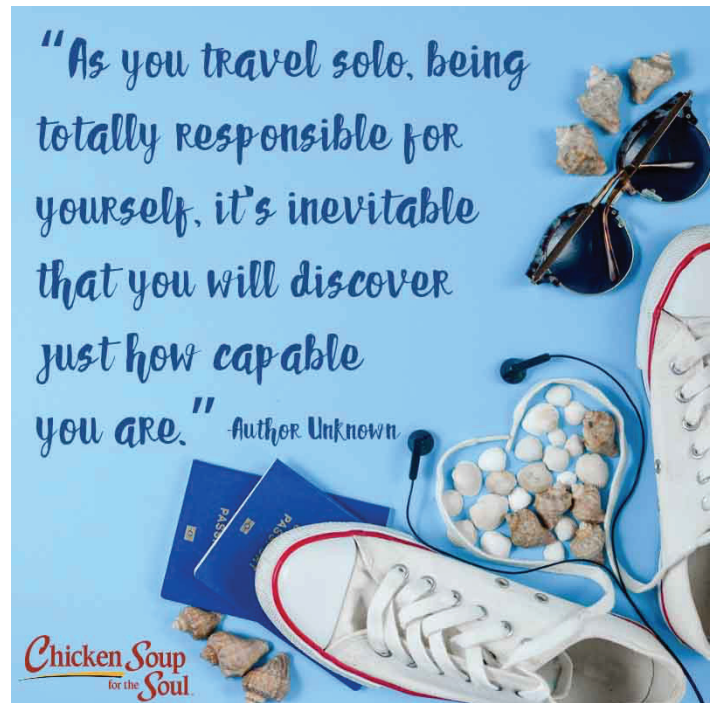


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OPEN: **Recycling Trailer in Groton**
The recycling trailer is located at **10 East Railroad Ave.** It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

12 - Thursday

Cancelled: Boys Golf in Groton
11 a.m.: St. John's Luncheon
4 p.m.: Boys soccer hosts James Valley Christian
6 p.m.: Volleyball hosts Hamlin (JV/C at 6:00)
7 p.m.: Lions Club meets at 104 N Main.
Breakfast: Breakfast Burrito
Lunch: BBQ Sandwich, Sweet Potato Fries
Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potatoes and gravy, parsley buttered carrots, frosted brownie, fruit, whole wheat bread.

13 - Friday

4 p.m.: Girls Soccer hosts West Central
7 p.m.: Football hosts Sisseton
C&MA: Men's Bible Study at Dairy Queen, 6:30 a.m.
Breakfast: Rolls
Lunch: Chicken Quesadilla, Green Beans
Senior Menu: Turkey sub sandwich, potato salad, fruit, ice cream sundae.

14 - Saturday

9 a.m.: Groton 5th-6th FB hosts Groton Jamboree
9 a.m.: Groton 4th FB hosts WVYF Gold
1 p.m.: Girls Soccer at SF Christian
3 p.m.: Boys Soccer at SF Christian
SEAS Catholic: Service, 4:30 p.m.

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**Greener School Buses = Better Student Health, Test Scores
Retrofitting or Replacing Big Old Yellow Buses Could Pay Dividends for Society**

by Roddy Scheer and Doug Moss

Dear EarthTalk: I've heard that school buses cause a lot of pollution, especially for the kids riding inside. Is anyone making greener school buses yet?

—Jake McConnell, Philadelphia, PA

Now that school is back in session, those big yellow diesel-fueled school buses are all over the roads again. While they're relatively safe—and definitely old school—they're also big polluters, chugging along at 4-6 miles to the gallon while creating a cloud of harmful airborne pollutants.

Greener School Buses According to the non-profit Clean Air Trust (CAT), some 25 million American kids travelling on half a million school buses every day are exposed to five to 15 times more air toxins than the rest of us. "Those buses travel more than four billion miles each year and these kids spend three billion hours on [them]," reports the group. "About 90 percent of these buses run on diesel fuel, annually emitting 3,000 tons of cancer-causing soot and 95,000 tons of smog-causing compounds."

If you don't think all that pollution is having a negative effect, think again. A March 2019 study from researchers at Georgia State University found that students did significantly better on standardized English tests and marginally better in math when they spent their commutes riding in school buses retrofitted to reduce emissions by 95 percent as compared to students riding in non-upgraded buses. The researchers conclude that "engine retrofits can have meaningful and cost-effective impacts on health and cognitive functioning."

Luckily the retrofits are easy to come by and relatively inexpensive, especially when you factor in the costs of health care to treat sick kids, not to mention the price tag for raising kids' test scores in other ways. Retrofitting 10 percent of the average school district's bus fleet in Georgia, for instance, would cost less than \$100,000, a drop in the bucket of the state's \$10.6 billion K-12 public schools budget.

And beginning in October 2018, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set aside \$9 million to help pay for upgrading older diesel school buses nationwide. School districts and other public agencies charged with transporting school kids can apply for rebates of up to \$20,000 per bus to help cover the retrofits on up to 10 individual buses.

Retrofitting is a great start, but even better would be replacing old buses with new, more efficient all-electric models. But few school districts can justify the \$300,000 price tag to replace perfectly functional older diesel buses. That didn't stop the school district in White Plains, New York, though, which purchased five electric buses last year with financial help from the local utility, Consolidated Edison, and a grant from the state.

These outside contributions helped bring the final cost to the school district down to something along the lines of buying new diesel buses. While ConEd gets the benefit of good public relations and good karma, it also gets to use the buses during the summer as excess electricity storage that can be moved around to where it's needed most (when the air conditioners are blazing). White Plains is hoping other school districts across the country will follow a similar model to clean up their acts.

EarthTalk® is produced by Roddy Scheer & Doug Moss for the 501(c)3 nonprofit EarthTalk. See more at <https://emagazine.com>. To donate, visit <https://earthtalk.org>. Send questions to: question@earthtalk.org.

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It's Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Hamlin
Chargers**

VS



Groton Area Tigers

Thursday, Sept. 12, 2019

7:15 p.m. at Groton

Broadcast Sponsored By:

Allied Climate Professionals

Bahr Spray Foam

BaseKamp Lodge

DeHoet Trucking

Groton Auto Works

Hanlon Brothers

John Sieh Agency

Milbrandt Enterprises

Professional Management Services.

