTN 2

Walks

4

X. Sheehan, 14HM

L. Tietz, GRTN 2

G. Clubb, 14HM 2

RBI's

4

D. Arbach, 14HM

C. Larson, GRTN 2

C. Sauder, 14HM 2

QAB's

4

X. Sheehan, 14HM

A. Marzahn, GRTN 3

J. Nebel, 14HM 3

PITCHING HIGHLIGHTS

[Away Pitching Stats](#) | [Home Pitching Stats](#) | [Season Pitching Stats](#)

Innings

5.0

T. Opdahl, 14HM

C. Dunker, GRTN 3.0

K. Kutil, 14HM 2.0

First Pitch Strikes

13

T. Opdahl, 14HM

C. Dunker, GRTN 12

K. Kutil, 14HM 7

Strikeouts

5

C. Dunker, GRTN

K. Kutil, 14HM 3

T. Opdahl, 14HM 3

WHIP

1.00

A. Marzahn, GRTN

T. Opdahl, 14HM 1.60

C. Dunker, GRTN 2.00

Opening Statement: Ranking Member Dusty Johnson

Subcommittee on Nutrition, Oversight, and Department Operations Public Hearing: "The Potential Implications of Eliminating Broad-Based Categorical Eligibility for SNAP Households"

Thank you, Madam Chair.

I appreciate you convening this hearing to discuss one of the most egregious and unnecessary loopholes in current food stamp policy.

Broad-based categorical eligibility is a sham. We will hear comments and questions that refer to administrative efficiencies. We will hear hyperbolic examples of how any changes to this policy decimate school lunch programs. Scare tactics and false advocacy do not mitigate what the true issue is—expanded eligibility for a program that should always be preserved for our most needy friends and neighbors. We need this program, and we need it to be effective.

By law, states must convey SNAP benefits to those enrolled in other federal aid programs. That makes sense. But through bloated regulatory language, states are permitted additional administrative flexibilities, which some states have abused. Take Vermont, where simply receiving a bookmark can convey SNAP eligibility.

Eligibility can be granted via a line on an application, a pamphlet with information not relevant to the household applying, even a brochure about services they may not even qualify for. Pieces of paper funded by a broad-purpose block grant that in and of itself has problems. But that's a conversation for another day.

I am looking at Rob Undersander, the "Minnesota Millionaire"—Mr. Undersander, welcome—a man with assets in the millions who was able to receive more than a nominal SNAP benefit month after month because of Minnesota's abuses of their "administrative flexibility." Mr. Undersander is not alone

A report prepared for the USDA found that most income-eligible households with financial resources that exceed the federal resource limit have more than \$20,000 in countable assets. One in five had more than \$100,000 in assets, including tens of thousands of households with more than \$1 million in assets.

Mr. Undersander didn't lie on his forms, he exposed the flaws of a failed system. It's not his fault that our nation's checks and balances don't work. Receiving a welfare check shouldn't be easier than applying for a job. If millionaires are receiving these benefits, this committee has work to do.

Defenders of this outlandish regulatory flexibility claim it reduces administrative costs, and that doing anything—anything—to change it would increase costs to both the federal government and states. There is no evidence that leaving this policy in place saves money. In fact, most state administrative costs are because of program enrollment. So, the more enrolled, the higher the cost. As a matter of fact, closing this loophole could reduce administrative costs by up to \$660 million per year. And I like to look at it through a different lens—\$660 million to reinvest in other SNAP-related services and supports.

I sit on the Education and Labor Committee where just a few weeks ago, a (fake) nexus was discussed as it relates to this policy and school lunch. What we never heard is that even if the proposal were to alter regulatory language related to categorical eligibility, over 99.9 percent of children receiving free or reduced lunch would remain eligible. I think we forget that the National School Lunch Program is not based on SNAP eligibility. It has its own eligibility requirements.

Lastly, proponents talk about administrative burden to the recipient. I would like to ask—on the record—for my colleagues to host a hearing on technology. There are a variety of innovations—used today across other programs—that significantly ease the application process and that do not involve statutory manipulation.

Let's have that conversation.

So, I welcome our witnesses and look forward to their testimony. With that I yield, Madam Chair.

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2019 Brown County 4-H Horse Show

Exhibitor First Name	Exhibitor Last Name	4-H Age	Class	Class Ribbon	Class Awards
Riley	Zoellner	10	1000: Beginner Western Showmanship	Blue	GRAND CHAMPION
Walker	Zoellner	10	1000: Beginner Western Showmanship	Blue	RESERVE CHAMPION
Lydia	Blachford	10	1000: Beginner Western Showmanship	Blue	
Rayven	Dutenhoffer	10	1000: Beginner Western Showmanship	Blue	
Hailey	Pauli	9	1000: Beginner Western Showmanship	Red	
Lydia	Blachford	10	1001: Beginner Pony/Miniature Horse Western Showmanship	Blue	
Emily	Malsam	11	1002: Junior Western Showmanship	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Kylie	Johannsen	11	1002: Junior Western Showmanship	Blue	RESERVE CHAMPION
Blake	Pauli	11	1002: Junior Western Showmanship	Blue	
Blake	Pauli	11	1003: Junior Pony/Miniature Horse Western Showmanship	Blue	GRAND CHAMPION
Jazmine	Hart-Crissman	14	1004: Senior Western Showmanship	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Colin	Sprinkel	16	1004: Senior Western Showmanship	Purple	RESERVE CHAMPION
Dylan	Krueger	16	1004: Senior Western Showmanship	Blue	
Grace	Malsam	16	1004: Senior Western Showmanship	Blue	
Gabriella	Siefkes	16	1004: Senior Western Showmanship	Blue	
Morgan	Browning	15	1004: Senior Western Showmanship	Red	
Jordan	Zoellner	14	1004: Senior Western Showmanship	White	
Kylie	Johannsen	11	1006: Junior English Showmanship	Blue	GRAND CHAMPION
Emily	Malsam	11	1006: Junior English Showmanship	Blue	RESERVE CHAMPION
Colin	Sprinkel	16	1007: Senior English Showmanship	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Gabriella	Siefkes	16	1007: Senior English Showmanship	Blue	RESERVE CHAMPION
Walker	Zoellner	10	2000: Beginner Stock Seat Equitation	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Rayven	Dutenhoffer	10	2000: Beginner Stock Seat Equitation	Blue	RESERVE CHAMPION
Lydia	Blachford		2000: Beginner Stock Seat Equitation	Blue	
Hailey	Pauli	9	2000: Beginner Stock Seat Equitation	Blue	
Riley	Zoellner	10	2000: Beginner Stock Seat Equitation	Red	
Emily	Malsam	11	2001: Junior Stock Seat Equitation	Blue	
Blake	Pauli	11	2001: Junior Stock Seat Equitation	Red	
Kylie	Johannsen	11	2001: Junior Stock Seat Equitation	White	
Colin	Sprinkel	16	2002: Senior Stock Seat Equitation	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Dylan	Krueger	16	2002: Senior Stock Seat Equitation	Blue	RESERVE CHAMPION
Jazmine	Hart-Crissman	14	2002: Senior Stock Seat Equitation	Blue	
Jordan	Zoellner	14	2002: Senior Stock Seat Equitation	Blue	
Grace	Malsam	16	2002: Senior Stock Seat Equitation	Red	
Gabriella	Siefkes	16	2002: Senior Stock Seat Equitation	White	
Emily	Malsam	11	2004: Junior Hunt Seat Equitation	Blue	
Kylie	Johannsen	11	2004: Junior Hunt Seat Equitation	Red	
Gabriella	Siefkes	16	2005: Senior Hunt Seat Equitation	Blue	
Walker	Zoellner	10	3000: Junior Reining	Red	
Riley	Zoellner	10	3000: Junior Reining	White	
Dylan	Krueger	16	3001: Senior Reining	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Morgan	Browning	15	3001: Senior Reining	Blue	RESERVE CHAMPION
Colin	Sprinkel	16	3001: Senior Reining	Blue	
Jordan	Zoellner	14	3001: Senior Reining	Blue	

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Rayven	Dutenhoffer	10	3002: Junior Ranch Riding	Blue	
Emily	Malsam	11	3002: Junior Ranch Riding	Blue	
Blake	Pauli	11	3002: Junior Ranch Riding	Blue	
Riley	Zoellner	10	3002: Junior Ranch Riding	Blue	
Walker	Zoellner	10	3002: Junior Ranch Riding	Blue	
Grace	Malsam	16	3003: Senior Ranch Riding	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Colin	Sprinkel	16	3003: Senior Ranch Riding	Purple	RESERVE CHAMPION
Jordan	Zoellner	14	3003: Senior Ranch Riding	Blue	
Dylan	Krueger	16	3003: Senior Ranch Riding	Purple	
Morgan	Browning	15	3003: Senior Ranch Riding	Red	
Kylie	Johannsen	11	3004: Junior Trail	Blue	
Blake	Pauli	11	3004: Junior Trail	Blue	
Emily	Malsam	11	3004: Junior Trail	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Morgan	Browning	15	3005: Senior Trail	Blue	
Jazmine	Hart-Crissman	14	3005: Senior Trail	Blue	
Grace	Malsam	16	3005: Senior Trail	Blue	
Jordan	Zoellner	14	3005: Senior Trail	Blue	
Colin	Sprinkel	16	3005: Senior Trail	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Gabriella	Siefkes	16	3005: Senior Trail	Red	
Lydia	Blachford		3006: Junior Pleasure Single-Horse Driving	Blue	
Walker	Zoellner	10	3010: Beginner Trail	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Lydia	Blachford		3010: Beginner Trail	Blue	
Rayven	Dutenhoffer	10	3010: Beginner Trail	Blue	
Riley	Zoellner	10	3010: Beginner Trail	Blue	
Hailey	Pauli	9	3010: Beginner Trail	White	
Blake	Pauli	11	4000: Junior Barrel Racing	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Rayven	Dutenhoffer	10	4000: Junior Barrel Racing	Purple	RESERVE CHAMPION
Emily	Malsam	11	4000: Junior Barrel Racing	Blue	
Hailey	Pauli	9	4000: Junior Barrel Racing	Blue	
Riley	Zoellner	10	4000: Junior Barrel Racing	Blue	
Kylie	Johannsen	11	4000: Junior Barrel Racing	Red	
Walker	Zoellner	10	4001: Junior Pony Barrel Racing	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Lydia	Blachford		4001: Junior Pony Barrel Racing	Blue	
Grace	Malsam	16	4002: Senior Barrel Racing	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Jordan	Zoellner	14	4002: Senior Barrel Racing	Blue	
Jazmine	Hart-Crissman	14	4002: Senior Barrel Racing	Red	
Colin	Sprinkel	16	4002: Senior Barrel Racing	Red	
Rayven	Dutenhoffer	10	4003: Junior Pole Bending	Blue	
Emily	Malsam	11	4003: Junior Pole Bending	Blue	
Blake	Pauli	11	4003: Junior Pole Bending	Blue	
Hailey	Pauli	9	4003: Junior Pole Bending	Red	
Riley	Zoellner	10	4003: Junior Pole Bending	Red	
Kylie	Johannsen	11	4003: Junior Pole Bending	White	
Walker	Zoellner	10	4004: Junior Pony Pole Bending	Blue	
Lydia	Blachford		4004: Junior Pony Pole Bending	White	
Grace	Malsam	16	4005: Senior Pole Bending	Blue	
Jordan	Zoellner	14	4005: Senior Pole Bending	Blue	
Colin	Sprinkel	16	4005: Senior Pole Bending	Red	
Riley	Zoellner	10	4006: Beginner Flag Racing	Purple	GRAND CHAMPION
Rayven	Dutenhoffer	10	4006: Beginner Flag Racing	Purple	RESERVE CHAMPION
Lydia	Blachford		4006: Beginner Flag Racing	Blue	
Walker	Zoellner	10	4006: Beginner Flag Racing	Blue	
Hailey	Pauli	9	4006: Beginner Flag Racing	White	

Judicial Watch Statement on Supreme Court Ruling; World War I Veterans Memorial Cross Will Remain Standing

(Washington, DC) – Judicial Watch President Tom Fitton made the following statement in response to the Supreme Court of the United States ruling allowing the Bladensburg, MD, Peace Cross to stand:

We applaud the Supreme Court's ruling. The cross has been used throughout American history to honor our nation's war dead. The Bladensburg Peace Cross has become synonymous with veteran sacrifice. It was dedicated to the memory of local heroes.

Military sacrifice made possible the guarantee of our constitutional rights. It is the duty of the courts to honor the Constitution as written by the Framers. Today's decision not only honors those who made the ultimate sacrifice, it is a victory for religious freedom.

Today's Supreme Court decision is in keeping with a December 2018 Judicial Watch amicus curiae brief that asked court to reverse a decision by the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fourth Circuit. Today's ruling recognizes that the World War I memorial cross is not in violation of the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the Constitution.



FILE - In this Feb. 13, 2019 file photo, visitors walk around the 40-foot Maryland Peace Cross dedicated to World War I soldiers in Bladensburg, Md. The Supreme Court says the World War I memorial in the shape of a 40-foot-tall cross can continue to stand on public land in Maryland. The high court on Thursday rejected a challenge to the nearly 100-year-old memorial. The justices ruled that its presence on public land doesn't violate the First Amendment's establishment clause. That clause prohibits the government from favoring one religion over others.(AP Photo/Kevin Wolf)

NJHFR to be held at the SD State Fairgrounds June 23-29

HURON, S.D. - The 15th National Junior High Finals Rodeo (NJHFR) is returning to Huron, South Dakota on the South Dakota State Fairgrounds this year from June 23-29. The NJHFR is the pinnacle event for National High School Rodeo Association (NHSRA) Junior High Division members. They spend all rodeo season competing and qualifying for this championship rodeo. 1,150 contestants from Australia, Canada, Mexico and the United States will be on the fairgrounds as they compete for 14 world champion titles.

New this year is the \$50,000 added optional jackpot available for NJHFR competitors in their qualifying event. This optional jackpot with pre-entries has already reached an estimated \$150,000 to be broken down over the week.

Over the course of the seven days, each contestant will compete twice in two go-rounds and a short-go for a total of 13 rodeo performances. The 2019 NJHFR will conclude with the Top 20 in each event competing in the final round on June 29. Performances start at 7:00 pm Sunday, June 23rd and will continue daily at 9:00 am and 7:00 pm throughout the week. Tickets are available for purchase on the grounds and ahead of time online at sdstatefair.com.

Ridepass.com will be streaming each and every performance to the public with a \$19.99 subscription fee. That will also get you access to the National High School Finals Rodeo in Rock Springs, Wyoming, July 14-20, 2019.

The short-round go will also be televised on RFD-TV from June to December as the Cinch High School Rodeo Tour.

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**GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6
School Board Meeting
June 24, 2019 – 7:00 PM – GHS Conference Room**

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed or amended.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of year ending District bills.

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Request from Mr. Lowell Harms to consider policy amendment allowing homeschool participation in school activities.
3. School Board Committee Reports:
 - a. **Building, Grounds, & Transportation:** Clint Fjelstad, Merle Harder
 - b. **Personnel, Policy, & Curriculum:** Deb Gengerke, Kara Pharis
 - c. **Negotiations:** Grant Rix, Steve Smith, Marty Weismantel
4. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

NEW BUSINESS:

1. Authorize Business Manager to make necessary Contingency Fund transfers to cover year-ending deficit accounts in General Fund.
2. Approve Supplemental Budget to Capital Outlay and Special Education in accordance with SDCL13-11-3.2.
3. Open and approve fuel oil, diesel/gas quotes.
4. Open and approve newspaper quotes and designate official newspaper for FY2020.
5. Approve hiring Linda McInerney as bus route driver for 2019-2020.
6. Approve Administrative Negotiated Agreement for 2019-20 and amend administrative contracts with salaries to be published in July.

ADJOURN

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Today in Weather History

June 21, 1902: Light to heavy frost occurred over most of the state with low temperatures ranging from the mid-20s to the lower 30s. Some record low temperatures include; 27 degrees in Ipswich and Leola, 29 in Kennebec, 30 in Mellette, 31 in Aberdeen, Clark, and Watertown, 32 in Faulkton and Gann Valley, 36 in Sisseton, and 40 degrees in Milbank.

June 21, 1961: One or more tornadoes moved southeast along a distance from east of Aberdeen to the southeastern edge of Sioux Falls. A funnel cloud was first seen between Aberdeen and Groton and later on near Raymond. A tornado hit about 4 pm a few miles southwest of Clark with about 20 farm buildings demolished. One house was destroyed, killing an elderly lady and injuring one person. A boy was reportedly lifted high in the air, and another woman carried 100 yards by winds. Both were injured. Between 4:30 and 5:00 pm, areas northeast of Willow Lake and in northern Kingsbury were hit with a total of 13 farm buildings destroyed or twisted off the foundations. Five buildings on one farm were destroyed, and a house was unroofed near Oldham. The house roof was found several miles away. The tornado was of F3 strength.

June 21, 1983: An F3 tornado touched down in a resort area two miles west of Pollock. Eleven people fled from the southwesternmost cabin and crawled under a nearby cabin. The southwest cabin was destroyed and the cabin the group crawled under was moved five feet from its concrete block foundation. Four people were treated for injuries. A van, boat, and trailer were demolished, and a small car was heavily damaged. The tornado turned east and reformed four miles east of Pollock, where it touched down briefly and dissipated. Another F3 tornado touched down in open prairie three miles northeast of Glad Valley and moved northeast, creating a path of destruction as it progressed. On one farm, nine buildings were wiped out and scattered up to two miles away. Trees and poles were uprooted and scattered a half mile away. This tornado was estimated to be on the ground for six miles with a path width of 300 yards. A third tornado, rated F2, touched down seven miles south of Pollock. This tornado damaged several cabin roofs, a restaurant, and downed several trees. Boats were tossed into a lake, and picnic tables were hurdlers against cars.

June 21, 2013: A long-lived severe thunderstorm developed over the southern Black Hills and moved eastward across the South Dakota plains during the morning hours. The storm produced large hail to softball size from eastern Custer to northern Jackson Counties. The softball size fell 12 miles east-southeast of Fairburn in Custer County, damaging property. This storm intensified along a strong warm front with volatile air and strong, deep layer winds into several supercell thunderstorms and a damaging line of thunderstorms/bow echo across parts of central and northeast South Dakota through the afternoon hours. Damaging winds up to 90 mph uprooted large trees and caused considerable structural and crop damage and loss of power to those along the path. The worst wind damage was located at Lake Poinsett, Watertown, and Milbank. A woman was killed, and her husband had been severely injured on Lake Poinsett when their lake house was destroyed. Numerous trees were downed along with many structures damaged or destroyed. Many trees had fallen onto homes, cabins, and trailers. The bowling alley in Clear Lake lost its roof along with numerous pole barns being destroyed along the path of the storm. Thousands of people were also left without power. Four tornado touchdowns occurred along with hail up to the size of softballs. Isolated flash flooding also occurred. Codington, Hamlin, Grant, and Deuel counties were all declared in a Federal Disaster Declaration. Total damage estimates were around 1,100,000 dollars.