First of three seminars completed



The first of three seminars sponsored by Groton churches was held Wednesday evening at the United Methodist Church. Guest speakers were Levi Jensen (right photo). He is a state trooper talked about vaping and other drugs that affect the youth. In the middle photo is Andrea Kost who works at the Journey Home in Aberdeen. She talked about the affects that drugs and alcohol have on people and how many of them end up in prison or foster homes. Pastor Brandon Dunham from the Methodist Church gave a short sermon about hiding based on Psalm 119:114. The next seminar will be held October 9 at the Groton Christian & Missionary Alliance Church and that one will deal with sex trafficking and date violence. The event was recorded and uploaded to 397news.com where GDI subscribers will have access. It is cataloged under 2019-20 School Year and then under "Other Events." (Photos lifted from gdilive.com)

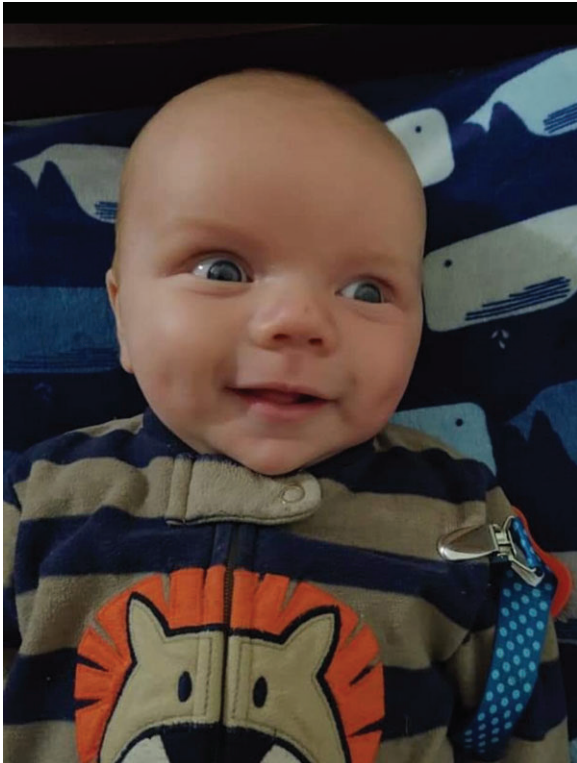
Langford Front Porch Help Wanted



Immediate opening for a FT General Manager at The Front Porch Bar & Grill, Langford SD. This person will ensure a profitable and efficiently run restaurant/bar operation through innovative menus, events, staff management and business operations. Wage DOE. Must be 21 years old. Contact Paula Jensen at (605) 228-5963 or email resume by September 30, 2019 to langfordfrontporch@venturecomm.net.

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Steven James Dahlman

Stephanie Fey and Steven Dahlman announced the birth of their son, Steven James Dahlman. He was born June 26, 2019 and weighed 9 lbs 14.2 oz. and was 23 inches long. Grandparents are Roxanne Fey, Groton; and Stacy and Don Dahlman, Rosholt; great grandparents are Donna and Alvin Bahr, Turton; Steve and Nancy Wood, Rosholt; Toddy Dahlman, Rosholt; and Della Fey, Lake City, Minn.

Groton Class of '69 50th Year Reunion

Saturday, Sept 21st
Olive Grove Golf Course
The public is invited to attend after
6:30 to renew acquaintances
with OLD friends



2019 Groton Area Elementary
Preschool Developmental Screening for 3 year olds
September 24 and 25

Parents of children age 3 in the Groton Area School District are asked to contact Heidi Krueger at the Groton Area Elementary School during school hours at 397-2317 to either confirm their screening time or set up a time. Letters will be send out the week of September 16. If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

The Developmental Screening will take place at Groton Area Elementary School.



(0911.0918)

Roberts County Democratic Party

is hosting a

STEAK FRY DINNER

Friday, September 20, 2019 • 6:30 p.m.

Valley View Golf Course

Speaker will be Joel Heitkamp

KFGO morning show "News & Views"

TICKET PRICE: \$50

To purchase tickets call: Gary Hanson 268-0448

Jason Frerichs 605-949-2204, Dave Gleason 237-1923

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*Tribute to 100
years of the
American Legion*



*Coffee and
Birthday
Cake*

THE AMERICAN LEGION

1919

2019

100
Years

*Please help us celebrate a Century
of the American Legion*

VETERANS STILL SERVING AMERICA

Friday, Sept 20, 2019 ~ 3:30 p.m., Groton Legion Post #39

1 free drink to any Veteran

Program to include

Legion history

Local performers singing songs from the following periods

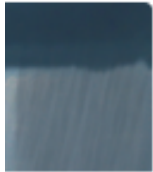
WW I ~ WW II ~ Korea ~ Vietnam to present time

MILITARY RITES AT THE CONCLUSION IN HONOR OF OUR DECEASED COMRADES PERFORMED BY GROTON POST #39

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Today

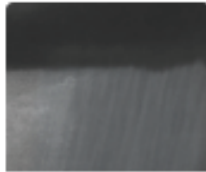


50%

Shower then
Chance
Showers

High: 63 °F

Tonight



40%

Chance
Showers and
Breezy

Low: 50 °F

Friday



20%

Slight Chance
Showers and
Breezy

High: 65 °F

**Friday
Night**



Mostly Clear

Low: 49 °F

Saturday



Mostly Sunny

High: 77 °F

Review of Tornadoes

Despite it being September, the severe weather ingredients necessary for severe weather including tornadoes came together Monday afternoon/evening: plenty of moisture (65 to 70 degree dewpoints) which helped create low cloud bases, wind shear (change of wind direction/strength with height), and just enough instability ahead of a low pressure system. The first tornado of the day occurred near Thomas in Hamlin County, and a few others followed in Day County a few hours later. While no injuries were reported with this activity, a couple farmsteads did sustain damage. Hail and strong straight-line winds also occurred on occasion with these storms, as did heavy rainfall. The last time tornadoes occurred in September in South Dakota was the 15th and 19th in 2017, and the 30th in 2014.

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Today in Weather History

September 12, 1931: On this day in 1931, near record or record heat came to an end across central and northeast South Dakota as well as west central Minnesota. From September 9th through the 12th, many record highs were set at Aberdeen, Kennebec, Mobridge, Timber Lake, Watertown, and Wheaton. High temperatures during this four-day period ranged from 95 degrees to 109 degrees. Aberdeen rose to 107 degrees on the 10th, Kennebec rose to 109 on the 9th, Mobridge rose to 105 on the 9th, Timber Lake's high was 106 on the 9th, Watertown rose to 104 on the 10th, and Wheaton rose to 108 degrees on the 10th.

1950: A hailstorm struck southern parts of Oklahoma City on this day. The storm damaged about 4,000 homes, 300 businesses, and 750 cars, resulting in a loss estimated at \$987,000.

1961: Super Typhoon Nancy was an incredibly powerful tropical cyclone of the 1961 Pacific typhoon season. The system had possibly the strongest winds ever measured in a tropical cyclone and caused extensive damage and at least 173 deaths and thousands of injuries in Japan and elsewhere. A reconnaissance aircraft flying into the typhoon near its peak intensity on September 12 determined Nancy's one-minute sustained winds to be 215 mph. If these values are reliable, they would be the highest wind speeds ever measured in a tropical cyclone. However, it was later discovered that measurements and estimations of wind speeds from the 1940s to 1960s were excessive. Thus, Nancy's winds may be lower than its official best-track value.

1882 - Hot and dry winds caused tree foliage in eastern Kansas to wither and crumble. (David Ludlum)

1977 - Thunderstorms deluged the Kansas City area with torrential rains in the early morning hours, and then again that evening. Some places were deluged with more than six inches of rain twice that day, with up to 18 inches of rain reported at Independence MO. Flooding claimed the lives of 25 persons. The Country Club Plaza area was hardest hit. 2000 vehicles had to be towed following the storm, 150 of which had to be pulled out of Brush Creek, which runs through the Plaza area. (The Kansas City Weather Almanac)

1979 - Hurricane Frederick smashed into the Mobile Bay area of Alabama packing 132 mph winds. Winds gusts to 145 mph were reported as the eye of the hurricane moved over Dauphin Island AL, just west of Mobile. Frederick produced a fifteen foot storm surge near the mouth of Mobile Bay. The hurricane was the costliest in U.S. history causing 2.3 billion dollars damage. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thunderstorms produced heavy rain which caused flooding in North Carolina, West Virginia, Virginia and Pennsylvania. Parts of Virginia received 3 to 4 inches of rain in just two hours early in the day. Later in the day, three to five inch rains deluged Cumberland County of south central Pennsylvania. Evening thunderstorms produced seven inches of rain at Marysville PA, most of which fell in three hours time. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - An afternoon tornado spawned a tornado which skipped across northern sections of Indianapolis IN damaging roofs and automobiles. It was the first tornado in central Indiana in September in nearly forty years of records. Hurricane Gilbert plowed across the island of Jamaica, and by the end of the day was headed for the Cayman Islands, packing winds of 125 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Snow whitened the mountains and foothills of northeastern Colorado, with eight inches reported at Buckhorn Mountain, west of Fort Collins. Two to three inches fell around Denver, causing great havoc during the evening rush hour. Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the Southern Plains Region between mid afternoon and early the next morning. Thunderstorms produced hail three inches in diameter at Roswell NM, and wind gusts greater than 98 mph at Henryetta OK. Thunderstorms also produced torrential rains, with more than seven inches at Scotland TX, and more than six inches at Yukon OK. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

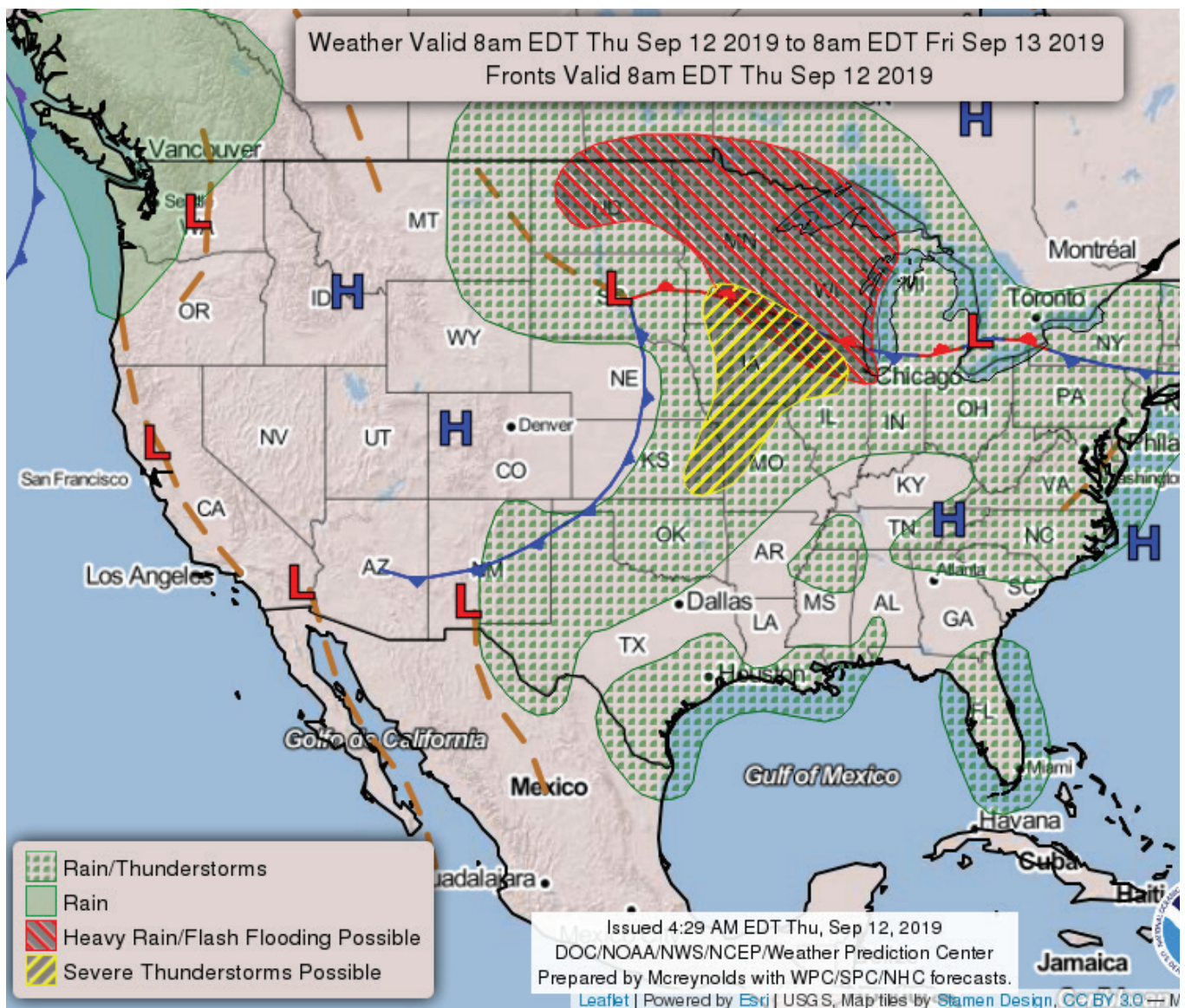
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 68 °F at 3:23 PM
Low Temp: 56 °F at 8:11 AM
Wind: 16 mph at 12:13 AM
Day Rain: This morning: 1.52