1987: A tornado destroyed 57 mobile homes at the Chateau Estates trailer park northwest of Detroit, Michigan killing one person and injuring six others. Thunderstorms over Lower Michigan also drenched the Saginaw Valley with up to 4.5 inches of rain in less than six hours.

1988: The first full day of summer was a hot one, with afternoon highs of 100 degrees or above reported from the Northern and Central Plains to the Ohio Valley. Sixty-nine cities in the north central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. The high of 110 degrees at Sioux Falls, SD was an all-time record for that location.

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Today	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
70% → 60%	80% → 40%	30%		20%
Showers Likely then Severe Thunderstorms	Severe Thunderstorms then Chance T-storms	Chance T-storms	Mostly Clear	Partly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms
High: 74 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 77 °F	Low: 53 °F	High: 79 °F

Time Day	7AM Fri	8AM Fri	9AM Fri	10AM Fri	11AM Fri	12PM Fri	1PM Fri	2PM Fri	3PM Fri	4PM Fri	5PM Fri	6PM Fri
Temperature (F)	57°	60°	62°	65°	67°	69°	71°	73°	74°	74°	73°	72°
Feels Like	57°	60°	62°	65°	67°	69°	71°	73°	74°	74°	73°	72°
Chance Precip	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	60%	60%	60%
Dew Point	57°	58°	59°	60°	61°	62°	63°	64°	64°	64°	64°	63°
Humidity	100%	93%	90%	84%	81%	79%	76%	74%	71%	71%	73%	73%
Wind Dir	E	E	ESE	ESE	ESE	SE	SE	SE	SSE	SSE	S	SSW
Wind Speed (mph)	7 MPH	9 MPH	10 MPH	11 MPH	11 MPH	13 MPH	13 MPH	14 MPH	15 MPH	16 MPH	16 MPH	15 MPH
Barometer (in.)	29.71	29.74	29.74	29.71	29.71	29.71	29.71	29.71	29.68	29.68	29.68	29.71

Time Day	7PM Fri	8PM Fri	9PM Fri	10PM Fri	11PM Fri	12AM Sat	1AM Sat	2AM Sat	3AM Sat	4AM Sat	5AM Sat	6AM Sat
Temperature (F)	70°	68°	65°	62°	60°	58°	57°	56°	56°	56°	55°	54°
Feels Like	70°	68°	65°	62°	60°	58°	57°	56°	56°	56°	55°	54°
Chance Precip	70%	60%	60%	60%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%	40%
Dew Point	62°	61°	60°	60°	59°	58°	57°	56°	56°	56°	55°	54°
Humidity	76%	79%	84%	94%	97%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	98%
Wind Dir	SW	SSW	SSE	SE	S	WSW	W	WNW	NW	NNW	NNW	NW
Wind Speed (mph)	13 MPH	10 MPH	8 MPH	6 MPH	5 MPH	3 MPH	3 MPH	3 MPH	2 MPH	2 MPH	2 MPH	2 MPH
Barometer (in.)	29.71	29.71	29.74	29.77	29.80	29.83	29.83	29.83	29.83	29.83	29.85	29.88

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 70 °F at 5:40 PM
Low Temp: 56 °F at 10:50 AM
Wind: 22 mph at 7:25 AM
Day Rain: 1.30 in

Record High: 108° in 1988
Record Low: 31° in 1902
Average High: 79°F
Average Low: 55°F
Average Precip in June.: 2.46
Precip to date in June.: 2.18
Average Precip to date: 9.60
Precip Year to Date: 9.96
Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:45 a.m.

SLIGHT RISK of Severe T-Storms

WHAT

Scattered severe thunderstorms possible. The storms could produce **wind gusts up to 60 mph, and large hail up to golf ball size.**

WHERE

Much of northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota, including Britton, Clear Lake, and Tintah.

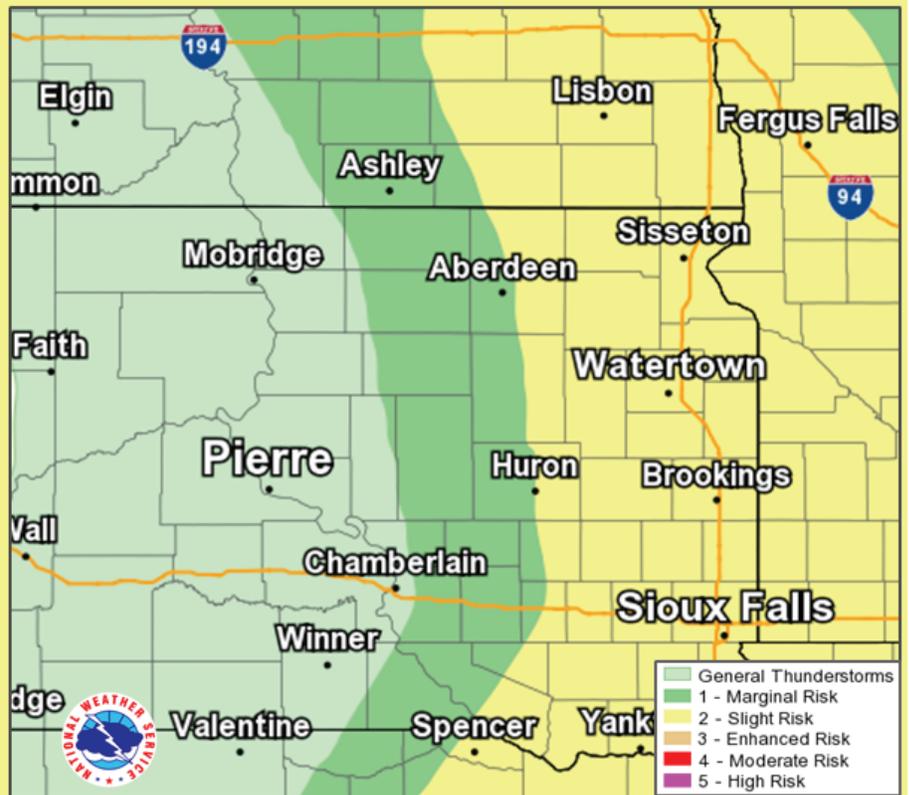
WHEN

Mid to late afternoon into mid evening. **The highest risk period will be from 3 pm – 9 pm.**

ACTION

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

ISSUED: 2:30 AM - Friday, June 21, 2019

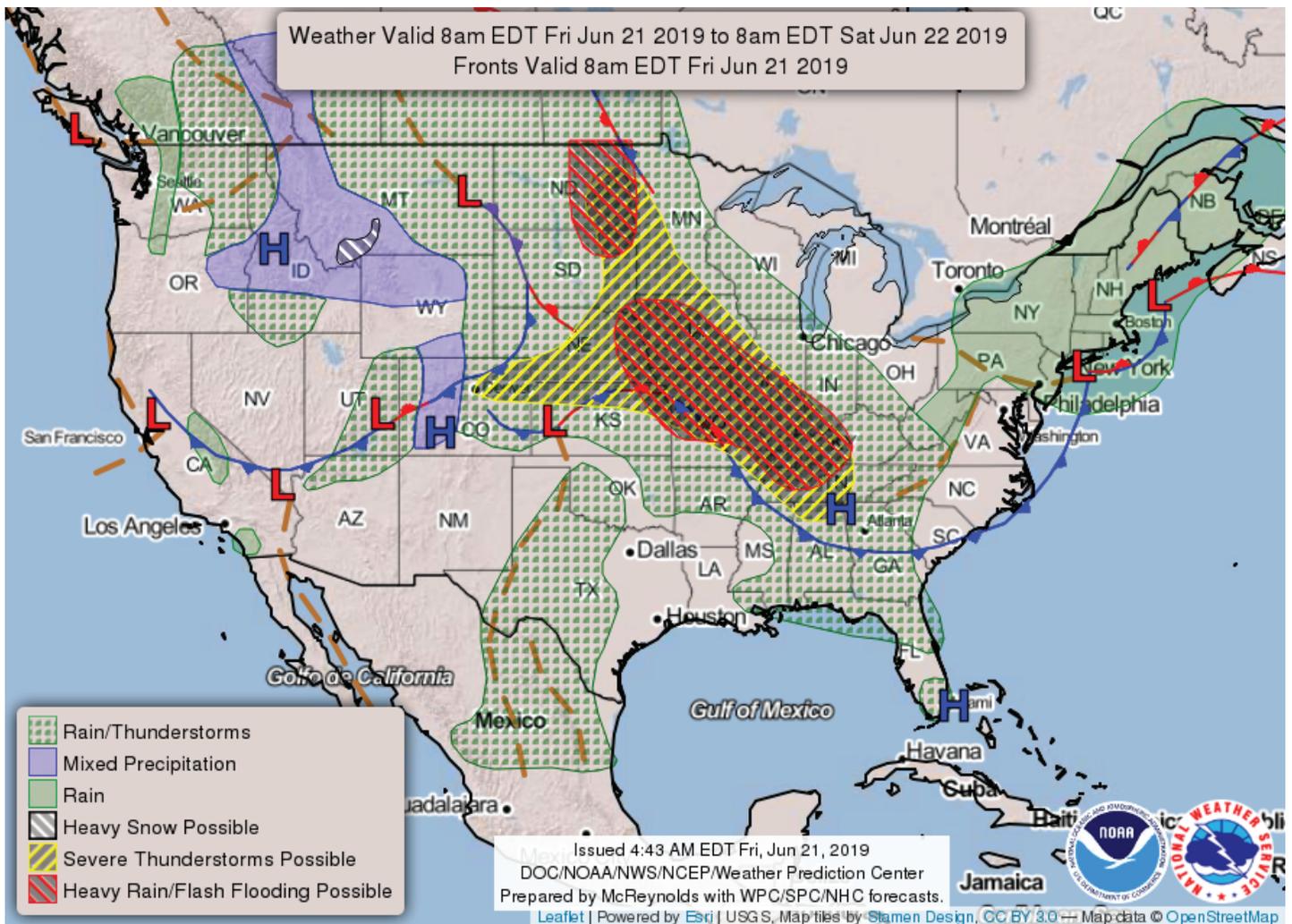


Published on: 06/20/2019 at 10:33PM

A slow moving cold front will edge into the James valley this afternoon. Showers and thunderstorms, some severe, are expected to develop near this front, and then spread slowly east and northeast into Minnesota later in the evening.

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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

Woman rescued from fast-moving Rapid City creek

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Crews rescued a woman who was thrown from her kayak in a fast-moving creek in Rapid City.

Fire officials say the woman was stuck underwater in Rapid Creek for a short time before surfacing on her own Thursday. Firefighters entered the creek and also sent an inflatable raft into the water to bring the woman to safety.

Authorities say the woman was showing signs of mild hypothermia and was fatigued, but otherwise OK.

Officials: Rain, high reservoir releases to mean wet summer

By MARGERY A. BECK Associated Press

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The continued threat of rain and higher-than-normal reservoir releases into the Missouri River will hamper the draining of floodwaters in fields and plans to repair more than 100 levee breaks after devastating spring floods.

Officials with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the National Weather Service said Thursday during a news conference that while water levels on the river have dropped below flood stage in most places, rain over the next week could lead to some parts of the river rising as much as 2 feet (0.61 meters) from Rulo, Nebraska, to where it meets the Mississippi River in St. Louis.

Increased reservoir releases are also keeping swamped land from drying out. The Corps reiterated Thursday that releases from Gavins Point Dam on the Nebraska-South Dakota border will remain at 75,000 cubic feet (2,124 cubic meters) per second until next Thursday, when officials plan to drop that amount to 70,000 cubic feet (1,982 cubic meters) per second. That's still about twice the normal amount for this time of year.

Normal releases from Gavins Dam might not be seen again until November, officials have said.

Officials with the Corps' Omaha and Kansas City, Missouri, divisions acknowledged that the increased reservoir releases were hampering efforts to close scores of levees broken in March during historic flooding in the Missouri River Basin that caused significant damage in Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Kansas.

"It has made things more difficult, yes," said Matthew Krajewski with the Omaha division.

Of the 47 levee breaks seen in Nebraska and Iowa, only seven have been closed, Krajewski said. In Kansas and Missouri, none of the 64 levee breaks have been repaired, Mike Dulin with the Corps' Kansas City division said.

"We have not been able to access those areas yet due to continued high water," Dulin said.

He said it will likely be "well into the summer" before crews can even access breached levees along the river in far northwestern Missouri. Other breaks further downstream in Kansas and Missouri north of Kansas City should be accessible sooner, he said.

"But there's no guarantees on that as long as the water is high," Dulin said.

Dakota Access pipeline operator plans to double capacity

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — The operator of the Dakota Access pipeline is planning to nearly double its capacity.

The Bismarck Tribune reports that Energy Transfer Partners plans to expand the pipeline's capacity from more than 500,000 barrels per day to as much as 1.1 million barrels.

ETP told North Dakota Public Service Commission in a letter Wednesday that the expansion will let the Texas-based company meet growing demand without additional pipelines or rail shipments.

The Dakota Access pipeline carries oil from North Dakota through South Dakota and Iowa to a shipping point in Illinois. The company said last year that it was planning to ship more crude to the Gulf Coast.

The pipeline sparked massive protests near the Standing Rock Indian reservation before it was completed and began moving oil in 2017.

Information from: Bismarck Tribune, <http://www.bismarcktribune.com>

Ravnsborg: Deputy shooting near Sioux Falls jail justified

By AMY FORLITI Associated Press

A sheriff's deputy was justified when he shot and wounded a man who lunged at officers with knives outside of the Sioux Falls jail last month, South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg said Thursday.

George Rinzy, Jr., 44, was shot May 21 after authorities say he caused a disturbance at the jail and failed to cooperate with deputies and corrections officers. He survived the shooting and was treated at a local hospital.

A summary of the investigation released by Ravnsborg's office says Rinzy shattered a glass door at the jail and threw a glass liquor bottle toward Minnehaha County Sheriff's Deputy Craig Olson, who was responding. Rinzy then armed himself with two knives — one in each hand — and began running toward officers.

Officers ordered Rinzy to drop the knives but he refused and charged toward Olson with his arms raised and "the knives in his hands in a fighting manner," the summary states.

Olson fired twice at Rinzy, hitting him once in the abdomen.

"It's an unfortunate situation when anything like that happens, but we stand behind the decision made by the officer," Sheriff Mike Milstead said, noting that there were civilians and unarmed officers at the scene.

"We train our officers. We have high expectations of our officers. This was an extremely stressful and volatile situation and the officer's decisions were found, through the investigation of the attorney general, to be appropriate," he said.

Rinzy faces multiple charges, including aggravated assault. Toxicology reports show he had methamphetamine, amphetamines and alcohol in his system at the time of the shooting, according to the report from Ravnsborg's office.

A message left with Rinzy's attorney was not immediately returned Thursday.

According to the incident summary, cellphone video taken by a witness shows Olson standing in the jail parking lot with his stun gun drawn. In the video, people can be heard yelling, "He's got a knife." As Rinzy walks into view, officers retreat and Rinzy is ordered to drop the knife multiple times. Rinzy can be seen raising his arms above his head and running directly at Olson.

"Based on the totality of the circumstances, a reasonable officer present at the scene utilized deadly force in a situation that was tense, uncertain, and rapidly evolving," the report states. "Rinzy Jr. had the means and opportunity to cause serious bodily injury and was a clear and present danger to Deputy Olson at the time."

The report also adds: "It is the conclusion of this report and the Attorney General that the Minnehaha County Sheriff's Deputy was justified in firing his weapon and using lethal force."

Olson works as a security deputy at the courthouse. Milstead said he returned to duty shortly after the shooting.

Follow Amy Forliti on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/amyforliti>

Sioux Falls park adopts safety measures after child drowned

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Viewing platforms and walkways with railings are being installed at a Sioux Falls park where a 5-year-old Iowa girl drowned last year.

The move follows a consultant's study that recommended improving safety at Falls Park after the death of Maggie Zaiger, who fell into the Big Sioux River and drowned. The city set aside \$300,000 to cover the cost, the Argus Leader reported.

Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken said the new safety measures should allow visitors of all ages and

mobility to enjoy the park.

At least 10 people have drowned in the falls area since 1980, the newspaper reported. Maggie was the third person to drown at the park since 2013.

A review commissioned by the city's insurance company last year found that the river's foam buildup near a pedestrian bridge obscures the edge of rocks and the steep drop into the water. Viewing platforms and safety railings were recommended to allow visitors to experience the rapid water while deterring them from being on the rocks.

When construction began in May, there were concerns about obstruction of the park's natural beauty. But Mark Patten, the city's park development specialist, noted that the design team chose rustic-looking railing that won't conflict with the surroundings.

"We tried to make the improvements as seamless as possible. We didn't want a big bulky structure," Patten said, adding that the platforms will provide optimal views of the river.

He said construction should be complete within the next couple of weeks, weather permitting.

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

Fugitive in Sioux Falls killing is arrested in Minneapolis

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man who was wanted in connection with a shooting in Sioux Falls that left one man dead and two people injured has been arrested by federal marshals in Minneapolis.

Authorities say the man had been on the run since the June 8 shooting that killed 42-year-old Larry Carr Jr. and wounded two others outside a Sioux Falls apartment building.

Two women who were wanted as material witnesses in the case were arrested last week in Idaho. All three are expected to be returned to South Dakota to face charges.

Investigators have said the shooting was the result of social media dispute.

Bankers survey indicates improving farm economy in 10 states

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Bankers surveyed in parts of 10 Plains and Western states are seeing improvement in the region's farm economy.

The Rural Mainstreet survey released Thursday shows the survey's overall index rising from a stunted 48.5 in May to 53.2 this month. Any score above 50 suggests a growing economy, while a score below 50 indicates a shrinking economy.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey, says higher agriculture commodity prices and rebuilding from recent floods boosted June's index. Goss also noted that despite negative consequences from trade tensions and tariffs, nearly 7 of 10 bank CEOs surveyed support either raising or continuing the Trump administration's current tariffs.

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

Human remains discovered in Sioux Falls park

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police are working to identify the remains of a woman found along the Big Sioux River in Sioux Falls.

Lt. Mike Colwill says the remains were likely there for at least three weeks. Two people fishing on the bank of the river found the remains Wednesday night and called officers to an area north of the Farmer's Market in Falls Park.

An autopsy is being done Thursday and police hope DNA will help identify the remains.

US prepped for strikes on Iran before approval was withdrawn

By LOLITA C. BALDOR and DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States abruptly called off preparations for a military strike against Iran over the downing of a U.S. surveillance drone, a U.S. official said, while Iran claimed Friday it had issued several warnings before shooting down the drone over what it said was Iranian territory.

The Trump administration offered no immediate public account of the thinking behind the last-minute halt in U.S. preparations for retaliation, amid sharply escalating tensions between the two countries. A U.S. official, who was not authorized to discuss the operation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said the targets would have included radars and missile batteries.

The swift reversal was a reminder of the serious risk of military conflict between U.S. and Iranian forces as the Trump administration combines a “maximum pressure” campaign of economic sanctions with a buildup of American forces in the region. As tensions mounted in recent weeks, there have been growing fears that either side could make a dire miscalculation that led to war.

On Friday, the head of Iran’s Revolutionary Guard’s aerospace division told Iranian state television that Iran had given repeated warnings before launching a missile at the U.S. military surveillance drone.

Gen. Amir Ali Hajizadeh, standing in front of what Iranian authorities described as pieces of the U.S. Navy RQ-4A Global Hawk drone, told state TV that Iranians gave the warnings over radio frequencies that are routinely monitored by drone pilots and the U.S. military. “Unfortunately, they did not answer,” he said.

He added Iran collected the debris from its territorial waters. The U.S. military says that the drone was in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz when it was shot down.

The New York Times separately reported that President Donald Trump had approved the strikes Thursday night, but then called them off. The newspaper cited anonymous senior administration officials.

According to the official who spoke to The Associated Press, the strikes were recommended by the Pentagon and were among the options presented to senior administration officials.

It was unclear how far the preparations had gone, but no shots were fired or missiles launched, the official said.

The military operation was called off around 7:30 p.m. Washington time, after Trump had spent most of Thursday discussing Iran strategy with top national security advisers and congressional leaders.

Asked earlier in the day about a U.S. response to the attack, Trump said, “You’ll soon find out.”

The downing of the U.S. drone — a huge, unmanned aircraft — over the Strait of Hormuz prompted accusations from the U.S. and Iran about who was the aggressor. Iran insisted the drone violated Iranian airspace; Washington said it had been flying over international waters.

Trump’s initial comments on the attack were succinct. He declared in a tweet that “Iran made a very big mistake!” But he also suggested that shooting down the drone — which has a wingspan wider than a Boeing 737 — was a foolish error rather than an intentional escalation, suggesting he may have been looking for some way to avoid a crisis.

“I find it hard to believe it was intentional, if you want to know the truth,” Trump said at the White House. “I think that it could have been somebody who was loose and stupid that did it.”

Trump, who has said he wants to avoid war and negotiate with Iran over its nuclear ambitions, cast the shootdown as “a new wrinkle ... a new fly in the ointment.” Yet he also said “this country will not stand for it, that I can tell you.”

He said the American drone was unarmed and unmanned and “clearly over international waters.” It would have “made a big, big difference” if someone had been inside, he said.

But fears of open conflict shadowed much of the discourse in Washington. As the day wore on, Trump summoned his top national security advisers and congressional leaders to the White House for an hour-long briefing in the Situation Room. Attendees included Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, national security adviser John Bolton, CIA Director Gina Haspel, Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Joseph Dunford, acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan and Army Secretary Mark Esper, whom Trump has said he’ll nominate as Pentagon chief.

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Pompeo and Bolton have advocated hardline policies against Iran, but Rep. Adam Schiff, the chairman of the House intelligence committee, said "the president certainly was listening" when congressional leaders at the meeting urged him to be cautious and not escalate the already tense situation.

On Capitol Hill, leaders urged caution, and some lawmakers insisted the White House must consult with Congress before taking any actions.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said no specific options for a U.S. response were presented at the meeting. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said, "The administration is engaged in what I would call measured responses." And late Thursday, House Republicans on the Foreign Affairs, intelligence and Armed Services committees issued a statement using the same word, saying, "There must be a measured response to these actions."

The Trump administration has been putting increasing economic pressure on Iran for more than a year. It reinstated punishing sanctions following Trump's decision to pull the U.S. out of an international agreement intended to limit Iran's nuclear program in exchange for relief from earlier sanctions.

Citing Iranian threats, the U.S. recently sent an aircraft carrier to the Persian Gulf region and deployed additional troops alongside the tens of thousands already there. All this has raised fears that a miscalculation or further rise in tensions could push the U.S. and Iran into an open conflict 40 years after Tehran's Islamic Revolution.

The paramilitary Guard, which answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, said it shot down the drone at 4:05 a.m. Thursday when it entered Iranian airspace near the Kouhmobarak district in southern Iran's Hormozgan province. Kouhmobarak is about 1,200 kilometers (750 miles) southeast of Tehran.

Air Force Lt. Gen. Joseph Guastella, commander of U.S. Central Command air forces in the region, disputed that contention, telling reporters that the aircraft was 34 kilometers (21 miles) from the nearest Iranian territory and flying at high altitude when struck by a surface-to-air missile. The U.S. military has not commented on the mission of the remotely piloted aircraft that can fly higher than 10 miles in altitude and stay in the air for over 24 hours at a time.

"This attack is an attempt to disrupt our ability to monitor the area following recent threats to international shipping and free flow of commerce," he said.

Late Thursday, the Federal Aviation Administration barred American-registered aircraft from flying over parts of the Persian Gulf and the Gulf of Oman and several major airlines from around the world on Friday began rerouting their flights to avoid the area, including British Airways, Australia's Qantas, Germany's Lufthansa and the Dutch carrier KLM.

Democratic leaders in particular urged the president to work with U.S. allies and stressed the need for caution to avoid any unintended escalation.

Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York said he told Trump that conflicts have a way of escalating and "we're worried that he and the administration may bumble into a war."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin, Lisa Mascaro and Matthew Lee in Washington, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and AP video producer Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

Global airlines reroute flights after Iran downs US drone

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Major airlines from around the world on Friday began rerouting their flights to avoid areas around the Strait of Hormuz following Iran's shooting down of a U.S. military surveillance drone there, as America warned commercial airliners could be mistakenly attacked.

The Federal Aviation Administration warned of a "potential for miscalculation or misidentification" in the region after an Iranian surface-to-air missile on Thursday brought down a U.S. Navy RQ-4A Global Hawk, an unmanned aircraft with a wingspan larger than a Boeing 737 jetliner and costing over \$100 million. The U.S. said it made plans for limited strikes on Iran in response, but then called them off.

Australia's Qantas, British Airways, Dutch carrier KLM, Emirates, Germany's Lufthansa, Malaysia Airlines

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and Singapore Airlines said soon afterward that they will avoid the region as well.

The FAA previously warned of a risk in the region, but Friday's warning threw into stark relief a danger that both the agency and analysts say is real after the shooting down of a Malaysian Airlines flight over Ukraine in 2014. That could further imperil the bottom lines of Gulf long-haul carriers, which already have faced challenges under the Trump administration.

"The threat of a civil aircraft shutdown in southern Iran is real," warned OPSGROUP, a company that provides guidance to global airlines.

The FAA made a similar warning in May to commercial airliners of the possibility of Iranian anti-aircraft gunners mistaking them for military aircraft, something dismissed by Tehran some 30 years after the U.S. Navy shot down an Iranian passenger jet.

Iran had no immediate reaction to the U.S. announcement.

The FAA said its warning would affect the area of the Tehran Flight Information Region, without elaborating. The FAA's operations center referred questions to its press office, which did not immediately respond to queries from The Associated Press. However, that likely only extends some 12 miles off of the Iranian coast, aviation experts said.

There are "heightened military activities and increased political tensions in the region, which present an inadvertent risk to U.S. civil aviation operations and potential for miscalculation or misidentification," the FAA said. "The risk to U.S. civil aviation is demonstrated by the Iranian surface-to-air missile shoot-down of a U.S. unmanned aircraft system on 19 June 2019 while it was operating in the vicinity of civil air routes above the Gulf of Oman."

Qantas said it would reroute its London flights to avoid the Strait of Hormuz and Gulf of Oman. British Airways, KLM, Malaysia Airlines and Singapore Airlines said their flights would avoid the strait. Lufthansa said it would avoid both the Strait of Hormuz and the Gulf of Oman, as well as nearby land. However, it said it would continue its flights to Tehran.

The Persian Gulf is home to some of the world's top long-haul carriers, who already have been battered by Trump's travel bans targeting a group of predominantly Muslim countries, as well as an earlier ban on laptops in airplane cabins for Mideast carriers. Etihad, the Abu Dhabi-based long-haul carrier, said it had "contingency plans" in place, without elaborating.

"We will decide what further action is required after carefully evaluating the FAA directive to U.S. carriers," the carrier told The Associated Press.

Emirates, the long-haul carrier in Dubai near the Strait of Hormuz, said in a statement to AP that it was "rerouting all flights away from areas of possible conflict." Its sister airline, the low-cost carrier FlyDubai, said it "adjusted some of the existing flight paths in the region as a precautionary measure."

Qatar Airways did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

Iran said the drone "violated" its territorial airspace, while the U.S. called the missile fire "an unprovoked attack" in international airspace over the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf. OPSGROUP said the Iranian weapons system that shot down the drone was comparable to the Russian Buk system used in 2014 Malaysian Airlines shutdown in Ukraine.

"Any error in that system could cause it to find another target nearby - another reason not to be anywhere near this part of the Straits of Hormuz," OPSGROUP said.

President Donald Trump initially tweeted that "Iran made a very big mistake!" He later appeared to play down the incident, telling reporters in the Oval Office that he had a feeling "a general or somebody" being "loose and stupid" made a mistake in shooting down the drone.

A U.S. official said the military made preparations Thursday night for limited strikes on Iran in retaliation for the downing of a U.S. surveillance drone, but approval was abruptly withdrawn before the attacks were launched.

The official, who was not authorized to discuss the operation publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said the targets would have included radars and missile batteries.

The New York Times reported that President Donald Trump had approved the strikes, but then called them off. The newspaper cited anonymous senior administration officials.

The White House on Thursday night declined requests for information about whether Trump changed his mind.

The incident immediately heightened the crisis already gripping the wider region, which is rooted in Trump withdrawing the U.S. a year ago from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal and imposing crippling new sanctions on Tehran. Recently, Iran quadrupled its production of low-enriched uranium to be on pace to break one of the deal's terms by next week while threatening to raise enrichment closer to weapons-grade levels on July 7 if Europe doesn't offer it a new deal.

Citing unspecified Iranian threats, the U.S. has sent an aircraft carrier to the Middle East and deployed additional troops alongside the tens of thousands already there. All this has raised fears that a miscalculation or further rise in tensions could push the U.S. and Iran into an open conflict, 40 years after Tehran's Islamic Revolution.

"We do not have any intention for war with any country, but we are fully ready for war," Revolutionary Guard commander Gen. Hossein Salami said in a televised address Thursday.

Associated Press writers Lolita C. Baldor and Deb Riechmann in Washington, David Rising in Berlin and Mike Corder in The Hague, Netherlands, contributed to this report.

China's Xi pushes economic reform at North Korea summit

By CHRISTOPHER BODEEN Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Chinese President Xi Jinping offered encouragement for North Korea's focus on economic development in a speech in Pyongyang, turning to a topic Beijing has long pressed with its Communist neighbor amid wider concerns over the North's nuclear weapons program.

In an address at a banquet Thursday night, Xi noted that the nation under leader Kim Jong Un had "initiated a new strategic line of economic development and improving people's livelihoods, raising socialist construction in the country to a new high tide," according to China's official Xinhua News Agency.

Xi left North Korea early Friday afternoon, Chinese state media reported. An image posted on the mobile app of state broadcaster CCTV showed people waving at his Air China Boeing 747 on the tarmac at the airport in Pyongyang.

Before leaving, Xi, accompanied by Kim and their wives, laid a wreath at a memorial to Chinese soldiers killed in the 1950-53 Korean War. China's intervention in the conflict prevented a rout of North Korean forces by troops from the U.S. and others under United Nations command.

"We will pass down the China-North Korea friendship from generation to generation, consolidate and develop the two countries' socialist cause, better enrich our citizens and advance regional peace, stability, development and prosperity," Xi was quoted as saying.

The North's long-moribund economy has shown some recent improvements, but it remains heavily dependent on aid — mainly from China — and food security is a constant concern. China has agreed to U.N. economic sanctions over the North's nuclear and missile programs but is wary of any measures that could push its economy toward collapse, potentially unleashing instability and chaos on its border.

Xi's speech also touched on the nuclear issue, saying all sides agreed to "stick to peace talks so as to make even greater contributions to peace, stability and prosperity in the region and the wider world," Xinhua said.

North Korean state media said Friday that Xi and Kim held broad discussions over the political situation surrounding the Korean Peninsula and reached a shared understanding on the issues they discussed. The Korean Central News Agency report did not give any specifics on the stalled nuclear negotiations between Washington and Pyongyang over disagreements in exchanging sanctions relief for disarmament.

"The supreme leaders ... broadly exchanged their opinions on the political situation of the Korean Peninsula and other serious international and regional issues," KCNA said. They assessed that deepening their relationship was in line with the "mutual interest of the two countries in face of serious and complicated changes in the environment and would be favorable for the region's peace, stability and development,"

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it said.

In South Korea, the presidential Blue House welcomed Xi's visit to North Korea, saying it believes his talks with Kim will help promote peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula.

Kim told Xi on Thursday that he has not received a desired response from Washington and that the U.S. should meet North Korea halfway to "explore resolution plans that accommodate each other's reasonable concerns," according to Chinese state media.

Xi said his government is willing to play a constructive role in the denuclearization of the Korean Peninsula. "The international community expects the U.S. and North Korea to continue to talk and achieve results," CCTV quoted him as saying.

His visit to North Korea was the first by a Chinese president in 14 years.

Xi is expected to meet with President Donald Trump next week in Japan and could pass him a message from Kim about the nuclear negotiations.

Following Thursday's banquet, the leaders and their wives attended a mass performance of music, dance and calisthenics at a packed 110,000-seat stadium.

The spectacle featured gymnasts, dancers and flip card-holding spectators performing in precise unison — at one point producing a huge image of a waving Chinese flag in the stands, then flipping their cards to show the North Korean flag.

Xi and Kim waved to cheering crowds during the performance, dubbed "Invincible Socialism," according to KCNA. Performing groups sang Chinese favorites and put on what KCNA termed "the peculiar display of Chinese folk dances." The show ended with red fireworks over the May Day Stadium.

Nuclear talks between the U.S. and North Korea broke down after the failed summit between Kim and Trump in February in Vietnam.

The U.S. is demanding that North Korea abandon its nuclear weapons entirely before international sanctions are lifted. North Korea is seeking a step-by-step approach in which moves toward denuclearization are matched by concessions from the U.S., notably a relaxation of the sanctions.

"Over more than a year, the North Korean side has taken many positive measures to avoid escalation of the situation and manage and control the peninsular situation, but it hasn't received an active response from the relevant party," Kim told Xi on Thursday, according to CCTV.

Xi was expected to endorse North Korea's calls for an incremental disarmament process. China is also pushing for a resumption of six-nation disarmament talks it had hosted but which broke down a decade ago.

Associated Press writers Hyung-jin Kim and Kim Tong-hyung in Seoul, South Korea, and researcher Yu Bing in Beijing contributed to this report.

LGBTQ news coverage still evolving 50 years after Stonewall

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — During the 1969 series of riots that followed a police raid of the Stonewall Inn, the New York Daily News headlined a story that quickly became infamous: "Homo Nest Raided, Queen Bees are Stinging Mad."

Some of the coverage of rioting outside the gay bar — unimaginable today in mainstream publications for its mocking tone — was itself a source of the fury that led Stonewall to become a synonym for the fight for gay rights.

Fifty years later, media treatment of the LGBTQ community has changed and is still changing.

"The progress has been extraordinary, with the caveat that we still have a lot to do," said Cathy Renna, a former executive for the media watchdog GLAAD who runs her own media consulting firm.

Before Stonewall, mainstream media coverage of gays was generally nonexistent or consisted of negative, police blotter items.

When a small group demonstrated against government treatment outside the White House in 1965, a newspaper headline said, "Protesters Call Government Unfair to Deviants," noted Josh Howard, whose

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film "The Lavender Scare," about an Eisenhower-era campaign against gays and lesbians in government, aired on PBS this week.

A 1966 Time magazine article called homosexuality "a pathetic little second-rate substitute for reality, a pitiable flight from life. As such it deserves fairness, compassion, understanding and, when possible, treatment. But it deserves no encouragement, no glamorization, no rationalization, no fake status as minority martyrdom, no sophistry about simple differences in taste and above all, no pretense that it is anything but a pernicious sickness."

This is the sort of thing that Howard, who was 14 at the time of Stonewall, read about people like himself when he was young.

"It's a hard way to grow up," said the longtime CBS News producer. "I sort of realized that it was safe for me to be in the closet."

Stonewall got some straightforward coverage at the time, although stories in The New York Times and the New York Post were buried well inside the newspapers. An Associated Press story from June 30, 1969, said "police cleared the streets in the Sheridan Square area of Greenwich Village early Sunday as crowds of young men complained of police harassment of homosexuals."

New York television stations ignored it, so the visual record amounts to a handful of still pictures.

The Daily News story was filled with slurs, and it began: "She sat there with her legs crossed, the lashes of her mascara-coated eyes beating like the wings of a hummingbird. She was angry. She was so upset she hadn't bothered to shave."

At the time, many demonstrators were more upset with riot coverage by the now-defunct alternative newsweekly The Village Voice, said Edward Alwood, author of "Straight News: Gays, Lesbians and the News Media."

One Voice writer holed up with police inside Stonewall and said he wished he was armed. "The sound filtering in doesn't suggest dancing faggots anymore," Howard Smith wrote. "It sounds like a powerful rage bent on vendetta."

Another Voice writer, Lucian Truscott IV, repeatedly referred to "faggot" and "faggotry" and said of the rioters at one point, "limp wrists were forgotten."

"That event has generally been seen through political lenses," Alwood said. "It was also a wake-up call for the media."

The immediate impact was growth and a heightened profile for news outlets specifically oriented to gays and lesbians, said Eric Marcus, author of the book "Making Gay History" and host of a podcast of the same name.

Marcus wrote in an essay this week about how Time magazine's 1966 story "just about burned the skin off my face as I read it."

Time didn't cover Stonewall, but in October 1969 published a cover story about the emerging civil rights movement. While more straightforward in its reporting than the essay three years earlier, the story "was still dripping with sarcasm and contempt," he said.

Time published Marcus' piece as part of its Stonewall anniversary coverage, although it didn't apologize for its past work.

While outright hate within the mainstream media subsided through the years, discomfort and stereotyping persisted. The go-to gay image for most publications was a silhouette of two men holding hands.

Coverage of gays in the military, for example, focused on "showers and submarines," Renna said, or the unease of straight males in the presence of gays. Lesbians were barely mentioned, a sign of little awareness of diversity.

Through her work at GLAAD, Renna saw how Ellen DeGeneres' revelation that she was a lesbian, both the ABC sitcom character she played at the time and the comedian in real life, was pivotal to promoting understanding.

Renna has urged journalists to pay attention to their language. Being gay is not a lifestyle, she notes; "Having a dog is a lifestyle." She also urges the use of "sexual orientation" as opposed to "sexual prefer-

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ence," a recognition that being gay isn't a choice.

"The vast majority of journalists are not homophobic," she said. "They're homo-ignorant."