Record High: 97° in 1931
Record Low: 24° in 1902
Average High: 74°F
Average Low: 47°F
Average Precip in Sept.: 0.83
Precip to date in Sept.: 4.85
Average Precip to date: 17.12
Precip Year to Date: 24.61
Sunset Tonight: 7:51 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:09 a.m.



Issued 4:29 AM EDT Thu, Sep 12, 2019
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center
Prepared by McReynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts.

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

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HERE AND HEREAFTER

Two elderly ladies were sitting on the porch rocking and talking the day away. Said one to the other, "Sally, do you ever think of the hereafter?"

"All the time," came the reply. "Every time I go into a different room I look around and say to myself, 'What did I come here after?'"

An amusing little story that we can use to remind ourselves of one of life's most important realities: while we live in this world, we must prepare ourselves for the next. Many live as though this life will never end, or that the next one will never begin. I recall seeing a tombstone that read: "I lived all of my life expecting to die – but not this soon."

We all marvel at the persistence and power, the determination and drive that the Apostle Paul had in presenting the message of salvation. His audience would change, his location would be different, and his conditions would vary. But one fact remained constant: "The necessity to turn from sin, get closer to God every day of his life, and grow his faith in Christ as Lord."

This message is for the "newly saved" as well as the "elders of the church." There must be that moment in everyone's life when we surrender ourselves completely to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. But, there are also many other moments in life when we pause, confess our sins, repent, seek forgiveness, and prepare to meet the Lord! Are you ready to face Him?

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for Your salvation. We want to live life knowing that we may meet You sooner than we had planned. So, convict us every day of our sins. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Acts 20:21 I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2019 St. John's Lutheran Luncheon
- 09/20/2019 Presbyterian Luncheon
- 09/28/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 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

- 01/26/2020 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt, 10 a.m. Sharp (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Dakota Cash

06-12-13-30-33

(six, twelve, thirteen, thirty, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$119,000

Lotto America

12-29-30-34-36, Star Ball: 10, ASB: 2

(twelve, twenty-nine, thirty, thirty-four, thirty-six; Star Ball: ten; ASB: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$2.85 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$172 million

Powerball

06-17-24-53-57, Powerball: 3, Power Play: 3

(six, seventeen, twenty-four, fifty-three, fifty-seven; Powerball: three; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$50 million

Tornado hits South Dakota hospital: 'All are safe and sound'

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

When the warning sounded shortly before midnight that a tornado could be approaching, the clock turned into a stopwatch for staff members working the night shift at a behavioral health center at a Sioux Falls hospital.

"We had 10 minutes to wake up 102 residents, get them to the center of the building," said David Flicek, the president and CEO of Avera McKennan Hospital and University Health Center in South Dakota's largest city. "And all are safe and sound."

Although a significant tornado had not struck Sioux Falls for 25 years, the Avera Health System hospitals have kept up regular preparedness training. This work paid off when one of three EF-2 tornadoes pummeled the hospital campus.

The twister with wind speeds of up to 130 mph also roared over the system's heart hospital after a man was brought in having a heart attack. Doctors and nurses continued operating on the man — and saved his life — as the storm blew on, according to the CEO of Avera Heart Hospital, Nick Gibbs.

"We talk at our hospital about doing drills. I've got to tell you our staff was courageous," said Flicek.

Natasha Sundet, a 46-year-old nurse manager at the behavioral health center, arrived at the hospital shortly after the patients had been moved and said she hardly recognized the hospital and grounds.

"There are big chunks of metal hanging from the building; broken glass everywhere; tree limbs and trash; cars that have been picked up and moved with their windows blown out," Sundet said. "When I walked into the building there was water pouring in through the ceiling. I have never seen anything like it."

Of the 102 patients who were moved, 39 of them were adolescents, Sundet said.

"We had children ranging from 4 to 17 who were huddled with their blankets and really just frightened and in shock," she said.

The National Weather Service has determined that three EF-2 tornadoes struck the city overnight, lead meteorologist Todd Heitkamp said Wednesday.

Dozens of buildings were damaged or destroyed, trees torn up and power lines downed. But no one has been reported killed or even seriously injured in the devastation of the storm. Flicek said seven people

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suffered minor injuries from falling debris at the hospital campus and another was hurt outside.

Noting that Sioux Falls hasn't experienced a tornado since October 1996, Heitkamp said even the weather service staff ducked for cover as the storm rolled in.

On top of it all, there was a snafu with the city's outdoor siren warning system. Most of the sirens sounded in southeastern Sioux Falls, where the most serious damage occurred, but they were not activated in the rest of the city. Mayor Paul TenHaken cited a "miscommunication" among staff and vowed it would never happen again.

"I'm owning it. It's my team. It's my administration," he said.

At least 37 buildings collapsed or were damaged by the storm, and residents have been asked to stay away from the hardest-hit areas, Fire Chief Brad Goodroad said at a news conference early Wednesday.

Other damaged businesses included an Advanced Auto Parts store where a wall collapsed. Kohl's and Best Buy lost part of their roofs and Pizza Ranch suffered heavy damage.

The Red Cross opened a shelter at the Sioux Empire Fairgrounds' armory for people displaced by the storm. The city of about 190,000 people lies about 240 miles (390 kilometers) southwest of Minneapolis.

Xcel Energy says as many as 25,000 customers were without power at one point because of the damage, but that more than two-thirds of those had electricity Wednesday morning.

The storm system appears to have spared the rest of the state. The South Dakota Department of Public Safety received reports of flooding in Hutchinson and Brule counties, but no assistance was requested.

The weather service warned of possible severe thunderstorms Wednesday across the Plains and Upper Midwest, stretching from western Nebraska, Minnesota and Iowa to Wisconsin. The likeliest threat was in western Nebraska, and the weather service warned of possible flash flooding in the north-central part of the state.

— This story has been corrected to show that the name of the Sioux Falls fire chief is Brad Goodroad, not Goodread.

Father, son died in plane crash in southern South Dakota

CROOKSTON, Neb. (AP) — A father and his teenage son who farmed near the border of South Dakota and Nebraska have died in a single-engine plane crash.

Todd County, South Dakota Sheriff Barry Bailey identifies the victims as 39-year-old Clint VanderWey and his 16-year-old son, Jed VanderWey. Both were killed when their Cessna 140 crashed in a pasture near the family's farm.

Wayne Rundback was Clint VanderWey's father-in-law and Jed's grandfather. Rundback says Clint VanderWey would fly to monitor his irrigation service.

Rundback says the two left in the plane Sunday evening, and a search-and-rescue mission began around 10 p.m.

Jed VanderWey had just started school as a sophomore. KVSH Radio reports Valentine Community School made counselors available.

Funeral services will be held Monday at United Methodist Church in Valentine. Federal authorities are investigating.

Tornado Recovery: U-Haul Offers 30 Days Free Self-Storage in Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS, S.D., Sept. 11, 2019 /PRNewswire/ -- U-Haul Company of Fargo is offering 30 days of free self-storage and U-Box® container usage to residents in Sioux Falls who were impacted by Tuesday night's tornado.

The twister touched down in southeast South Dakota, downing power lines and causing structural collapses in the Sioux Falls area.

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"The storm hit quickly and has left many residents with damaged homes," noted Shawn Odden, U-Haul Company of Fargo president. "On top of the tornado damage, there's also a flood warning in effect.

"U-Haul is stepping up to offer our neighbors a place to securely store their belongings during the clean-up process at no charge for one month. We're a proud member of this community and we're eager to help."

People seeking more information about the 30 days free disaster relief assistance or needing to make self-storage arrangements should contact:

U-Haul Moving & Storage of Sioux Falls

923 W. 11th St.

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

(605) 339-0750

U-Haul Storage of Sioux Falls

201 S. West Ave.

Sioux Falls, SD 57104

(605) 231-4078

U-Haul stores offer needed supplies to help with storm recovery like boxes, tarps, propane and propane tanks. U-Haul urges customers to ensure their tanks are topped off since propane is good to have in the event of long-term power outages.

With U-Box containers, you can conveniently pick up our custom-designed trailer and take your U-Box with you. U-Haul also can store your U-Box container in our secure warehouses or pick up and deliver it to a location of your choice.

South Dakota Prep Polls

By The Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) - The South Dakota Prep Media football polls for the week of Sept. 10 are listed below, ranking the top-five teams in each class. First-place votes received are indicated in parentheses.<

Class 11AAA

1. SF Roosevelt (24) 2-0 120 1

2. Brandon Valley 1-1 92 4

3. SF O'Gorman 1-1 60 2

4. Harrisburg 2-0 58 RV

5. SF Washington 1-1 17 3

Receiving votes: Sioux Falls Lincoln 11, Rapid City Stevens 2.

Class 11AA

1. Pierre (24) 2-0 120 1

2. Brookings 2-0 95 3

3. Yankton 1-1 65 2

4. Mitchell 1-1 39 4

5. Huron 1-1 38 5

Receiving votes: Sturgis 3.

Class 11A

1. Tea Area (21) 2-0 114 1

2. Madison (3) 2-0 97 2

3. SF Christian 2-0 63 3

4. Dakota Valley 1-1 50 4

5. Dell Rapids 2-0 26 RV

Receiving votes: West Central 9, Tri-Valley 1.

Class 11B

1. Bridgewater-Emery-Ethan (19) 3-0 115 1

2. Winner (5) 3-0 99 2

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3. Mount Vernon-Plankinton 2-0 66 3

4. Webster Area 3-0 36 T-4

5. St. Thomas More 2-1 33 T-4

Receiving votes: McCook Central-Montrose 10, Groton Area 1.

Class 9AA

1. Bon Homme (22) 3-0 117 1

2. Viborg-Hurley (2) 2-0 90 2

3. Baltic 2-0 70 3

4. Parker 3-0 44 4

5. Deuel 2-0 38 5

Receiving votes: Lemmon-McIntosh 1.

Class 9A

1. Sully Buttes (14) 3-0 106 T-1

2. Canistota/Freeman (8) 3-0 103 T-1

3. Britton-Hecla (2) 2-0 71 3

4. Howard 2-0 42 4

5. Kimball/White Lake 3-0 23 5

Receiving votes: Gregory 11, Timber Lake 3, Ipswich/Edmunds Central 1.

Class 9B

1. Colman-Egan (22) 3-0 118 1

2. Dell Rapids St. Mary (2) 3-0 88 4

3. Wolsey-Wessington 2-1 62 3

4. Alcester-Hudson 3-0 35 RV

5. Faulkton Area 1-1 30 2

Receiving votes: Herreid-Selby Area 18, Corsica-Stickney 7, Harding County 2.