Renna, who wears her hair short and favors tailored suits, is used to being mistaken for a man. Until about a decade ago, people she would correct generally shrugged. As a sign of changing attitudes, "now people fall over themselves to apologize once they realize I'm a girl," she said.

A handbook of terminology for news organizations that is put out by LGBTQ journalists has helped increase awareness.

There are still missteps. The AP decreed in 2013 that its journalists would not use the word "husband" or "wife" in reference to a legally married gay or lesbian couple. After a protest, the AP reversed its call a week later.

Two 2017 entries in the AP Stylebook, considered the authoritative reference for journalists on the use of language, illustrate how far things have come since the "queen bees" days 50 years ago. The AP endorses the use of "they, them or theirs" as singular pronouns (replacing he or she) if the story subject requests it, although the AP urges care in writing to avoid confusion.

The stylebook also reminds readers that not all people fit under one of two categories for gender, "so avoid references to both, either or opposite sexes."

Gender identification remains an object of confusion for many journalists. Activists also urge news organizations to be aware of people who are emboldened to lash out at the LGBTQ community by the divided politics of the past few years.

With the Stonewall anniversary, Marcus, of "Making Gay History," has been busy working with news organizations doing stories about the event.

One publication he finds particularly interested and responsible in marking the occasion is the New York Daily News. The News on June 7 wrote an editorial recognizing its unseemly moment in history.

"We here at the Daily News played an unhelpful role in helping create a climate that treated the victims as the punchline of jokes, not as dignified individuals with legitimate complaints about mistreatment," the newspaper wrote. "For that, we apologize."

It was the newspaper's second apology for its 1969 story in four years.

Hong Kong protests flare anew after demands unmet

By RAF WOBER Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Several hundred protesters, mainly students, gathered Friday outside Hong Kong government offices, with some blocking traffic on a major thoroughfare and others occupying the lobby of a government tax office.

The new protest actions came after a deadline passed for the government to meet demands over highly unpopular extradition bills that many see as eroding the territory's judicial independence.

Police called for the demonstrators to disperse but did not immediately take firm action to remove them.

While the protest began peacefully, the presence again of demonstrators on busy Harcourt Road and in the lobby of the Revenue Tower raised the possibility of violent confrontations.

"I now appeal to the members of the public to leave as soon as possible," police spokeswoman Yolanda Yu said at a news conference.

Outside, activist Joshua Wong called on police to answer demands over heavy-handed tactics used during a mass protest on June 12, including the firing of 150 rounds of tear gas, rubber bullets and beanbag rounds, and the beating of unarmed protesters by police with truncheons.

"We ... urge police to apologize to the people" over the use of such tactics and their labeling of the gathering as a riot, Wong said.

Protest leaders have said they are determined to keep up the pressure on Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam, who has shelved but not abandoned the extradition legislation. She has insisted the bills are needed to uphold justice, but critics see them as part of a campaign by Beijing to diminish Hong Kong's democratic institutions.

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"I myself am not the type to get involved in violence," student protester Brian Chow said. "I'll just carry on sitting here, sing some Christian hymns, show our resistance, and keep the government paralyzed until it responds to us."

Another student, who would only give her first name, Yvonne, said she was determined to maintain the movement's momentum.

"I'm going to carry on coming out, and carry on protesting," she said.

Many protesters have been wary of giving their full names and some have obscured their features with facemasks to guard their identities against potential retribution from government or school authorities.

Government offices were ordered closed Friday "due to security considerations," and hearings at the Legislative Council were suspended.

Since the confrontations June 12, police have eased their approach, hoping to avoid a replay of 2014 protests, when officers unleashed 87 rounds of tear gas at protesters in the same location as the current protests. When the smoke from that response cleared, bigger crowds returned, angrier than before, and didn't leave for nearly three months.

The bills would expand the scope of criminal suspect transfers to include mainland China, Taiwan and Macau. Legal and business groups in Hong Kong oppose the legislation, saying critics of China's ruling Communist Party would be at risk of torture and unfair trials on the mainland and that it further chips away at the "one country, two systems" framework under which Hong Kong has been governed since 1997.

That framework guaranteed the territory the right to retain its own legal, economic and political system for 50 years, but the Communist Party under Chinese President Xi Jinping has been pushing ever more aggressively to quiet independent voices in Hong Kong. Beijing has squelched all reporting on the protests in mainland media and accused foreign forces of stirring up disturbances in Hong Kong.

Opposition to the legislation has come from a broad range of civic, human rights, legal profession and commercial organizations.

On Friday, the Hong Kong Bar Association reiterated its criticisms, saying Lam's decision to suspend but not withdraw the bill was "wholly unsatisfactory" because it could still dictate the parameters of future consultation on the issues of surrender of fugitives and cross-border legal assistance.

The association also called for the setting up of an independent commission to investigate the June 12 violence, including whatever guidelines existed on the use of force by police against demonstrators.

Amnesty International went a step further, saying police must "end the unlawful use of force against peaceful protesters," and issuing a report documenting 14 incidents of apparent police violence on June 12.

Officers appeared "out of control, placing peaceful protesters who posed no threat in danger of serious injury," Man-kei Tam, the group's Hong Kong director, said in a statement.

"The Hong Kong authorities should send a clear message that these failures in policing will not be tolerated. A thorough, independent and effective investigation needs to take place and any officers found responsible must face justice, at any level of the chain of command," Tam said.

Biden's South Carolina trip to test whether stumbles matter

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

Joe Biden has sat atop the crowded Democratic presidential field from virtually the moment he joined the race, leading the polls, raking in money and campaigning with the air of an inevitable nominee. But his recent fumbles on abortion and race are a reminder that early front-runners often face the most intense scrutiny.

The former vice president's strengths and weaknesses will be on display this weekend when he joins virtually every other White House hopeful in South Carolina.

Following controversial comments about his past work with segregationists, Biden will make appeals to African Americans, including at a closed-door meeting with black leaders on Friday afternoon. And after sparking a fury this month by saying he didn't back federal funds for abortion — only to quickly reverse his position — he'll appear before abortion rights activists at a Planned Parenthood forum on Saturday.

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His reception in the state that's home to the first Southern primary will set the tone for an even bigger stage next week, when 20 White House hopefuls — including Biden — gather in Miami for the first debate of the primary. The biggest question going into the pivotal stretch ahead is whether voters have already digested Biden's tendency for clumsy comments and are sticking with him in the belief that he's best positioned to beat President Donald Trump. And with many voters only now beginning to pay some attention to the campaign, some Democrats say Biden's rough week won't have a long-term impact.

This is the kickoff of the campaign preseason, and "the regular season starts next week," said South Carolina Democrat Antjuan Seawright, an unaligned party strategist. Even after weeks in the spotlight, "it's still everyone else trying to catch Joe."

Still, Biden's vulnerabilities as a candidate are increasingly clear. His comment at a New York fundraiser this week that the Senate "got things done" with "civility" even when the body included segregationists with whom he disagreed sparked outrage from many Democrats, including two black candidates who are also seeking the party's nomination — Sens. Kamala Harris and Cory Booker .

The Biden campaign has sought to minimize any potential damage, arguing that, taken in full, Biden's remarks on his former Senate colleagues make clear that he fought segregationists on matters of race. Aides insist his overall argument for a more functional government is a winner, even in a primary.

He called Booker on Wednesday night, but that seemed to do little to mitigate the tension. The New Jersey Democrat's campaign released a statement on Thursday calling on Biden to "take responsibility for what he said and apologize to those who were hurt."

The episode suggested Biden was struggling to adjust to the level of attention paid to the words of a front-runner. And like the abortion debate weeks earlier, Biden found himself open to criticism that he's out of touch with a party that is getting younger, less white and more liberal.

"On its face, I don't think Joe Biden said anything intentionally racist," said Quentin James, the founder and executive of Collective PAC, which works to elect people of color. "I just think he's going to have a hard time this election cycle catching up to where our society is politically."

Biden isn't expected to change his tactics. Aides said he will use his trip to South Carolina to reinforce a message of unity and helping the middle class, while implicitly conveying his pitch that he's the ideal nominee to oust Trump. One aide, who like the others spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss strategy, said campaign insiders were not pressuring Biden to alter the way he's been making his case.

Biden's South Carolina supporters put it even more bluntly.

"Look, Joe Biden isn't going to stop being Joe Biden, so why would I tell him to even try?" said state Sen. Dick Harpootlian, a former state party chairman and longtime friend of the Biden family. "People here know Joe Biden," Harpootlian added, "because he's been coming here for years. This doesn't damage him here, with blacks or whites."

Harpootlian, who is white, noted the makeup of South Carolina's Democratic electorate fits Biden. Contrary to more liberal Democratic electorates in other regions, the South Carolina primary trends older, moderate and pragmatic. Black voters make up more than 60% of the electorate and whites account for nearly all the rest.

Indeed, those older voters also are accustomed to watching black and white South Carolina politicians, including former segregationists, work together.

The senior South Carolina Democrat in Congress, House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, made that point in Biden's defense this week. The highest-ranking black member of Congress, Clyburn noted that he spent decades working with Sen. Strom Thurmond, once a full-throated segregationist who left the Democratic Party to become a Republican when national Democrats began supporting civil rights for African Americans after World War II.

Biden eulogized Thurmond when he died in 2003. He did the same earlier this year when another South Carolina politician and onetime segregationist, Democrat Fritz Hollings, died.

Seawright, the black party strategist, said the best avenue for any Biden rival to cut into his South Carolina lead may be through younger black voters who aren't as loyal to Biden. He said Booker, Harris

and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren have been aggressive on that front.

"Biden's relationships are deeper and generational," Seawright said. "So maybe the best way to beat him is to go make your own relationships."

Associated Press writer Brian Slodysko contributed to this report from Washington.

Follow Bill Barrow on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/BillBarrowAP>.

Pentagon is without a chief as US faces many global threats

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It's a difficult time for the Pentagon to be without a permanent U.S. defense secretary.

The Trump administration is grappling with an escalating crisis with Iran, an unusual and controversial deployment of troops to the U.S.-Mexico border, the nearly two-decade-old war in Afghanistan and stalled talks with North Korea over its nuclear weapons program.

Amid all that, and more, acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan stepped down this week and the man tapped to replace him on an interim basis appears to face legal hurdles that could initially prevent him from serving more than about six more weeks. It's an unusual level of uncertainty for one of the most important jobs in the administration.

"This is a very difficult time. With everything going on in Iran and all the provocations and counteractions, and to have no Secretary of Defense at this time is appalling," said Democratic Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York. "It shows the chaos in this administration. They have so many empty positions, revolving doors, in the most sensitive of security positions."

Shanahan and his planned replacement, Army Secretary Mark Esper, have been attending White House and other meetings, including sessions to debate how the military should respond to Iran's shoot-down of an American drone.

Esper is slated to take over as acting defense secretary at midnight on Sunday, and then head out Tuesday to a meeting of NATO defense ministers. There it will be critical for Esper to convince allies that he is now in charge, and that the U.S. national security leadership is stable and able to make decisions when faced with escalating threats from Iran, amid questions from a wary Congress.

Meanwhile, inside the Pentagon, lawyers are debating how to get Esper through what will be a difficult legal and Congressional confirmation process. Defense officials said Thursday that so far they don't yet have a clear way forward.

The key problem is that Trump never formally nominated Shanahan for the defense job. He announced his intention to do so, but as the months went on it never happened, and officials repeatedly said the vetting was dragging on. On Monday, Shanahan stepped down saying he wanted to spare his family as details of domestic problems linked to his messy divorce nearly a decade ago became public.

Trump immediately named Esper as the new acting secretary, but because of limitations laid out in court decisions and legislation governing how top level vacancies are filled, he will only be allowed to serve for about six weeks in that temporary capacity.

Law prohibits Esper from being nominated for the job while also serving as the acting secretary. If he is nominated, he'll have to step down and move to another job until the Senate votes on his confirmation. And anyone chosen to fill in temporarily -- even for a short time while the confirmation process goes on -- will have limited authorities and won't have all of the decision-making power that a defense secretary needs when his nation is at war in several countries and conducting major military operations in dozens of others.

Normally, senior leaders can be "acting" for 210 days, but because Shanahan was never nominated the clock on Esper started ticking on January 1, when previous Defense Secretary Jim Mattis resigned. That would force Esper out of the acting role by July 30.

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Adding to the problem, is that even if Trump wants to nominate Esper, he'll have to come up with someone to fill the job, also in an acting capacity, for an undetermined amount of time. Because Trump never nominated anyone to replace Shanahan as deputy defense secretary, which was his previous job, there is no one to easily step up and fill in as acting secretary during that confirmation process.

While lawmakers have expressed initial support for Esper, who is well known on the Hill and previously served on committees as legislative staff, there is no guarantee he'll get a quick approval.

As a former executive at defense contractor Raytheon, Esper may have to excuse himself from decisions involving the company. And that could include sensitive, top level negotiations with Turkey over its decision to buy a Russian missile defense system, and America's counter offer of the Raytheon-made Patriot surface-to-air weapon.

Lawmakers have also expressed impatience with the large number of acting executives in the Trump administration.

Under Trump at least 22 of the 42 people in top Cabinet jobs have been acting, or just over half.

In contrast, data compiled by incoming Yale political science professor Christina Kinane, suggests that from 1977 through mid-April of this year — the administrations of President Jimmy Carter through the first half of Trump's — 266 individuals held Cabinet posts. Seventy-nine of them held their jobs on an acting basis, or 3 in 10.

Trump has said he likes naming acting officials, telling reporters in January, "It gives me more flexibility."

The practice lets Trump quickly, if temporarily, install allies in important positions while circumventing the Senate confirmation process, which can be risky with Republicans running the chamber by a slim 53-47 margin.

But another explanation is that under Trump, the process of filling jobs has been slow and riddled with missteps.

Trump has withdrawn 63 nominees so far, doubling the 31 Obama retracted at this point in his first term, according to the nonpartisan Partnership for Public Service, which studies ways to improve government effectiveness. He's also decided against nominating some candidates after realizing the GOP-led Senate would reject them, including two would-be picks for the Federal Reserve: businessman Herman Cain and conservative commentator Stephen Moore.

In addition, Trump's 568 nominations during his first year in office were more than 100 fewer than Obama submitted during that period, partnership figures show.

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 PREPPED RETALIATORY STRIKES ON IRAN FOR DRONE ATTACK

A U.S. official tells the AP targets would have included radars and missile batteries and The New York Times reported that Trump had approved the strikes, but then called them off.

2. GLOBAL CARRIERS TO AVOID STRAIT OF HORMUZ

International airlines follow U.S.-registered aircraft which are now barred from operating over parts of the Persian Gulf and Iran amid tensions between Washington and Tehran.

3. DEFENSE CHIEF'S EXIT LEAVES VOID

Patrick Shanahan's departure from the Pentagon comes during an escalating crisis with Iran, a controversial deployment of troops to the U.S.-Mexico border and stalled talks with North Korea.

4. BIDEN'S SOUTH CAROLINA TRIP TESTS WHETHER STUMBLES MATTER

The former vice president's recent fumbles on abortion and race are reminders that early front-runners often face the most intense scrutiny.

5. XI PRAISES KIM JONG UN'S ECONOMIC REFORMS

The Chinese president offers encouragement for North Korea's new focus on economic development in a speech in Pyongyang.

6. WHO WILL CHOOSE NEXT UK LEADER

Only about one in 400 people get to choose Britain's next prime minister — and most of them are well-off older white men. An opposition lawmaker called the process "undemocratic."

7. COMING TO A RESTAURANT NEAR YOU

Salmon produced by Indiana-based AquaBounty are the first genetically modified animals approved for human consumption in the U.S.

8. ROT IN PEACE

So many gray whales are dying off the U.S. West Coast that scientists and volunteers are asking coastal residents to lend them their private beaches.

9. START THEM UP!

The Rolling Stones are back on tour and in Chicago after Mick Jagger's recent heart surgery.

10. IT'S ZION TIME ON BOURBON STREET

The New Orleans Pelicans selected Zion Williamson with the No. 1 pick in the NBA draft, one of the most exciting prospects in years.

Migrant children describe neglect at Texas border facility

By **CEDAR ATTANASIO, GARANCE BURKE AND MARTHA MENDOZA** Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A 2-year-old boy locked in detention wants to be held all the time. A few girls, ages 10 to 15, say they've been doing their best to feed and soothe the clingy toddler who was handed to them by a guard days ago. Lawyers warn that kids are taking care of kids, and there's inadequate food, water and sanitation for the 250 infants, children and teens at the Border Patrol station.

The bleak portrait emerged Thursday after a legal team interviewed 60 children at the facility near El Paso that has become the latest place where attorneys say young migrants are describing neglect and mistreatment at the hands of the U.S. government.

Data obtained by The Associated Press showed that on Wednesday there were three infants in the station, all with their teen mothers, along with a 1-year-old, two 2-year-olds and a 3-year-old. There are dozens more under 12. Fifteen have the flu, and 10 more are quarantined.

Three girls told attorneys they were trying to take care of the 2-year-old boy, who had wet his pants and no diaper and was wearing a mucus-smear shirt when the legal team encountered him.

"A Border Patrol agent came in our room with a 2-year-old boy and asked us, 'Who wants to take care of this little boy?' Another girl said she would take care of him, but she lost interest after a few hours and so I started taking care of him yesterday," one of the girls said in an interview with attorneys.

Law professor Warren Binford, who is helping interview the children, said she couldn't learn anything about the toddler, not even where he's from or who his family is. He is not speaking.

Binford described that during interviews with children in a conference room at the facility, "little kids are so tired they have been falling asleep on chairs and at the conference table."

She said an 8-year-old taking care of a very small 4-year-old with matted hair couldn't convince the little one to take a shower.

"In my 22 years of doing visits with children in detention I have never heard of this level of inhumanity," said Holly Cooper, who co-directs University of California, Davis' Immigration Law Clinic and represents detained youth.

The lawyers inspected the facilities because they are involved in the Flores settlement, a Clinton-era legal agreement that governs detention conditions for migrant children and families. The lawyers negotiated access to the facility with officials, and say Border Patrol knew the dates of their visit three weeks in advance.

Many children interviewed had arrived alone at the U.S.-Mexico border, but some had been separated from their parents or other adult caregivers including aunts and uncles, the attorneys said.

Government rules call for the children to be held by the Border Patrol for no longer than 72 hours before they are transferred to the custody of Health and Human Services, which houses migrant youth in

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facilities around the country.

Government facilities are overcrowded and five immigrant children have died since late last year after being detained by Customs and Border Protection. A teenage mother with a premature baby was found last week in a Texas Border Patrol processing center after being held for nine days by the government.

In an interview this week with the AP, acting Customs and Border Protection Commissioner John Sanders acknowledged that children need better medical care and a place to recover from their illnesses. He urged Congress to pass a \$4.6 billion emergency funding package includes nearly \$3 billion to care for unaccompanied migrant children.

He said that the Border Patrol is holding 15,000 people, and the agency considers 4,000 to be at capacity.

"The death of a child is always a terrible thing, but here is a situation where, because there is not enough funding ... they can't move the people out of our custody," Sanders said.