New data shows Israeli settlement surge in east Jerusalem

By **JOSEPH KRAUSS** and **MOHAMMED DARAGHMEH** Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — New official data obtained by The Associated Press shows a spike in Jewish settlement construction in Israeli-annexed east Jerusalem since President Donald Trump took office in 2017, along with strong evidence of decades of systematic discrimination illustrated by a huge gap in the number of construction permits granted to Jewish and Palestinian residents.

The expansion of Jewish settlements in east Jerusalem, which Israel seized along with the West Bank and Gaza in the 1967 Mideast war, threatens to further complicate one of the thorniest issues in the conflict.

The refusal to grant permits to Palestinian residents has confined them to crowded, poorly served neighborhoods, with around half the population believed to be at risk of having their homes demolished.

The data was acquired and analyzed by the Israeli settlement watchdog Peace Now, which says it only obtained the figures after a two-year battle with the municipality. It says the numbers show that while Palestinians make up more than 60% of the population in east Jerusalem, they have received only 30% of the building permits issued since 1991.

The fate of the city, which is home to holy sites sacred to Jews, Muslims and Christians, is at the heart of the decades-old conflict. The Palestinians want east Jerusalem to be the capital of their future state, while Israel views the entire city as its unified capital. Tensions have soared since Trump recognized Jerusalem as Israel's capital in 2017 and moved the U.S. Embassy there, breaking with a longstanding international consensus that the city's fate should be decided in negotiations.

Trump has argued that his recognition does not preclude a final settlement. But the Palestinians and rights groups say his unbridled support for Israel's nationalist government has given it a free pass to tighten its grip on war-won lands sought by the Palestinians.

Peace Now found that in the first two years of Trump's presidency, authorities approved 1,861 housing

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units in east Jerusalem settlements, a 60% increase from the 1,162 approved in the previous two years. The figures show that 1,081 permits for settler housing were issued in 2017 alone, the highest annual number since 2000. A total of 1,233 housing units were approved for Palestinians in 2017 and 2018, according to Peace Now.

Spokesmen for the Israeli government and the municipality did not respond to requests for comment.

The figures are for construction permits issued by the municipality, the final step of a costly bureaucratic process that can take years to complete. The figures show that since 1991, the municipality has issued 21,834 permits for housing units in Jewish settlements in east Jerusalem and just 9,536 for Palestinian neighborhoods.

Hagit Ofra, an expert on settlements who collected and analyzed the data, says the discrepancy in permits dates back to 1967, when Israel expanded the city's municipal boundaries to take in large areas of open land that were then earmarked for Jewish settlements. At the same time, city planners set the boundaries of Palestinian neighborhoods, preventing them from expanding.

"In the planning vision of Jerusalem there was no planning for the expansion of Palestinian neighborhoods," she said, adding that the government has initiated almost no construction in those neighborhoods, placing the burden of planning and permits entirely on the residents themselves.

Today, around 215,000 Jews live in east Jerusalem, mostly in built-up areas that Israel considers to be neighborhoods of its capital. Most of east Jerusalem's 340,000 Palestinian residents are crammed into increasingly overcrowded neighborhoods where there is little room to build.

Palestinians say the expense and difficulty of obtaining permits forces them to build illegally. Peace Now estimates that of the 40,000 housing units in Palestinian neighborhoods of east Jerusalem, half have been built without permits.

"When you build illegally, without a permit, there's always a chance your house will be demolished," said Ofra.

B'Tselem, another Israeli rights group, says at least 112 housing units in east Jerusalem were demolished in the first seven months of this year — more than in any full year since at least 2004.

On a hot, sunny day earlier this week, Jamil Masalmeh, 59, used a crowbar and power tools to destroy an apartment he had added to his home in the Silwan neighborhood years earlier. When he failed to secure a permit, municipal authorities gave him the option of destroying it himself or paying more than \$20,000 for the city to demolish it.

He says he began trying to get a permit 20 years ago, when he built the extension, which consisted of two bedrooms and a kitchen, for his growing family. Eight years ago, the authorities forced him to dismantle it, but he built it again, hoping to eventually get a permit.

"Every time they tell me to get something different. Get this document or that document, get whatever we tell you to, and then in the end they say you can't build on this land. Why? There's no answer," he said. "I'll die before I ever get a permit."

Jihad Rajabi, who lives in the Palestinian neighborhood of Beit Hanina, says he wasn't given the option of destroying his own home.

Authorities showed up one morning last month with police and heavy equipment. They only gave him and his extended family of 15 people enough time to salvage some personal belongings before demolishing the 200-square-meter (2,150 square-foot) home. A broken coffee mug, children's toys and parts of a bedframe poke out from the drift of rubble left behind.

"They are trying to drive us out of Jerusalem," he said. "They fine us, they try to drive us out, but we're going to stay here."

Every Israeli government since 1967 has actively promoted settlement construction, including during the peace process with the Palestinians.

But settlement approvals have accelerated in east Jerusalem and the West Bank since Trump took office, as Israel has encountered little if any resistance from a friendly White House. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to annex the Jordan Valley, which makes up about a quarter of the

West Bank, and other settlements there if his party wins next week's elections.

The Palestinians cut off all ties with the Trump administration after the Jerusalem decision and have already rejected a peace plan the president has promised to release, saying the administration is marching in lockstep with Israel's right-wing government. The Palestinians and much of the international community have long seen settlements as illegal and a major obstacle to peace. Israel says the settlement issue should be resolved in negotiations and blames the lack of progress on Palestinian intransigence.

With peace efforts stalled and little hope for an independent state anytime soon, the Palestinians who remain in east Jerusalem are left to endure its crowded conditions and an uncertain future.

"If you want to travel it's a problem, if you want to stay home it's a problem, if you want to work it's a problem, if you want to build it's a problem," Masalmeh said. "Everything's a problem."

Follow Joseph Krauss on Twitter at www.twitter.com/josephkrauss

Tentative opioid deal won't end court battles for Purdue

By **GEOFF MULVIHILL** and **DAVE COLLINS** Associated Press

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Courtroom showdowns still face OxyContin maker Purdue Pharma and the family that owns it, the Sacklers.