The arrival of thousands of families and children at the border each month has not only strained resources but thrust Border Patrol agents into the role of caregivers, especially for the many migrant youth who are coming without parents.

But children at the facility in Clint, which sits amid the desert scrubland some 25 miles (40 kilometers) southeast of El Paso, say they have had to pick up some of the duties in watching over the younger kids.

A 14-year-old girl from Guatemala said she had been holding two little girls in her lap.

"I need comfort, too. I am bigger than they are, but I am a child, too," she said.

Children told lawyers that they were fed oatmeal, a cookie and a sweetened drink in the morning, instant noodles for lunch and a burrito and cookie for dinner. There are no fruits or vegetables. They said they'd gone weeks without bathing or a clean change of clothes.

A migrant father, speaking on condition of anonymity because of his immigration status, told AP Thursday that authorities separated his daughter from her aunt when they entered the country. The girl would be a second grader in a U.S. school.

He had no idea where she was until Monday, when one of the attorney team members visiting Clint found his phone number written in permanent marker on a bracelet she was wearing. It said "U.S. parent."

"She's suffering very much because she's never been alone. She doesn't know these other children," said her father.

Republican Congressman Will Hurd, whose district includes Clint, said "tragic conditions" playing out on the southern border were pushing government agencies, nonprofits and Texas communities to the limit.

"This latest development just further demonstrates the immediate need to reform asylum laws and provide supplemental funding to address the humanitarian crisis at our border," he said.

Dr. Julie Linton, who co-chairs the American Academy of Pediatrics Immigrant Health Special Interest Group, said CBP stations are not an appropriate place to hold children.

"Those facilities are anything but child friendly," said Dr. Julie Linton. "That type of environment is not only unhealthy for children but also unsafe."

The Trump administration has been scrambling to find new space to hold immigrants as it faces criticism that it's violating the human rights of migrant children by keeping so many of them detained.

San Francisco psychoanalyst Gilbert Kliman, who has evaluated about 50 children and parents seeking asylum, says the trauma is causing lasting damage.

"The care of children by children constitutes a betrayal of adult responsibility, governmental responsibility," he said.

Burke reported from San Francisco. Mendoza reported from Santa Cruz, California.

Booker campaign gets 2020 jolt with pushback against Biden

By ELANA SCHOR and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Cory Booker's supporters have spent months waiting for a moment when the charismatic senator could break through a crowded field of Democratic presidential candidates. That

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opening came when Joe Biden clumsily talked about segregationists, prompting Booker to push back at his 2020 rival to great effect.

The New Jersey senator called on Biden to apologize Wednesday after the former vice president nostalgically referenced the "civility" he maintained during his time in the Senate with two segregationist Democrats in the 1970s despite their vast distance in ideology. After Biden pushed back, saying Booker should apologize to him because the senator "knows better," Booker called for the Democratic Party to choose a presidential nominee who can be "sensitive" to the "hurt and pain" caused by Biden noting that the two senators had called him "son" instead of "boy," a reference to the racist way many whites addressed black men at the time.

Biden called Booker on Wednesday night about the matter, but tension between the two Democrats continued into Thursday. During the call, "Cory shared directly what he said publicly," Booker spokeswoman Sabrina Singh said in a statement. "Cory believes that Vice President Biden should take responsibility for what he said and apologize to those who were hurt."

Booker clarified Thursday night on MSNBC that he doesn't want Biden to apologize to him directly, but "to the American people, and having this discussion with all of us."

The schism between the two candidates, who at times offer a similar emphasis on collaboration with the GOP despite mounting polarization under President Donald Trump, promises to reverberate this weekend in a pivotal early voting state. They are the final two hopefuls set to speak to the South Carolina Democratic Party during its 21-candidate convention on Saturday.

Booker, 50, has languished in the middle tier of candidates in the early months of the race, but some strategists looked to his confidence in taking on Biden, 76, as the beginning of a potential boost.

"Cory's argument is very poignant, and it is 'Why should we be spending time teaching any nominee' — but let's focus on Joe Biden — 'what it means to be conscious about race?'" said Quentin James, co-founder of Collective PAC, which boosts African American candidates in federal and statewide offices.

Booker's campaign message "has been about love" and unity, James added. "That's fine. But we also want to see a little fight from Cory."

For Booker and his advisers, however, a willingness to engage in meaningful fights always has been on the agenda. One person close to Booker's campaign, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal dynamics, said Thursday that Biden crossed a line with his lack of an apology for recalling that the Senate "got things done" even with white supremacists, making this week's battle an easy one to pick.

Whether the tension continues in South Carolina this weekend remains to be seen. Booker has maintained one of the sprawling Democratic field's largest footprints in South Carolina, home of the first Southern primary and the first state in which candidates can make their cases before an audience of mostly black primary voters.

Even so, Biden has maintained a foothold in South Carolina that could prove stronger than his lead in national polls, thanks to his appeal to older black voters who connect with him as former President Barack Obama's No. 2. That both men are selling themselves as bridge builders with a more optimistic message could further complicate Booker's path to translating his pushback to an advantage over Biden.

"Biden is sort of co-opting his theme," Audrey Haynes, a political scientist at the University of Georgia, said in a recent interview. "Biden has always been a 'bring it together' kind of guy, so he has more money, was VP to a popular black president, and they had a visible bromance that seemed very authentic."

Biden's public stumble over addressing his past relationships with segregationist senators offers a road map for Booker to continue to talk about thorny discussions of race as he works to undercut the white former vice president's claim to be the most electable Democrat against Trump. Still, Booker isn't the only black candidate who will get that opportunity this weekend: California Sen. Kamala Harris is also scheduled to speak in South Carolina.

Jalen Elrod, first Democratic Party vice chairman in Greenville County, said in a recent interview before joining Sen. Bernie Sanders' presidential campaign that Booker may be lagging in support because of Harris' hard-charging presence and appeal among black women.

As the race moves past next week's debates, said Elrod, "you'll get a better sense of where the black

community is.”

Kinnard reported from Columbia, S.C. Associated Press writer Bill Barrow contributed from Atlanta.

Rot in peace: Sites lacking for whale corpses amid die-off

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — So many gray whales are dying off the U.S. West Coast that scientists and volunteers dealing with the putrid carcasses have an urgent request for coastal residents: Lend us your private beaches so these ocean giants can rot in peace.

The number of dead whales washing ashore in Washington state alone — 29 as of this week — means almost every isolated public beach has been used. Authorities are now scrambling to find remote stretches of sand that are privately owned, with proprietors who don't mind hosting a rotting creature that's bigger than a school bus and has a stench to match its size.

“The preferred option is, at all times, that they just be allowed to decompose naturally,” said John Calambokidis, a research biologist with the Olympia, Washington-based Cascadia Research. “But it gets harder and harder to find locations where they can rot without creating a problem. This is a new wrinkle.”

At least 81 gray whale corpses have washed ashore in California, Oregon, Washington and Alaska since Jan. 1. If tallies from Mexico and Canada are added, the number of stranded gray whales reaches about 160 and counting, said Michael Milstein, spokesman for NOAA Fisheries.

U.S. scientists last month declared the die-off an “unusual mortality event,” a designation that triggered additional resources to respond to the deaths and launch an investigation.

The first private-beach owners to respond, a Washington state couple, received their carcass earlier this month. Volunteers with the so-called “stranding network” — a coalition of nonprofits, research institutions and government agencies — attached a rope to the dead whale's tail and used a motorboat to tow it 3 miles (4.8 kilometers) along the coast to the couple's beach, where they anchored it to tree stumps.

Mario Rivera and his veterinarian wife, Stefanie Worwag, asked their neighbor's permission first and are using copious amounts of lime to speed decomposition and reduce the stench. They visit the carcass daily and consider it a scientific opportunity.

“It's decomposing nicely. There've been a couple of days this week when I was out there mowing and I was like, 'Oooph,'" Rivera said of smell from the 40-foot (12-meter) adult male whale sitting 150 yards (137 meters) from his house.

“But it's only temporary. It's only going to be smelling for about a month — and after that, the smell's gone.”

Since the Port Townsend, Washington, couple welcomed the carcass, 15 more private individuals have signed on to do the same, mostly in remote areas around the Salish Sea in far northwest Washington state, Milstein said.

The number of dead whales found in Washington state this year has already surpassed the tally for 2000, when the last significant die-off of gray whales occurred on the West Coast. In Oregon, five dead gray whales have been documented as of this week, more than in all of last year. California has seen 37, and 10 have come ashore in Alaska.

Experts estimate the washed-up whales represent just 10 percent of the total number of the dead, with the rest sinking into the sea unnoticed by humans.

In past years, the majority of stranded whales were left to rot in place after necropsies were done. A few were buried, hauled to a landfill or sunk at sea. Officials have learned how not to dispose of whale carcasses from experience, including a 1970 attempt to blow up a dead sperm whale with dynamite in Oregon. The blast sent chunks of burning, rotting blubber raining down on spectators, and several cars in a nearby parking lot were crushed by blobs of putrid flesh.

Now, it's about “getting people to step up and say, 'Yeah, we can take these animals and have them on our beach,'" said Betsy Carlson, the citizen science coordinator for the Port Townsend Marine Science Center.

"There's such sadness in them just washing up on the shores and seeing these big, majestic animals there."

It's a disappointing twist in what is otherwise considered a success story for species recovery.

The eastern North Pacific gray whales were removed from the endangered species list in 1994, after rebounding from the whaling era. The population has grown significantly in the past decade and is now estimated at 27,000 — the highest since surveys began in 1967.

But that has raised questions about whether their population has reached the limit of what the environment can sustain, causing a rash of starvation. Another theory cites the loss of Arctic sea ice due to global warming.

The whales spend their summers in the Arctic feeding on tiny shrimp-like, bottom-dwelling creatures called amphipods before migrating 10,000 miles (16,090 kilometers) to winter off Mexico, where the females give birth. Though they eat all along their route, they are typically thinning by the time they return north along the West Coast each spring.

Although scientists are far from an answer about the die-off, whale expert Calambokidis wonders if fluctuations in the food supply because of global warming are having an outsized impact on the whales because their population has increased.

"It isn't like there are twice as many gray whales this year as there were last year. The increases (in numbers) are small, so why would you expect this huge jump in deaths? There has to be some other variable," he said.

The whales that have washed up this year are emaciated, and scientists have also noted that whales migrating north are showing up in places they wouldn't normally venture, such as the Ports of Los Angeles and Long Beach, California, or San Francisco Bay. That leads researchers to wonder if the gigantic mammals are veering off course in a desperate bid to find food far south of where they usually fatten up in the late summer months.

The dead whale Rivera and Worwag have on their beach had a stomach full of eel grass, far from its normal diet. A necropsy showed the adult male starved to death.

"This whale was desperation feeding," said Rivera. "It's like a starving human eating grass to stay alive. It just can't."

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>

Suspect in death of California officer has a troubled past

By **DON THOMPSON** and **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ** Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A man with a history of domestic violence restraining orders gunned down a rookie California police officer and continued firing, preventing other officers from reaching their wounded colleague for 45 minutes, authorities said Thursday.

An armored vehicle eventually was used to reach Officer Tara O'Sullivan and take her to a hospital, where she later died.

O'Sullivan, 26, and other officers were helping a woman gather her belongings from a Sacramento home as part of a domestic violence call when the shooting occurred Wednesday evening.

A day later, police had not revealed key details about what happened, including whether the man was already on the property when officers arrived, where on the property the shooting occurred, or why it took so long for O'Sullivan to be pulled to safety.

Police Chief Daniel Hahn said he had few details on how the shooting unfolded but noted that the gunman fired for hours. Hahn defended the delay in getting O'Sullivan to the hospital.

"One of the reasons it took so long is the suspect was continuing to fire at officers," he said. "So I know the character of the officers that serve this community and I know that they would have done anything to get to her."

Police identified the suspect as 45-year-old Adel Sambrano Ramos of Sacramento and said his standoff

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with police lasted eight hours, with five officers firing their weapons.

Ramos was in custody and scheduled to appear in court Monday.

A relative of Ramos said the woman being helped by O'Sullivan was the suspect's girlfriend. She was not injured.

"We are devastated," Deputy Chief Dave Peletta said about the death of O'Sullivan. "There are no words to convey the depth of sadness we feel or how heartbroken we are for the family of our young, brave officer."

O'Sullivan is the first Sacramento police officer to be killed on the job in two decades.

She and several other officers arrived at the home at 5:41 p.m. on Wednesday and within a half-hour O'Sullivan was hit with gunfire, police said. The gunman kept firing, and at 6:54 p.m. additional officers responded to retrieve O'Sullivan. She was transported within five minutes to UC Davis Medical Center, where she died.

She graduated from the police academy in December and was working with a training officer. She was expected to be on her own in a couple of weeks, Peletta said.

A moment of silence for O'Sullivan opened Thursday night's graduation ceremonies for the department's next group of 56 young recruits.

"We suffered a devastating loss yesterday," master of ceremonies Lt. Steve Oliveira began. "Yesterday's tragic events remind us of the potential dangers of this profession as well as the tremendous commitment and sacrifice law enforcement officers make every day."

Sacramento Mayor Darrell Steinberg said he initially wondered if the ceremony should be postponed but "I immediately concluded 'no way.'"

He decided the graduation "could not be more timely. ... You are uplifting our spirits and our hopes when we all need it most."

City manager Howard Chan said the officer died "selflessly coming to the aid of others."

The police chief remembered her as "an amazing and incredible person who paid the ultimate sacrifice."

"She chose to stand in the gap between evil, between what tries to tear apart the fabric of what we call community," he said.

A native of the San Francisco Bay Area, O'Sullivan was a member of the first class of a law enforcement training program at California State University, Sacramento. She completed the training program and graduated with a degree in child development.

"She had a big heart, a strong mind, a great personality. She made you smile — she is exactly what we need in the police force," said Robert Nelson, the university president. The school plans to launch a scholarship in O'Sullivan's honor.

Melissa Repa, director of the career center, recalled watching O'Sullivan go through an obstacle and ropes course in the rain during her first day in the university training program. She didn't let her small stature stop her.

"Nothing would get in her way of climbing and surmounting her goals," she said through tears.

Orlando Ramos, the younger brother of the suspect, told The Associated Press that Adel Ramos is estranged from his family.

He sent his condolences to the officer's family.

"If he goes to prison for the rest of his life, I could care less," Orlando Ramos said. "I'm a lot more heartbroken for seeing the pain in my mother and for the police officer and her family than I am for him going to prison."

Court filings show a warrant was issued for Ramos just nine days before the shooting when he failed to appear in court on a November misdemeanor battery charge involving a female minor.

A judge twice granted domestic violence restraining orders against Ramos issued at his wife's request in 2004 and 2007, court records show. In both cases, he was required to give up his guns. The restraining orders later expired.

Muhammed Ilyas, who lives near the scene of the shooting, said Ramos had a history of harassing a

black family that lived next door and even threatened the three children with kitchen knives as they played outside.

He frequently shouted racial slurs at the family, said Ilyas, who identified Ramos as the man living there when shown a photo.

Law enforcement experts offered differing opinions on the standoff's timeline and potential tactical actions.

Thor Eells, executive director of the National Tactical Officers Association and a retired SWAT commander from Colorado Springs, Colorado, said lack of cover or protection, the topography of the area and the location of the fallen officer and shooter could explain why it took 45 minutes to get to O'Sullivan, Eells said.

Charles "Sid" Heal, former commanding officer of Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department's SWAT unit, said putting additional officers in harms' way without the proper protection is not an option.

Meanwhile, Stephen Nasta— a professor at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a former inspector with the New York Police Department—called the delay "unacceptable" and said officers should have commandeered an armored bank vehicle, bus or heavy construction equipment if an armored police vehicle was not available or used diversionary tactics to distract the gunman as other officers rescued the wounded comrade.

Rodriguez reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writer Stefanie Dazio in Los Angeles contributed to this story.

Roy Moore running for Senate despite discouragement from GOP

By KIM CHANDLER and ALAN FRAM Associated Press

MONTGOMERY, Ala. (AP) — Alabama Republican Roy Moore, a former judge who defiantly opposed gay marriage and defended the public display of the Ten Commandments, has jumped into the race for a U.S. Senate seat he lost under a cloud of accusations to a Democrat two years ago.

In announcing his candidacy, Moore on Thursday defied national GOP leaders eager to keep him out of the contest after his narrow defeat in 2017 to Sen. Doug Jones amid accusations Moore engaged in sexual misconduct with teenage girls decades ago. Moore has vehemently denied those accusations.

The March 2020 GOP primary presents a wall of opposition to Moore that includes resistance from national party figures who fear he could damage their chances of reclaiming the once reliably red state.

Moore had previously dismissed his 2017 loss as the result of "fraudulent" tactics and said Thursday that Alabama's Republican voters — not people outside the state — will decide the 2020 primary.

"People in Alabama are not only angry, they are going to act on that anger. They want Washington, and other people outside their state, out of this election," Moore said at his announcement.

"Why does the mere mention of my name cause people to get up in arms in Washington D.C.?" added Moore. "Is it because I believe in God, and marriage and morality in our country? ... Are these things embarrassing to them?"

Those critical of Moore's decision included Alabama's senior senator.

"Alabama can do better than Roy Moore," Republican Sen. Richard Shelby told reporters shortly before Moore's announcement. Of the possibility of Moore securing the GOP nomination, he added: "I don't think it's good for the party nationally. ... I don't think it would help the president, I don't think it would help anybody running."

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell was similarly blunt.

"He can do what he wants to, but we're certainly going to oppose him in every way," the Kentucky Republican said of Moore before his announcement.

President Donald Trump tweeted last month that Moore "cannot win" and said Republicans need to retake the seat in the generally conservative state.

"Republicans cannot allow themselves to again lose the Senate seat in the Great State of Alabama," Trump tweeted.

Asked whether Trump would support or oppose Moore, Erin Perrine — a spokeswoman for the president's

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reelection campaign — said only that “I refer you to the president’s previous tweets on the matter.”

During the 2017 race, several women accused Moore of pursuing romantic or sexual relationships with them when they were teenagers and he was an assistant district attorney in his 30s. Two accused him of assault or molestation.

Moore denied the accusations and has said he considered his 2017 defeat, when he lost to Jones by 22,000 votes out of 1.3 million cast, “a fraud.”

He currently faces a defamation lawsuit from Leigh Corfman, who said that Moore touched her sexually when she was 14 after meeting her at the courthouse. Moore has also countersued Corfman and other accusers.

Moore’s entry upends an already crowded GOP primary field competing to challenge Jones.

U.S. Rep. Bradley Byrne, former Auburn University football coach Tommy Tuberville, legislator Arnold Mooney and businessman Stanley Adair have already announced bids and others are expected to enter the race.

Moore retains a strong following among some evangelical voters. He was twice elected the state’s chief justice but was twice stripped of those duties after a judicial ethics panel said he defied, or urged defiance of, federal court orders regarding same-sex marriage and the public display of the Ten Commandments.