But after a tentative settlement reached Wednesday with thousands of local governments and more than 20 states, the fight will be less about the damage done by the company and more over how to divide its assets.

The agreement could be worth up to \$12 billion over time. That amount includes future profits for the company, the value of overdose antidotes it's developing and cash payments of \$3 billion to \$4.5 billion from the Sacklers. The amount is contingent on the sale of the family's international drug company, Mundipharma, which, like Purdue, has been criticized for overselling the benefits of its powerful prescription opioid painkillers and understating the risks.

Critics are fuming that the deal won't be worth close to the stated \$12 billion, that it won't force internal company documents to be made public and that it doesn't do enough to hold the company or its owners responsible. "The idea that Purdue might get away without having to admit any wrongdoing flies in the face of every definition of justice and accountability known to the human race. It's unconscionable," said Ryan Hampton, a Los Angeles-based advocate for people in recovery from opioid addiction.

For the Stamford, Ohio-based company, one of the next steps is a bankruptcy filing, which would likely end lawsuits filed against the company by some 2,000 counties, municipalities, Native American tribes, unions and hospitals, along with nearly every state.

Parties that don't sign on to the settlement could raise objections in bankruptcy court — and some states have made it clear that that's their plan.

"Far too many lives have been lost or devastated in Rhode Island as a result of the opioid crisis," Rhode Island Attorney General Peter Neronha said in a statement Wednesday. "Before we could responsibly reach any agreement, we would need much more information about the financial holdings of Purdue Pharma and the Sacklers to be confident that this resolution adequately compensates Rhode Island and, equally as important, holds the company and its owners accountable for the enormous destruction they have caused. We are committed to continuing to aggressively pursue our claims against Purdue Pharma and the Sacklers."

The state was already suing some members of the Sackler family, which was listed by Forbes magazine in 2016 as one of the 20 richest in the country. On Wednesday, it added more family members to the suit. More than 20 other states also have legal claims against family members, and many plan to keep pursuing them.

On the other side, several attorneys general said the agreement was a better way to ensure compensation from Purdue and the Sacklers than taking their chances if Purdue files for bankruptcy on its own.

Arizona Attorney General Mark Brnovich said the deal "was the quickest and surest way to get immediate relief for Arizona and for the communities that have been harmed by the opioid crisis and the actions

of the Sackler family.”

But even advocates of the deal cautioned that it's not yet complete.

“There's still a lot of telephone calls going on. I think we see the outlines of a thing that might be, but it's not yet,” Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost said in an interview.

Opioid addiction has contributed to the deaths of some 400,000 Americans over the past two decades, hitting many rural communities particularly hard.

The tentative agreement and expected bankruptcy filing would remove Purdue from the first federal trial over the opioids epidemic, scheduled to begin next month in Cleveland.

In a statement after Wednesday's announcement, the company said that it “continues to work with all plaintiffs on reaching a comprehensive resolution to its opioid litigation that will deliver billions of dollars and vital opioid overdose rescue medicines to communities across the country impacted by the opioid crisis.”

Members of the Sackler family said in a statement that there are good reasons for governments to join the settlement: “This is the most effective way to address the urgency of the current public health crisis, and to fund real solutions, not endless litigation.”

Mulvihill reported from New Jersey. Associated Press writers Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix; Carla K. Johnson in Seattle; Jennifer McDermott in Providence, Rhode Island; and Julie Carr Smyth in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report.

Supreme Court allows broad enforcement of asylum limits

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court is allowing nationwide enforcement of a new Trump administration rule that prevents most Central American immigrants from seeking asylum in the United States.

The justices' order late Wednesday temporarily undoes a lower-court ruling that had blocked the new asylum policy in some states along the southern border. The policy is meant to deny asylum to anyone who passes through another country on the way to the U.S. without seeking protection there.

Most people crossing the southern border are Central Americans fleeing violence and poverty. They are largely ineligible under the new rule, as are asylum seekers from Africa, Asia and South America who arrive regularly at the southern border.

The shift reverses decades of U.S. policy. The administration has said that it wants to close the gap between an initial asylum screening that most people pass and a final decision on asylum that most people do not win.

“BIG United States Supreme Court WIN for the Border on Asylum!” President Donald Trump tweeted.

Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Sonia Sotomayor dissented from the high-court's order. “Once again, the Executive Branch has issued a rule that seeks to upend longstanding practices regarding refugees who seek shelter from persecution,” Sotomayor wrote.

The legal challenge to the new policy has a brief but somewhat convoluted history. U.S. District Judge Jon Tigar in San Francisco blocked the new policy from taking effect in late July. A three-judge panel of the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals narrowed Tigar's order so that it applied only in Arizona and California, states that are within the 9th Circuit.

That left the administration free to enforce the policy on asylum seekers arriving in New Mexico and Texas. Tigar issued a new order on Monday that reimposed a nationwide hold on asylum policy. The 9th Circuit again narrowed his order on Tuesday.

The high-court action allows the administration to impose the new policy everywhere while the court case against it continues.

It's not clear how quickly the policy will be rolled out, and how exactly it fits in with the other efforts by the administration to restrict border crossings and tighten asylum rules.

For example, thousands of people are waiting on lists at border crossings in Mexico to claim asylum in the U.S. And more than 30,000 people have been turned back to Mexico to wait out their asylum claims.

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Asylum seekers must pass an initial screening called a "credible fear" interview, a hurdle that a vast majority clear. Under the new policy, they would fail the test unless they sought asylum in at least one country they traveled through and were denied. They would be placed in fast-track deportation proceedings and flown to their home countries at U.S. expense.

Lee Gelernt, the American Civil Liberties Union lawyer who is representing immigrant advocacy groups in the case, said: "This is just a temporary step, and we're hopeful we'll prevail at the end of the day. The lives of thousands of families are at stake."

Justice Department spokesperson Alexei Woltornist said the agency was "pleased that the Supreme Court intervened in this case," adding, "This action will assist the Administration in its objectives to bring order to the crisis at the southern border, close loopholes in our immigration system, and discourage frivolous claims."

Associated Press writer Colleen Long contributed to this report.