His loyal following propelled him to victory in the 2017 primary and could give him another boost in 2020.

“I’m a hundred percent behind Judge Moore,” said Tim Sprayberry of Cleburne County, a supporter at Thursday’s announcement. “Judge Moore is one of the few candidates that I have ever seen that will tell you he is going to do something, and he does it regardless of what the consequences to him personally or his political career.”

Republican pollster Brent Buchanan said the crowded GOP primary will likely head to a runoff and said Moore is in the “catbird seat to have a spot in a runoff.”

But Steven Law, president of a GOP political committee linked to McConnell, said Moore faces tougher challenges this time around. That include competition vying for the same conservative religious voters who comprise the heart of Moore’s support and a less divided GOP, which in 2017 saw former Trump adviser Stephen Bannon helping insurgents like Moore.

“It’s a harder road for him this time,” said Law, who heads the Senate Leadership Fund.

Fram reported from Washington.

Restaurants could be 1st to get genetically modified salmon

By **CANDICE CHOI AP Food & Health Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — Inside an Indiana aquafarming complex, thousands of salmon eggs genetically modified to grow faster than normal are hatching into tiny fish. After growing to roughly 10 pounds (4.5 kilograms) in indoor tanks, they could be served in restaurants by late next year.

The salmon produced by AquaBounty are the first genetically modified animals approved for human consumption in the U.S. They represent one way companies are pushing to transform the plants and animals we eat, even as consumer advocacy groups call for greater caution.

AquaBounty hasn’t sold any fish in the U.S. yet, but it says its salmon may first turn up in places like restaurants or university cafeterias, which would decide whether to tell diners that the fish are genetically modified.

“It’s their customer, not ours,” said Sylvia Wulf, AquaBounty’s CEO.

To produce its fish, Aquabounty injected Atlantic salmon with DNA from other fish species that make them grow to full size in about 18 months, which could be about twice as fast as regular salmon. The company says that’s more efficient since less feed is required. The eggs were shipped to the U.S. from the company’s Canadian location last month after clearing final regulatory hurdles.

As AquaBounty worked through years of government approvals, several grocers including Kroger and Whole Foods responded to a campaign by consumer groups with a vow to not sell the fish.

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Already, most corn and soy in the U.S. is genetically modified to be more resistant to pests and herbicides. But as genetically modified salmon make their way to dinner plates, the pace of change to the food supply could accelerate.

This month, President Donald Trump signed an executive order directing federal agencies to simplify regulations for genetically engineered plants and animals. The move comes as companies are turning to a newer gene-editing technology that makes it easier to tinker with plant and animal DNA.

That's blurring the lines around what should be considered a genetically modified organism, and how such foods are perceived. In 2015, an Associated Press-GfK poll found two-thirds of Americans supported labeling of genetically modified ingredients on food packages. The following year, Congress directed regulators to establish national standards for disclosing the presence of bioengineered foods.

But foods made with the newer gene-editing technique wouldn't necessarily be subject to the regulation, since companies say the resulting plants and animals could theoretically be produced with conventional breeding. And while AquaBounty's salmon was produced with an older technique, it may not always be obvious when people are buying the fish either.

The disclosure regulation will start being implemented next year, but mandatory compliance doesn't start until 2022. And under the rules, companies can provide the disclosures through codes people scan with their phones. The disclosure also would note that products have "bioengineered" ingredients, which advocacy groups say could be confusing.

"Nobody uses that term," said Amy van Saun of the Center for Food Safety, who noted "genetically engineered" or "genetically modified" are more common.

The center is suing over the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's approval of AquaBounty's salmon, and it is among the groups that asked grocers to pledge they wouldn't sell the fish.

The disclosure rules also do not apply to restaurants and similar food service establishments. Greg Jaffe of the Center for Science in the Public Interest noted that AquaBounty's fish will represent a tiny fraction of the U.S. salmon supply, and that many people may not care whether they're eating genetically modified food. Still, he said restaurants could make the information available to customers who ask about it.

"The information should not be hidden," Jaffe said.

AquaBounty's Wulf noted its salmon has already been sold in Canada, where disclosure is not required. She said the company believes in transparency but questioned why people would want to know whether the fish are genetically modified.

"It's identical to Atlantic salmon, with the exception of one gene," she said.

Follow Candice Choi at <http://www.twitter.com/candicechoi>

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Witness in Navy SEAL trial takes blame for killing

By **JULIE WATSON** and **BRIAN MELLEY** Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — When the prosecution called a special forces medic to testify, they expected him to bolster their murder case against a decorated Navy SEAL accused of stabbing an Islamic State fighter in his care.

Corey Scott delivered on that count, saying Special Operations Chief Edward Gallagher had unexpectedly plunged a knife into the adolescent detainee after treating his wounds in 2017 in Iraq.

But the government was stunned with what came next: Scott took the blame for the killing, saying he had suffocated the boy shortly after Gallagher had stabbed him. Scott called the asphyxiation an act of mercy.

It was a stunning twist in an already tumultuous case that illustrates the challenges of prosecuting war crimes cases, especially those involving members of the secretive special forces, and the risks of granting immunity.

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Scott wanted to invoke his Fifth Amendment right against self-incrimination when called by the prosecution. But he was granted immunity and ordered to testify.

"You're assuming a certain amount of risk that you know what they're going to say and that what they're going to say is truthful," said Retired Army Maj. Gen. John Altenburg Jr., who handled or oversaw about 1,000 military trials. "If you get surprised, you get surprised. That's what can happen when you have cases like this."

A visibly angry prosecutor accused Scott of lying, saying he had told investigators a different story several times and changed it only after he was granted immunity and ordered to testify.

"So you can stand up there and you can lie about how you killed the ISIS prisoner so Chief Gallagher does not have to go to jail," John said. "You don't want Chief Gallagher to go to jail, do you?"

"He's got a wife and family," Scott said. "I don't think he should be spending his life in prison."

The testimony is the latest setback for prosecutors and a big boost for Gallagher, who is fighting charges of premeditated murder in the boy's death and attempted murder in the shooting of civilians.

The defense has said Gallagher only treated the prisoner for a collapsed lung and that disgruntled sailors fabricated the murder accusations because he was a demanding leader and they didn't want him promoted.

When asked if Scott's testimony, which did not dispute that Gallagher stabbed the militant in his care, would mean a lesser charge of premeditated attempted murder for the special operator, defense attorney Tim Parlatore said it only proved one thing: "It means he's not guilty," he said.

Gallagher's wife said she was relieved to have the truth come out.

"To hear today that someone's finally had the bravery to stand up for the truth was refreshing after all these years," Andrea Gallagher said as she stood with her husband and their two children outside of court.

The Navy said in a statement it will not drop the premeditated murder charge and it's up to jurors to decide the credibility of the witness.

Before the stabbing, Scott said that he and Gallagher had stabilized the sedated prisoner who was wounded in an airstrike and that he was breathing normally through a tube inserted to clear his airway.

Scott said he was shocked when Gallagher, the platoon's leader, stabbed the boy at least once below the collarbone. He said there was no medical reason for it. Gallagher then grabbed his medical bag and walked away.

"I was startled and froze up for a little bit," Scott said.

Scott said the patient would have survived the stabbing, but he plugged the youth's breathing tube with his thumb because he believed the prisoner would eventually be tortured by the Iraqi forces who had captured him and delivered him to the SEAL compound for medical treatment.

"I knew he was going to die anyway, and I wanted to save him from waking up to whatever would happen to him," Scott said.

Scott said no one asked him how the patient died.

Four SEALs and one former SEAL have taken the stand. Scott was the second to say they witnessed Gallagher stab the militant.

Several of the SEALs also described instances when they said Gallagher had fired at civilians, once shooting an old man.

Gallagher's case has drawn the attention of President Donald Trump, who is reportedly considering a pardon.

The trial comes after months of turmoil and follows a judge's removal of the lead prosecutor over a bungled effort to track emails sent to defense lawyers in order to find the source of news leaks.

The judge determined that the effort violated Gallagher's constitutional rights and reduced the maximum possible punishment from life in prison without parole to the possibility of parole.

The seven-man jury is made up of five Marines and two sailors — all veterans of war zones. A two-thirds majority — at least five — is needed to convict. Anything less ends in acquittal.

The Navy said the jury can convict Gallagher of a lesser charge, such as premeditated attempted murder, which carries a maximum penalty of life with parole. There is no minimum sentence.

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Toxic mix of gangs, vigilantes fuels rising Mexican violence

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

XALTIANGUIS, Mexico (AP) — What now passes for the law in Xaltianguis, a little town on the road to Acapulco, arrived with a car bomb and butchery.

A heavily armed vigilante force took over the town in the Mexican state of Guerrero last month by driving out a rival band, blowing up a car with gas cylinders and cutting up the body of one of two fallen foes.

Residents cowered in their homes or fled down the highway through mountainous tropical scrubland. Police and troops guarding Xaltianguis did nothing. Now, a few hundred yards (meters) from the new “community police” base the force set up, Mexican marines and state police guard the highway and make patrol sorties through the town. But they have made no attempt to arrest the vigilantes even though most openly carry illegal assault rifles.

“We have the town practically bullet-proofed by the government. At the entrances to the town you can see the army, the marines, all levels of government here supporting us,” boasted Daniel Adame, the leader of the group that took over Xaltianguis.

It is a scene repeated over and over again in southern Mexico: So-called “community police” or “self-defense” groups, often accused of drug cartel ties themselves, have proliferated and extended their control over territory. And time after time, outnumbered soldiers don’t intervene, in part because they are afraid of opening fire on civilians.

Many had expected violence to taper off in Guerrero as synthetic opioids like fentanyl knocked the bottom out of the opium market that had fed organized crime groups in the state. In fact, homicides in the notoriously violent state dropped by 36% in the first three months of the year. But it now appears a new round of violence is only starting, pitting warring gangs against vigilante squads fighting over fuel theft, gold mines and routes for precursor chemicals.

Thousands have been displaced by the fighting, and the toxic mix of cartels, hired killers, vigilante police forces have essentially neutralized the Mexican military, forcing troops into the role of mere spectators, or worse, hostages.

Adame is a far call from the vigilante leaders of past years, townsfolk who armed themselves with shotguns and single-shot rifles to defend their towns from drug cartels. Critics say rival gangs often infiltrated the ranks of “community police” forces. The leader of the FUPCEG vigilante group — the United Front of Guerrero Community Police — is a self-described businessman who owns a lion and exotic birds and has an expensive AR-15 with a telescopic sight. His son carries a pistol with carved silver handgrips.

He defended the use of the car-bomb, saying other vigilante groups like the rival UPOEG — the Union of Towns and Organizations of Guerrero — also use explosives. His group took over, he said, because the other group is tied to organized crime, an assertion UPOEG tosses back at his force.

Townpeople confirmed that FUPCEG took over the town in mid-May and ran rival vigilantes out, killing two and carving up the body of one man with bayonet-like knives.

Just across the state line in neighboring Michoacan, a group of vigilantes who state Gov. Silvano Aureoles described as “criminals, nothing more,” shoved a squad of a half dozen soldiers up against a wall, took their weapons, and pushed and insulted them until they agreed to return a .50 caliber snipers’ rifle that had been seized by a previous patrol.

Despite that humiliation, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador invited the soldiers to the National Palace a few days later to personally “thank them and reward their calm and grace under pressure, which avoided the death of innocent people,” according to the Defense Department.

That drew a howl of concern from the Mexican Employers’ Federation, one of the country’s leading business groups.

“The armed forces are the only viable force to restore order and peace,” the group said in a statement. “The president has ordered the army to protect the nation’s territory, and at the same time has asked them never to confront civilians...”

It complained the order “prevents them from confronting criminal gangs or paramilitary groups.”

And such groups are increasingly powerful and willing to challenge the armed forces.

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Salvador Alanis is a strategist and spokesman for the FUPCEG, the group that took over Xaltianguis. He said the group has as many as 9,000 men under arms in a string of towns it controls, outnumbering the Mexican army in the state. Nor is Alanis loath to take on soldiers.

"One time the army came and fired tear gas at women, and we didn't allow that," Alanis recalled.

López Obrador is betting his security strategy on the newly created National Guard, a sort of militarized police force that is expected to be deployed in Guerrero in about a month. But if the Guard faces the limits the army faces, it will immediately be at a disadvantage in states like Guerrero and Michoacan.

"I'm telling the federal government right now, this could happen to your National Guard, because if one of these guys opens fire, it will be a massacre on both sides," said Alanis, who claimed to have an arrangement with local army commanders in Guerrero to leave his forces alone.

"It's a relationship of tolerance, if not coordination," said Alanis. "You don't mess with us, and we don't mess with you."

While most of the vigilante forces are recruited from local men, Alanis said his group also employs about 100 gunmen trained to kill for taking over towns. He calls them "a team that comes to destroy."

"They are ready to kill or die for whatever you give them," said Alanis.

And as the vigilantes grow harder to distinguish from cartels, the cartels also are growing bolder.

In the Michoacan town of Zamora, the Jalisco New Generation drug cartel paraded through town in May in a convoy of at least two dozen pickups and SUVs — all proudly bearing the cartel's initials "CJNG" on their doors and sides.

With soldiers standing by as towns are taken over, the conflicts in some areas are becoming almost medieval. Residents of the town of Chichihualco have dug trenches across the highway leading to the FUPCEG stronghold in the village of Filo de Caballos because Alanis has repeatedly threatened to take over Chichihualco.

Others have set up roadblocks to defend their towns. Driving the back roads of Guerrero these days means passing dozens of roadblocks manned by men in civilian clothes with assault rifles.

"Comandante Geronimo" stood by one such bullet-riddled barricade made of sandbags. A member of the UPOEG, he has endured attacks about every two months from FUPCEG to the south and the Arillos drug gang to the north. Geronimo — who won't give his real name for fear of reprisals — explained why there is such heavy fighting for such small, poor towns.

"There's a crisis now in the mountains and the criminal gangs aren't blockheads," he said. "They say this (opium) isn't going to be a business, but the mines are. So I think a month of crisis is coming."

The Canadian-owned gold mines that dot the mountains have historically been shaken down for protection payments by gangs. Now gold has been discovered at other spots in the state, raising the prospect that cartels or vigilante groups may want to take a direct role in the mines.

Others believe the groups want to take control of routes to the seaport of Acapulco to move precursor chemicals now that synthetic opioids have displaced the region's natural-grown opium poppies.

"We thought that once the opium poppy business died out, the violence was going to end," said David Barragan, a resident of Los Moros who was forced from his village by the incursion of Alanis' FUPCEG forces.

Like many residents of the mountains, Barragan long depended on planting an acre or two of poppies to bring in cash. But when prices dropped a couple of years ago, Barragan turned to his stand of avocado trees, the new "green gold" in the mountains of southern Mexico.

But now the vigilantes have seized his avocado orchard and are harvesting the fruit he has waited for two years to mature.

Barragan, like hundreds of his neighbors — and thousands throughout the state — has fled. He says people won't take it much longer.

"The National Guard is what we most need up here, and have been waiting for, but if it doesn't work, we are going to take other measures," Barragan said, adding a lot of his neighbors are thinking of getting guns.

Pelicans take Zion Williamson with No. 1 pick in NBA draft

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Zion Williamson plays with force and ferocity, a Hulk in hightops who looks as though he'd never show a soft side.

Draft night proved otherwise.

Williamson was the No. 1 pick of the New Orleans Pelicans — a surprise to nobody who watched basketball this past season. But afterward he couldn't hide his emotions, even though he along with everyone else knew what would happen Thursday night.

"Because I love the game of basketball," he said. "You can hear people say things like, 'Oh, that it was likely I was going to go No. 1.' But I guess you don't know until you actually go through it. Hearing my name called and I was able to make it on stage without a tear, shake the commissioner's hand, but in the interview my mom was standing beside me, and my emotions just took over."

There might be tears of joy in New Orleans, too, after the Pelicans were able to get the Duke powerhouse who is considered one of the most exciting prospects in years.

The 6-foot-7, 285-pounder compiled a college career worth of highlights into just one season, becoming the third freshman to be voted player of the year by The Associated Press.

His assault on the rims made him a favorite of college basketball fans, but his game is more than just dunks. Williamson averaged 22.6 points and 8.9 rebounds while shooting 68% from the field.

Wearing a white suit, he hugged members of his family and NBA Commissioner Adam Silver after his name was called first at Barclays Center.

Williamson will step into an open position in New Orleans, which recently agreed to trade All-Star Anthony Davis, the last freshman to win the AP award, to the Los Angeles Lakers.

"I'm going to do anything to win. I'm just going to do anything to win," Williamson said.

The Memphis Grizzlies also quickly addressed a positional need by taking Murray State's Ja Morant with the No. 2 pick. The Grizzlies agreed to trade Mike Conley, their longtime point guard, to Utah a day earlier.

They got a good replacement in Morant, who led Division I with 10 assists per game as a sophomore while averaging 24.5 points.

"I have some big shoes to fill in Mike Conley," Morant said. "He's a great player. I wish him the best. Like I said before, it just means the Grizzlies see a lot in me."

RJ Barrett then made it two Duke freshmen within the top-three picks when the New York Knicks took the guard who actually edged out Williamson to lead the Atlantic Coast Conference in scoring. Knicks fans hoped they would get Williamson after finishing with the worst record in the league but seemed happy to end up with Barrett, loudly cheering and chanting "RJ! RJ!" when the pick was announced.

"That was great," Barrett said. "I'm glad that the city wants me here as much as I want to be here."

De'Andre Hunter of national champion Virginia was taken fourth but won't be teaming up with Williamson. The Pelicans acquired the rights to the pick in the Davis deal but agreed to trade it shortly before the draft to Atlanta. The original trade can't be official until July 6, so Hunter was outfitted with a Lakers hit and the draft board behind the stage listed the pick as belonging to the Lakers.

The Cleveland Cavaliers then took Vanderbilt guard Darius Garland, who played in just five games because of a knee injury.

Then it was another pick who won't be playing for the team that made it, with Jarrett Culver taken at No. 6 by Phoenix with a pick that the Suns agreed to trade to Minnesota for the No. 11 pick.

That turned out to be Cameron Johnson, the second North Carolina player to be drafted after Chicago took Coby White at No. 7.

Kentucky then had two straight picks, with PJ Washington going 12th to Charlotte and Tyler Herro 13th to Miami.

Duke did even better by placing three in the top 10. Cam Reddish went 10th to the Hawks, making the Blue Devils the only team to pull off that feat since Florida placed Al Horford third, Corey Brewer seventh and Joakim Noah ninth after winning the 2007 national championship.

The trades caused some confusion in Barclays Center beyond just players wearing hats of teams whose uniforms they won't wear. A brief "Brooklyn! Brooklyn!" chant broke out when the Nets were on the clock at No. 17, but the Nets had already agreed to deal that pick to Atlanta in yet another trade that won't become official until July 6.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker, Brandon Clarke and Mfiondu Kabengele followed Barrett into the NBA, giving Canada its best showing with four first-round picks. The overall record for draft picks from outside the U.S. was set when France had five players selected in 2016.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Georgia puts inmate to death for man's 1996 shotgun slaying

By KATE BRUMBACK Associated Press

JACKSON, Ga. (AP) — A Georgia inmate convicted of the 1996 shotgun slaying of a man who had agreed to give him and another man a ride outside a Walmart store maintained his innocence before being put to death Thursday.

Warden Benjamin Ford pronounced Marion Wilson Jr. dead at 9:52 p.m. at the state prison in Jackson. Wilson, 42, and Robert Earl Butts Jr. were convicted of murder and sentenced to death for the shotgun slaying of 24-year-old Donovan Corey Parks in Milledgeville, about 90 miles (145 kilometers) southeast of Atlanta.

"I ain't never took a life in my life," Wilson said as part of a final statement before receiving a deadly injection of pentobarbital.

He also addressed his friends, family and supporters, saying: "I love y'all forever. Death can't stop it. Can't nothing stop it."

He accepted an offer to have a prayer read.

The warden exited the execution chamber at 9:40 p.m. Records from previous executions show the lethal drug generally begins to flow within a couple of minutes of the warden leaving. Wilson smiled and looked out at a woman sitting in the witness area and spoke to her, but the microphone was turned off after the warden left the room and it was difficult to hear what he was saying.

He breathed deeply about 10 times, yawned and took several more deep breaths before becoming still.

Wilson was convicted in November 1997 of malice murder, armed robbery, hijacking a motor vehicle, possession of a firearm during the commission of a felony and possession of a sawed-off shotgun. Butts was found guilty of the same charges about a year later.

Butts, who was 40, was executed in May 2018.

Wilson's execution came after the State Board of Pardons and Paroles, the only authority in Georgia that can commute a death sentence, denied his clemency request. Efforts by his lawyers to get the courts to intervene also were unsuccessful.

The killing occurred on March 28, 1996, after Parks went to a Walmart to buy cat food, leaving his car right out front. A witness heard Butts ask Parks for a ride, and several people saw them getting into Parks' car, according to a Georgia Supreme Court summary of evidence and the testimony presented at trial.

Butts was in the front passenger seat and Wilson was in the back as they left. A short distance away, the men ordered Parks out of the car, shot him in the back of the head and stole his car, prosecutors said.

At Wilson's trial, while asking the jurors to impose the death penalty, Ocmulgee Judicial Circuit District Attorney Fred Bright said Wilson "blew (Parks') brains out on the side of the road." A year later, during the sentencing phase of Butts' trial in front of a different jury, Bright said Butts "pulled the trigger and blew out the brains of Donovan Corey Parks."

Lawyers for each man seized on that to argue that their client wasn't the triggerman and shouldn't be executed. Wilson's lawyers argued that while Wilson knew Butts probably intended to rob someone that night, he didn't know that Butts planned to harm or kill anyone and that Wilson played no active role in the slaying.

State lawyers countered that Bright repeatedly said throughout the trial that it wasn't clear which man fired the gun, but they said there was enough evidence that Wilson participated in the killing to merit a death sentence.

Wilson was the second prisoner executed by Georgia this year. He was also the 1,500th put to death nationwide since the U.S. Supreme Court reinstated the death penalty in 1976.

A group of protesters outside the prison held a banner reading: "1,500 executions and counting. Abolish the death penalty."

Parks' brother, Chris Parks, was a witness to the executions of both Butts and Wilson. He told The Associated Press last week that he was frustrated by how long it took for the death sentences to be carried out. Now, he said, he hopes his family can start to heal.

"Execution doesn't bring him back," he said, referring to his brother. "But what execution does is it offers a starting point for myself, my dad, our family, to finally get some sort of closure and to start healing."

Aldo Dávila set to be Guatemala's 1st openly gay congressman

By SONIA PÉREZ D. Associated Press

GUATEMALA CITY (AP) — Aldo Iván Dávila Morales is poised to take up a seat in Guatemala's congress in January, making history as the first openly gay man elected to the country's legislature.

Proudly gay and living with HIV, the 41-year-old activist says the rainbow flag will not be his only cause. He intends to begin his congressional career with three main agenda points: Fighting endemic corruption, ensuring Guatemalans' right to health care and defending human rights, with a focus on the LGBTQ community.

"I'm happy, with a lot of mixed feelings," Dávila said in an interview with The Associated Press. "The worry is I'm putting myself in a snake pit. But at the same time I'm no slouch, and I'm ready and able to fight when it needs to be done."

While it hasn't been officially confirmed by electoral authorities, experts say Dávila's left-wing Winaq party won four congressional seats in Sunday's general election, and he is set to represent a Guatemala City district.

"People have to see me as just another citizen, since I was elected democratically," Dávila said.

Guatemala has taken baby steps toward guaranteeing LGBTQ rights, such as adopting measures to identify hate crimes against members of the community and allowing people to change their legal names and choose how they appear in photos on official IDs, which let transgender people better express their identity.

It remains a socially conservative society, however, with the Roman Catholic Church and Protestant faiths dominant. Prejudice and fears over HIV are deeply rooted, and LGBTQ people have historically been the targets of discrimination and sometimes assault, although such treatment is slowly becoming less socially acceptable.

Neither Dávila's name nor photo was on the ballot — only the name of his party — and he didn't emphasize his sexuality during the campaign. So Gabriela Tuch, a lawyer and former human rights prosecutor focusing on the LGBTQ community, said his election can't be attributed to any significant shift in attitudes.

"It's not that society has said, 'A gay man, affirmative action, let's vote for him,'" Tuch said. "He was favored by the votes and the position he was in. Now the challenge begins."

One of the congressman-elect's first battles will be opposing a bill proposed by the conservative party that would criminalize abortion and codify into law that same-sex couples are barred from marrying or adopting children. He also intends to propose a new commission that would report and investigate all kinds of discrimination.

"You cannot be a spectator when your country is falling apart," Dávila said. "You have to take a leading role."

That's why Dávila was motivated to accept an offer to run for the party, founded in 2009 by Nobel Peace Prize-winner Rigoberta Menchú.

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Dávila lives in Guatemala City with his partner of 19 years and their gray Schnauzer, Valentino. Dávila said both inspire his activism and political participation.

He said he considers himself lucky because he has the love and support of family members who were always open and accepting of his sexuality. His mother went with him to the country's first Pride march in 2000.

Until recently Dávila was the director of Positive People, an organization supporting those living with HIV. He said that people have often come to him with complaints about discrimination, and that he himself was once dismissed from a job.

"Look, here are my diplomas and my trophies," Dávila said. "But they fired me because they found out that I'm gay, and that's how things are here."

Dávila said that when he was 22 he suffered from meningitis, which ultimately led him to discover that he had HIV. Today he is in good health, but he knows some may not understand how the virus is transmitted and may be afraid.

"It's very hard, of course, that they're not even going to want to sit next to me," he said.

"In this country people should no longer be dying of AIDS," Dávila continued. "It's the stigma and the discrimination that kill you, and the lack of medicine."

José Arriaza, a 24-year-old who identifies as queer, said Dávila's election gives him hope because he now sees himself being represented. Guatemalans will have to learn to accept diversity, he added.

He "isn't your typical privileged white man, like a majority of the congressmen nowadays," Arriaza said. "For me he's an example to follow, because he is someone empowered with ideals that help the community."

Carlos Valenzuela, a 36-year-old openly gay business administrator, agreed.

"It's fantastic because what we most want is to feel represented," Valenzuela said. "All minorities should be represented."

Dávila said his path was paved by Sandra Morán, the first Guatemalan lawmaker who openly identified as lesbian.

"She is a courageous woman who inspired me," he said.

But she didn't have it easy, and was even insulted on occasion by some of her colleagues over her sexual orientation. Dávila, who said he's been subjected to verbal abuse since he was young, is prepared to possibly go through the same thing.

"A worker at congress called me and congratulated me and told me to prepare myself," Dávila said. "But I will try to not respond to the attacks."

"With all the homophobia there is," he added, "they could even boot me from my seat."

Dávila criticized those who have pushed legislation limiting sexual diversity rights and said he does not believe Guatemalan society will change its views in the short term.

"We have to do a lot of work on educating, in demanding that the state be secular and for the church to stop intervening in things that don't concern it," he said. "We need to rule with the Constitution and not the Bible."

Storms bring tornadoes, floods, power outages across the US

By JEFF MARTIN and JAY REEVES Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Storms were blamed for two deaths and left hundreds of thousands of people without power across the southern United States, forecasters said.

Fallen trees ripped down power lines and crashed into buildings along a line from Texas to Alabama overnight and into Thursday morning, the national Storm Prediction Center reported. Similar damage continued later in the day in parts of Georgia, the Carolinas and southeast Virginia.

Straight-line winds of up to 85 mph (137 kph) damaged roofs Wednesday in the northeast Texas city of Greenville, the National Weather Service reported Thursday. Local officials had initially suspected a tornado. In Mississippi, Jackson Salter, 19, died when a tree fell on his home Wednesday night, Washington County Coroner Methel Johnson told The Delta Democrat-Times .

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A fallen tree was also blamed for the Thursday afternoon death of a person in Columbia, South Carolina, the Richland County Coroner's Office said. A wind gust of 79 mph (127 kph) was recorded in the city that afternoon. Across the Carolinas, there were dozens of reports of trees down, some landing on houses in North Carolina and others landing in the middle of Interstate 20 in South Carolina.

Utilities reported more than 200,000 customers without power Thursday evening across Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Virginia. More than 50,000 remained without power in Arkansas on Thursday evening, long after storms exited.

Downburst winds — strong winds that descend from a thunderstorms and spread out when they hit the ground — appeared to be the greatest threat, said Dan Miller, a meteorologist at the National Weather Service in Columbia, South Carolina.

Such winds hold the potential for serious damage, such as bringing trees and powerlines down and tearing into the shingles and siding on homes, he said.

Tornados and hail had been listed as possibilities for flood-weary residents of the Missouri River Valley in the Midwest, but were slow to materialize Thursday.

In Ohio, heavy rains led to landslides and flooded highways. The Riverbend Music Center along the Ohio River east of Cincinnati postponed a Thursday evening show that was to feature country star Brantley Gilbert. The venue cited heavy rainfall and the rising river.

Flooding caused travel problems, flooding commuter train stations and forcing service to be suspended between Philadelphia and New Jersey. The Delaware River was overflowing its banks in places, and people were rescued from high water.

A supermarket roof collapsed in suburban Philadelphia, causing sprinkler system pipes to break and send water gushing down.

Reeves reported from Birmingham, Alabama.

Trump, Canada's Trudeau try to build momentum for trade pact

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau sought to demonstrate a united front Thursday in the uphill effort to get a replacement for the North American Free Trade Agreement over the finish line.

At Trump's insistence, the U.S., Canada and Mexico agreed to an update of the 25-year-old agreement. But the agreement faces opposition from many House Democratic lawmakers and labor unions.

"I hope politically they can do what they have to do," Trump said of Democratic lawmakers. "Now, the day after the election it would win with tremendous support, but we have an election coming up."

In the end, it comes down to whether House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., will bring to a vote a bill that would implement changes necessary to enact the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. She insists that changes are needed to generate Democratic support, and has appointed a working group to meet with United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer on finding ways to ease Democratic lawmakers' concerns.

"My hope is that over the course of the next couple of weeks we can make substantial progress," Lighthizer told a Senate panel Tuesday.

"I think Nancy Pelosi is going to do the right thing," Trump predicted as he met with Trudeau in the Oval Office. He went on to describe the deal as "great for the farmers, manufacturers. It's really great for everybody."

Trudeau told reporters he had a "frank conversation about the path forward" Thursday with Pelosi but said he would not get involved in the U.S. ratification process.

However, Trudeau rejected the idea of reopening the deal in order to make changes.

"We are concerned that any reopening of (the trade pact) could lead to not just lengthy, further negotiations, but also may lead to worse outcomes for Canadians and for Canada," he said during a press

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conference held at the Canadian embassy Thursday afternoon.

Mexico this week became the first of the three nations to ratify the agreement.

The White House recently moved to ease passage of the agreement by lifting tariffs on imported steel and aluminum from Canada and Mexico.

The White House also took steps that would allow the administration to submit legislation necessary to implement the trade deal in time for lawmakers to vote before the August recess, if they so choose.

Labor unions, a key Democratic constituency, are seeking assurances that Mexico will enforce enhanced labor standards for workers there because that would reduce the incentive for U.S. companies to move their plants and jobs south of the border. The new deal requires Mexico to encourage independent unions that will bargain for higher wages and better working conditions.

"If the president insists on a premature vote, we'll have no choice but to oppose it," AFL-CIO President Richard Trumka said this week at a union event in Pittsburgh.

Democrats are also voicing concerns over language that would give pharmaceutical companies 10 years' protection from cheaper competition in a category of ultra-expensive drugs called biologics, which are made from living cells. The need to curb high drug prices has become a rallying cry for voters of all political stripes.

Trudeau also brought up the plight of two Canadians held in China. Beijing detained ex-diplomat Michael Kovrig and entrepreneur Michael Spavor on Dec. 10 in an apparent attempt to pressure Canada to release Meng Wanzhou, a top executive at Chinese tech giant Huawei. She was arrested Dec. 1 at the request of U.S. authorities who want her to face fraud charges in the U.S.

Trump is expected to meet with Chinese President Xi Jinping at the G-20 summit this month in Japan. The president said he would bring up Canada's concerns if Trudeau requested.

"Anything I can do to help Canada I will be doing," Trump said.

After the meeting, Trudeau said he and Trump had an extended conversation about how China has detained two Canadians in retaliation for the arrest of the Huawei executive.

"I spoke at length with the president about the wrongful detention of two Canadian citizens in China and continue to call for their immediate release," Trudeau said.

Trump and Trudeau have had a rocky relationship but tensions have eased since a low point last summer when the U.S. president called Trudeau "weak" and "dishonest." Trump was furious after Trudeau said at a Group of Seven summit that he wouldn't let Canada be pushed around in trade relations with the U.S.

Trudeau said that he and Trump have been able to maintain their focus on the "things that matter in this relationship."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Luis Alonso Lugo in Washington and Rob Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

Lawyers: 250 children held in bad conditions at Texas border

By CEDAR ATTANASIO, GARANCE BURKE AND MARTHA MENDOZA Associated Press

EL PASO, Texas (AP) — A traumatic and dangerous situation is unfolding for some 250 infants, children and teens locked up for up to 27 days without adequate food, water and sanitation, according to a legal team that interviewed dozens of children at a Border Patrol station in Texas.

The attorneys who recently visited the facility near El Paso told The Associated Press that three girls, ages 10 to 15, said they had been taking turns watching over a sick 2-year-old boy because there was no one else to look after him.

When the lawyers saw the boy, he wasn't wearing a diaper and had wet his pants, and his shirt was smeared in mucus. They said at least 15 children at the facility had the flu, and some were kept in medical quarantine.

The children told lawyers that they were fed uncooked frozen food or rice and had gone weeks without bathing or a clean change of clothes at the facility in Clint, in the desert scrubland some 25 miles south-

east of El Paso.

"In my 22 years of doing visits with children in detention I have never heard of this level of inhumanity," said Holly Cooper, an attorney who represents detained youth. "Seeing our country at this crucible moment where we have forsaken children and failed to see them as human is hopefully a wake up for this country to move toward change."

The lawyers visited the facility in Clint because they are involved in a legal settlement known as the Flores agreement that governs detention conditions for migrant children and families. The lawyers negotiated access to the facility with officials, and say Border Patrol knew the dates of their visit three weeks in advance.

Many of the more than 60 children the lawyers interviewed had arrived alone at the U.S.-Mexico border, but some had been separated from adult caregivers such as aunts and uncles, the attorneys said. Government rules call for the children to be held by the Border Patrol for no longer than 72 hours before they are transferred to the custody of Health and Human Services, which houses migrant youth in facilities around the country.

The allegations about the conditions inside the El Paso facility are the latest complaints about mistreatment of immigrants at a time when record numbers of migrant families from Central America have been arriving at the border.

Government facilities are overcrowded and five immigrant children have died since late last year after being detained by the U.S. government. A teenage mother with a premature baby was found last week in a Texas Border Patrol processing center after being held for nine days by the government.

In an interview this week with the AP, acting Customs and Border Protection Commissioner John Sanders acknowledged that children need better medical care and a place to recover from their illnesses. He urged Congress to pass a \$4.6 billion emergency funding package includes nearly \$3 billion to care for unaccompanied migrant children.

He said that the Border Patrol is holding 15,000 people, and the agency considers 4,000 to be at capacity. "The death of a child is always a terrible thing, but here is a situation where, because there is not enough funding ... they can't move the people out of our custody," Sanders said.

The Trump administration has been scrambling to find new space to hold immigrants as it faces withering criticism from Democrats that it's violating the human rights of migrant children by keeping so many of them detained.

Walmart to pay \$282 million over foreign corruption charges

By **MATTHEW BARAKAT** Associated Press

ALEXANDRIA, Va. (AP) — Walmart agreed Thursday to pay \$282 million to settle federal allegations of overseas corruption, including funneling more than \$500,000 to an intermediary in Brazil who was known as a "sorceress" for her uncanny ability to make construction permit problems disappear.

U.S. authorities went after Walmart under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, which prohibits American companies operating abroad from using bribery and other illegal methods.

The nation's biggest store chain settled both civil charges brought by the Securities and Exchange Commission and a criminal case built by federal prosecutors in Virginia. It said the two settlements close the books on federal investigations that stretch back to 2012 and have collectively cost the company more than \$900 million.

"We're pleased to resolve this matter," said Walmart President and CEO Doug McMillon in a statement. "Walmart is committed to doing business the right way, and that means acting ethically everywhere we operate. We've enhanced our policies, procedures and systems and invested tremendous resources globally into ethics and compliance, and now have a strong Global Anti-Corruption Compliance Program."

In the criminal case, Walmart agreed to pay \$138 million to avoid prosecution, while its Brazilian subsidiary, WMT Brasilia, pleaded guilty to violating the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act. As for the civil case, the SEC announced a \$144 million settlement against Walmart for "failing to operate a sufficient anti-corruption compliance program" in Brazil, China, India and Mexico.

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"Walmart valued international growth and cost-cutting over compliance," said Charles Cain, chief of the SEC unit overseeing FCPA violations. "The company could have avoided many of these problems, but instead Walmart repeatedly failed to take red flags seriously and delayed the implementation of appropriate internal accounting controls."

The criminal case focused on corruption that occurred in Brazil in 2009 and 2010 and involved what authorities said were misdeeds by the subsidiary that led the parent company to submit inaccurate financial records.

The money that went to the intermediary was recorded as payments to a construction company, even though there were numerous red flags indicating the intermediary was actually a government official, authorities said. Walmart Brazil was barred at the time from hiring civil servants.

Court papers do not identify the intermediary but say she became known inside Walmart Brazil as a "sorceress" or "genie" for her "ability to acquire permits quickly by 'sort(ing) things out like magic.'"

A representative of Walmart Brazil had no comment.

Walmart's foreign practices have been under investigation since 2012. The New York Times won a Pulitzer Prize for reporting that year that exposed millions of dollars in bribes made by Walmart executives to facilitate growth in Mexico.

According to the SEC, companies including Halliburton, Anheuser-Busch InBev, JPMorgan and Panasonic reached settlements under the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act ranging from \$6 million to \$264 million in recent years. Last year a Brazilian energy company agreed to pay nearly \$1.8 billion.

Bentonville, Arkansas-based Walmart recently reported quarterly earnings of \$3.84 billion. It announced last year that it decided to sell 80% of its stake in Walmart Brazil to Advent International at a loss of \$4.5 billion. At the time, the subsidiary had 438 stores in Brazil.

AP Correspondent Yesica Fisch in Rio de Janeiro and AP Business Writer Marcy Gordon in Washington contributed to this story.

Appeals court allows Trump abortion rules to take effect

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

New Trump administration rules imposing additional hurdles for women seeking abortions can take effect while the government appeals decisions that blocked them, a federal appeals court said Thursday.

The rules ban taxpayer-funded clinics from making abortion referrals and prohibit clinics that receive federal money from sharing office space with abortion providers — a rule critics said would force many to find new locations, undergo expensive remodels or shut down.

More than 20 states and several civil rights and health organizations challenged the rules in cases filed in Oregon, Washington and California. Judges in all three states blocked the rules from taking effect, with Oregon and Washington courts issuing nationwide injunctions. One called the new policy "madness" and said it was motivated by "an arrogant assumption that the government is better suited to direct women's health care than their providers."

But a three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco called the rules "reasonable" and said they accord with a federal law that prohibits taxpayer funds from going to "programs where abortion is a method of family planning."

"If the program refers patients to abortion providers for family planning services, then that program is logically one 'where abortion is a method of family planning,'" the panel wrote.

It granted the Justice Department a stay of the lower court injunctions, allowing the rules to take effect. A federal court in Maryland has also issued an order blocking the rules, but that only applied in that state. The Justice Department has appealed it.

"We are pleased that the Ninth Circuit has cleared the way for this important executive branch action to take effect while our appeals are pending," Justice Department spokeswoman Kelly Laco said in an emailed statement. "The Department of Justice's position is supported by long-standing Supreme Court

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precedent and we are confident we will ultimately prevail on appeal.”

The states and health care providers who challenged the law vowed to keep fighting. Planned Parenthood said it would immediately ask the 9th Circuit to reconsider the decision. The organization serves about 1.6 million of the 4 million low-income patients who receive health care through Title X, a 1970 law designed to improve access to family planning services.

“The news out of the 9th Circuit this morning is devastating for the millions of people who rely on Title X health centers for cancer screenings, HIV tests, affordable birth control and other critical primary and preventive care,” Dr. Leana Wen, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, said in a statement. “Planned Parenthood will not let the government censor our doctors and nurses from informing patients where and how they can access health care.”

Abortion is a legal medical procedure, but federal laws prohibit the use of Title X or other taxpayer funds to pay for abortions except in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life of the woman. Abortion opponents and religious conservatives say Title X has long been used to indirectly subsidize abortion providers.

The administration’s new rules are a return to rules that were adopted in 1988 and subsequently upheld by the Supreme Court. Under the Clinton administration, those rules were abandoned in favor of a requirement that the clinics provide neutral abortion counseling and referrals upon request.

Those challenging Trump’s approach pointed to the Affordable Care Act, which bars the government from creating unreasonable barriers to medical care or interfering with communications between the patient and provider. But the 9th Circuit said that just because the government is refusing to subsidize abortion referrals does not mean it’s creating barriers or interfering with communications.

While the new rules would permit clinic staff to discuss abortion with clients, they would no longer be required to do so. If patients ask for an abortion referral, staff would be required to give a list of primary care providers with no indication as to which provide abortions.

The list would have to include providers who do not offer abortions, and it could not include clinics or organizations that aren’t primary care providers, such as Planned Parenthood.

“This decision is a major step toward the Trump Administration being able to ensure that all Title X projects comply with the Title X statute and do not support abortion as a method of family planning,” Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar said in a news release.

Johnson reported from Seattle. Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar contributed from Washington, D.C.

Lost wallet? More cash means you’re likelier to get it back

By MALCOLM RITTER AP Science Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — People are more likely to return a lost wallet if it contains money — and the more cash, the better.

That’s the surprising conclusion from researchers who planted more than 17,000 “lost wallets” across 355 cities in 40 countries, and kept track of how often somebody contacted the supposed owners.

The presence of money — the equivalent of about \$13 in local currency — boosted this response rate to about 51%, versus 40% for wallets with no cash. That trend showed up in virtually every nation, although the actual numbers varied.

Researchers raised the stakes in the U.S., the United Kingdom and Poland. The response jumped to 72% for wallets containing the equivalent of about \$94, versus 61% for those containing \$13. If no money was enclosed, the rate was 46%.

How can this be?

“The evidence suggests that people tend to care about the welfare of others, and they have an aversion to seeing themselves as a thief,” said Alain Cohn of the University of Michigan, one author who reported the results Thursday in the journal *Science*.

Another author, Christian Zuend of the University of Zurich, said “it suddenly feels like stealing” when there’s money in the wallet. “And it feels even more like stealing when the money in the wallet increases,”

he added. That idea was supported by the results of polls the researchers did in the U.S., the U.K. and Poland, he told reporters.

The wallets in the study were actually transparent business card cases, chosen so that people could see money inside without opening them. A team of 13 research assistants posed as people who had just found the cases and turned them in at banks, theaters, museums or other cultural establishments, post offices, hotels and police stations or other public offices. The key question was whether the employee receiving each case would contact its supposed owner, whose name and email address were displayed on three identical business cards within.

The business cards were crafted to make the supposed owner appear to be a local person, as was a grocery list that was also enclosed. Some cases also contained a key, and they were more likely to get a response than cases without a key. That led the researchers to conclude that concern for others was playing a role, since — unlike money — a key is valuable to its owner but not a stranger.

The effect of enclosed money appeared in 38 of the 40 countries, with Mexico and Peru the exceptions. Nations varied widely in how often the wallet's "owner" was contacted. In Switzerland the rate was 74% for wallets without money and 79% with it, while in China the rates were 7% and 22%. The U.S. figures were 39% and 57%.

The study measured how employees act when presented with a wallet at their workplaces. But would those same people act differently if they found a wallet on a sidewalk?

"We don't know," said Michel Marechal, an author from the University of Zurich. But he said other analyses suggest the new results reflect people's overall degree of honesty.

Shaul Shalvi of the University of Amsterdam, who wrote a commentary that accompanied the study, told The Associated Press that he suspected the study does shed light on how people would act with a wallet found on the street.

He said the results "support the idea that people care about others as well as caring about being honest."

Robert Feldman, psychology professor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst who didn't participate in the work, said he suspected the experiment might have turned out differently if involved "everyday people" rather than employees acting in an official capacity.

But Feldman called the study impressive and said it seems like "a very real result."

Dan Ariely, a psychology professor at Duke University who didn't participate in the research, said the conclusions fit with research that indicates keeping a larger amount of money would be harder for a person to rationalize.

"It very much fits with the way social scientists think about dishonesty," he said.

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Supreme Court upholds cross on public land in Maryland

By JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A 40-foot-tall, World War I memorial cross can continue to stand on public land in Maryland, the Supreme Court ruled Thursday in an important decision about the use of religious symbols in American life.

The justices said preserving a long-standing religious monument is very different from allowing the building of a new one. And the court concluded that the nearly 100-year-old memorial's presence on a grassy highway median doesn't violate the Constitution's prohibition on the government favoring one religion over others. Seven of the court's nine justices sided with the cross' backers, a lineup that crossed ideological lines.

The case had been closely watched for its potential impact on other monuments. Defenders of the cross in Bladensburg, a suburb of the nation's capital, had argued that a ruling against them could doom hundreds of war memorials that use crosses to commemorate soldiers who died.

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But the case was also seen as an indication of how far the court's conservative majority would be willing to go in approving of religious symbols in public life. In the end, a majority of the justices signed on to a relatively narrow ruling, declining to go as far as they had been urged to by some of the cross' defenders.

Justice Samuel Alito wrote in a majority opinion for himself and four colleagues that "when time's passage imbues a religiously expressive monument, symbol or practice with this kind of familiarly and historical significance, removing it may no longer appear neutral."

"A government that roams the land, tearing down monuments with religious symbolism and scrubbing away any reference to the divine will strike many as aggressively hostile to religion," Alito wrote

Alito also wrote that the Maryland cross' connection to World War I was important in upholding it because crosses, which marked the graves of American soldiers, became a symbol closely linked to the war.

Two of the court's liberal justices, Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan, both of whom are Jewish, joined their conservative colleagues in ruling for the memorial, which on its base lists the names of 49 area residents who died in World War I.

Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Justice Sonia Sotomayor dissented, with Ginsburg writing that "the principal symbol of Christianity around the world should not loom over public thoroughfares, suggesting official recognition of that religion's paramountcy." Ginsburg read a summary of her dissent in court, a way of expressing deep disagreement. Ginsburg is the only other justice on the court who is Jewish. The others are Christian.

In all, seven justices wrote to explain their views in opinions that totaled some 80 pages, an indication of the depth of feeling the case provoked but also differences in the justices' positions.

The case began as a lawsuit by three people who live near the cross and the District of Columbia-based American Humanist Association, which includes atheists and agnostics. They argued that the memorial should be moved to private property or modified into a nonreligious monument such as a slab or obelisk.

Monica Miller, the lawyer who argued on behalf of the American Humanist Association at the Supreme Court, said after the decision was announced that while the organization was disappointed, the ruling is "very limited" and "could have been a lot worse."

Two justices, Neil Gorsuch and Clarence Thomas, said they would have thrown out the lawsuit by the cross' challengers altogether. Gorsuch wrote that people offended by religious displays shouldn't be able to sue over them. Gorsuch wrote that in "a large and diverse country, offense can be easily found" and that the answer shouldn't be a lawsuit. He pointed out that many Washington buildings including the Supreme Court include religious symbols in their decoration.

The cross' defenders included the American Legion, which raised money to build the monument, Maryland officials who took over maintenance of the cross nearly 60 years ago and the Trump administration.

"The Court's decision today is a win for protecting religious freedom and American historical tradition," Justice Department spokeswoman Kelly Laco said in a statement following the ruling.

Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan, a Republican, also praised the ruling in a statement as a "great victory."

In the past, similar monuments have met with a mixed fate at the high court. On the same day in 2005, for example, the court upheld a Ten Commandments monument on the grounds of the Texas Capitol while striking down Ten Commandments displays in Kentucky courthouses. The setting of the Texas monument among many other monuments was important to the case's outcome, while the displays in Kentucky courthouses were struck down because they were seen as having a religious purpose. Breyer, who voted to uphold the Maryland cross, was justice whose vote was central to both Ten Commandments cases.

Follow Jessica Gresko on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/jessicagresko>

Asian shares retreat after S&P 500 hits fresh record close

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Shares retreated in Asia on Friday after a broad rally for stocks drove the S&P 500 index to an all-time high as weak manufacturing data from Japan helped dampen investor sentiment.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index lost 0.8% to 21,286.49 and the Hang Seng in Hong Kong dropped 0.3% to 28,476.75. South Korea's Kospi declined 0.3% to 2,124.73 and in Australia, the S&P ASX 200 declined 0.7% to 6,641.40. India's Sensex lost 0.5%. Shares edged higher in Taiwan and Thailand but fell in Singapore.

The Shanghai Composite index added 0.6% to 3,005.36.

A preliminary survey of Japanese manufacturers, the IHS Markit flash purchasing managers index showed indicators dropping, with new orders at the lowest level in three years.

"A soft patch for automotive demand and subdued client confidence in the wake of U.S.-China trade frictions were often cited by survey respondents," the report said.

Wall Street capped a broad rally for stocks Thursday by driving the S&P 500 index to a fresh record, up 0.9% to 2,954.18, a record high.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average also rose 0.9%, to 26,753.17. The Nasdaq gained 0.8% to 8,051.34 and the Russell 2000 index of smaller companies picked up 0.5% to 1,563.49.

Thursday's rally came as investors balanced optimism over the possibility that the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates in response to a slowing global economy with jitters about the prospects of dimmer corporate profits should a severe slowdown take hold.

Those worries prompted traders to shift money into safe-haven assets this week, such as gold and U.S. government bonds. The yield on the 10-year Treasury briefly slid Thursday as low as 1.97% after falling a day earlier to 2.02%. The yield, which is used to set interest rates on mortgages and other loans, is the lowest it's been since November 2016.

The price of gold, meanwhile, jumped 3.6%.

"If the Fed is going to cut rates it means that the economic environment is slowing down," said Lindsey Bell, investment strategist at CFRA. "You have investors looking to bonds to hide out in. You're also seeing a big move up in gold on the back of the Fed's decision as well."

The price of U.S. crude oil fell back early Friday after jumping 5.4% overnight on fears that escalating tensions between the U.S. and Iran could cause oil shipments through the Strait of Hormuz to be compromised.

Iran's Revolutionary Guard said it shot down a U.S. drone over Iranian airspace. U.S. officials said the drone had not violated Iranian airspace. The drone shooting follows an attack last week on two oil tankers near the Gulf of Oman.

Crude prices had been in a bear market just weeks ago, what Wall Street calls a drop of 20% or more.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil lost 24 cents to \$56.85 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange, up from its close Thursday of \$57.07. Brent crude oil, the international standard, gave up 12 cents to \$64.33 per barrel. It rose 4.3% Thursday to close at \$64.45 a barrel.

The dollar fell to 107.08 Japanese yen from 107.28 yen on Thursday. The euro rose to \$1.1296 from \$1.1295.

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

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, June 21, the 172nd day of 2019. There are 193 days left in the year. Summer begins at 11:54 a.m. Eastern time.

Today's Highlight in History:

On June 21, 1964, civil rights workers Michael H. Schwerner, Andrew Goodman and James E. Chaney were slain in Philadelphia, Mississippi; their bodies were found buried in an earthen dam six weeks later. (Forty-one years later on this date in 2005, Edgar Ray Killen, an 80-year-old former Ku Klux Klansman, was found guilty of manslaughter; he was sentenced to 60 years in prison, where he died in January 2018.)

On this date:

In 1377, King Edward III died after ruling England for 50 years; he was succeeded by his grandson, Richard II.

In 1788, the United States Constitution went into effect as New Hampshire became the ninth state to ratify it.

In 1834, Cyrus Hall McCormick received a patent for his reaping machine.

In 1942, German forces led by Generaloberst (Colonel General) Erwin Rommel captured the Libyan city of Tobruk during World War II. (Rommel was promoted to the rank of Field Marshal; Tobruk was retaken by the Allies in November 1942.) An Imperial Japanese submarine fired shells at Fort Stevens on the Oregon coast, causing little damage.

In 1973, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Miller v. California*, ruled that states may ban materials found to be obscene according to local standards.

In 1977, Menachem Begin of the Likud bloc became Israel's sixth prime minister.

In 1982, a jury in Washington, D.C. found John Hinckley Jr. not guilty by reason of insanity in the shootings of President Ronald Reagan and three other men.

In 1988, "Who Framed Roger Rabbit," a comedy fantasy starring Bob Hoskins that combined live action and legendary animated cartoon characters, premiered in New York.

In 1989, a sharply divided Supreme Court ruled that burning the American flag as a form of political protest was protected by the First Amendment.

In 2001, a federal grand jury in Alexandria, Va., indicted 13 Saudis and a Lebanese in absentia for the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers in Saudi Arabia that killed 19 American servicemen. Death claimed actor Carroll O'Connor at age 76 and blues musician John Lee Hooker at age 80.

In 2002, one of the worst wildfires in Arizona history grew to 128,000 acres, forcing thousands of homeowners near the community of Show Low to flee.

In 2013, President Barack Obama nominated James Comey, a Bush-era Justice official, to head the FBI, succeeding Robert Mueller. The Food Network said it was dropping Paula Deen, barely an hour after the celebrity cook posted the first of two videotaped apologies begging forgiveness from fans and critics troubled by her admission to having used racial slurs in the past.

Ten years ago: Newsweek reporter Maziar Bahari was among hundreds of people arrested during the Tehran government's crackdown on nationwide protests over Iran's disputed presidential election. (Bahari was released nearly four months later.)

Five years ago: An armed South Korean soldier fled after killing five of his comrades and wounding seven at an outpost near the North Korean border. (The soldier, identified only as Sgt. Yim, was captured two days later.) Gerry Conlon, 60, who was unjustly imprisoned for an Irish Republican Army killing and inspired the Oscar-nominated film "In the Name of the Father," died in Belfast.

One year ago: First lady Melania Trump visited with migrant children during a brief stop at a Texas facility housing some children separated from their parents at the border; she caused a stir when she left Washington wearing a green, hooded military jacket with lettering that said, "I really don't care, do u?" Pulitzer Prize-winning conservative columnist and pundit Charles Krauthammer died at 68; he had said a

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year earlier that he was being treated for a tumor in his abdomen.

Today's Birthdays: Composer Lalo Schifrin is 87. Actor Bernie Kopell is 86. Actor Monte Markham is 84. Songwriter Don Black is 81. Actress Mariette Hartley is 79. Comedian Joe Flaherty is 78. Rock singer-musician Ray Davies (The Kinks) is 75. Actress Meredith Baxter is 72. Actor Michael Gross is 72. Rock musician Joe Molland (Badfinger) is 72. Rock musician Don Airey (Deep Purple) is 71. Rock musician Joey Kramer (Aerosmith) is 69. Rock musician Nils Lofgren is 68. Actress Robyn Douglass is 67. Actor Leigh McCloskey is 64. Cartoonist Berke Breathed is 62. Actor Josh Pais is 61. Country singer Kathy Mattea is 60. Oregon Gov. Kate Brown is 59. Actor Marc Copage is 57. Actress Sammi Davis is 55. Actor Doug Savant is 55. Country musician Porter Howell is 55. Actor Michael Dolan is 54. Writer-director Lana Wachowski is 54. Actress Carrie Preston is 52. Actress Paula Irvine is 51. Rapper/producer Pete Rock is 49. Country singer Allison Moorer is 47. Actress Juliette Lewis is 46. Actress Maggie Siff is 45. Musician Justin Cary is 44. Rock musician Mike Einziger (Incubus) is 43. Actor Chris Pratt is 40. Rock singer Brandon Flowers is 38. Britain's Prince William is 37. Actor Jussie Smollett is 37. Actor Benjamin Walker is 37. Actor Michael Malarkey is 36. Pop singer Kris Allen (TV: "American Idol") is 34. Pop/rock singer Lana Del Rey is 34. Actor Jascha Washington is 30. Country musician Chandler Baldwin (LANCO) is 27. Pop singer Rebecca Black is 22.

Thought for Today: "In America, to look a couple of years younger than you actually are is not only an achievement for which you are to be congratulated, it is patriotic." — Cynthia Propper Seton, American writer (1926-1982).