Mint, menthol: Vape industry has dug heels in on flavor bans

By **MARINA VILLENEUVE** Associated Press

AUGUSTA, Maine (AP) — Efforts to ban flavored e-cigarettes and reduce their appeal to youngsters have sputtered under industry pressure in over a half-dozen states this year even as one state, Michigan, moves ahead with its own restrictions and President Donald Trump promises federal ones.

In many cases, the fight by the industry and its lobbyists has focused on leaving the most popular flavors — mint and its close cousin, menthol — alone. But public health experts say that all flavors should be banned, and that menthol can still hook kids on vaping.

The proposal Trump outlined on Wednesday, which would supersede any state inaction, includes a ban on mint and menthol, and an industry giant quickly indicated it would capitulate.

"We strongly agree with the need for aggressive category-wide action on flavored products," read a statement released by Juul Labs Inc. "We will fully comply with the final FDA policy when effective."

But the fight in state legislatures has been fierce. Lobbyists for the vaping and tobacco industry fought bans on flavors in Hawaii, California, New Mexico, Massachusetts, New York, Maine and Connecticut.

Such bans failed or stalled, even as Michigan's governor this month ordered emergency rules prohibiting flavored e-cigarettes. New York Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo on Monday expressed a desire to ban flavored e-cigarettes.

Trump's federal proposal, as it stands, would require no congressional approval, meaning lobbying efforts to defeat it could be less effective than in state legislatures. Juul spent \$1.9 million in the first half of the year to try and sway the White House, Congress and the Food and Drug Administration.

The Vapor Technology Association has reported spending \$78,000 this year in its lobbying fight against California's proposed flavored e-cigarettes ban, while one of the world's largest tobacco producers, Altria, reported spending over \$100,000 last fall solely to lobby such legislation. The bills have since stalled.

Reynolds American, which sells Vuse Alto e-cigarettes, reported spending \$240,000 on paid lobbyists in New York this year. At least \$23,000 alone went to fund their lobbying push against a flavored tobacco ban that failed to pass this year.

Altria — which is also Juul's biggest investor — also spent over \$70,000 in Maine alone this spring on an online social media and email campaign in its efforts to defeat a ban on flavored e-cigarettes and all tobacco products, according to lobbying reports filed with state ethics officials. Maine still has no flavor ban.

The global e-cigarette and vape market was valued at as much as \$11 billion in 2018. The rise in teen vaping has been driven mainly by flavored cartridge-based products such as Juul, which controls roughly three-quarters of the U.S. e-cigarettes market.

The proposals and the lobbying fight come as health authorities investigate hundreds of breathing illnesses reported in people who have used e-cigarettes and other vaping devices. No single device, ingredient or additive has been identified, though many cases involve marijuana vaping.

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Supporters of flavors argue that adult cigarette users say flavors helped them quit, and that legislators should instead focus on companies that are trying to hook young nonsmokers with clearly kid-friendly marketing and packaging.

"One of the things that we are finding is that state legislatures are reflexively reacting to media stories and without a scientific basis making determinations that flavors are the problem so we need to get rid of all the flavors," said Tony Abboud, president of the Vapor Technology Association.

There had been concern that the tobacco and vaping industries were winning their fight to keep at least the most popular flavors — mint and menthol — in play. That concern has now been tempered by Trump's announcement Wednesday that his ban would include menthol and mint.

Last November, the FDA announced plans for a crackdown that could lead to federal regulators pulling all e-cigarette flavors besides menthol and mint — thought to be useful to adult smokers — from shelves. The FDA also said it would also seek to ban menthol cigarettes.

The FDA's announcement came just two days after Juul announced the halting of in-store sales of mango, fruit, creme and cucumber flavors in retail stores.

The company's CEO has said that Juul never intended for young people to use their products but that they are "sensitive" to concerns raised by the FDA.

And a spokesman for Juul, Ted Kwong, said before Wednesday's announcement by Trump that the company would support an outright ban on flavors that mimic kid candies, foods and drinks.

Still, in line with the FDA's proposed policy, Juul Labs still distributes mint, menthol and tobacco flavors in retail stores. The company also sells flavored products through its website.

Anti-tobacco and -vaping groups say there's no scientific basis for leaving menthol or mint alone. They warn menthol has been unethically marketed toward African Americans, and that such flavors can still increase the appeal of e-cigarettes for young people who aren't smokers by overcoming the harshness of nicotine.

"Anything that is overcoming the harshness of tobacco flavoring is something that kids are going to find more appealing," said Hillary Schneider, director of government relations in Maine for the American Cancer Society Action Network.

But banning minty flavors has been politically contentious.

In Maine, convenience store owners upset by a proposed flavor ban argued that mint, wintergreen and menthol represent 30% of flavors offered in stores statewide and \$32 million in tax revenue.

Lawmakers then considered a tweak to only allow menthol, mint and wintergreen flavors. Maine ended up passing a bill — backed by the tobacco and vaping industries, as well as small retail stores — that instead makes it illegal to sell e-cigarettes to people under 21 and give them to minors under 16.

Officials in Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer's administration discussed exempting mint and menthol flavors from the e-cigarette ban, but "determined that the action taken was the best path forward to protect youth," said Bob Wheaton, spokesman for the state Department of Health and Human Services.

A court challenge is expected for Michigan's ban.

Abboud argued before Wednesday that states should hold off on further action for now.

Concerns rise over tainted sewage sludge spread on croplands

By JOHN FLESHER and MICHAEL CASEY Associated Press

LAPEER, Mich. (AP) — For more than 20 years, the eastern Michigan town of Lapeer sent leftover sludge from its sewage treatment plant to area farms, supplying them with high-quality, free fertilizer while avoiding the expense of disposal elsewhere.

But state inspectors ordered a halt to the practice in 2017 after learning the material was laced with one of the potentially harmful chemicals known collectively as PFAS, which are turning up in drinking water and some foods across the U.S.

Now, the city of 8,800 expects to pay about \$3 million to have the waste treated at another facility and

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the leftover solids shipped to a landfill. Testing has found elevated PFAS levels in just one field where the sludge was spread, but farmers have lost an economical fertilizer source and hope more contamination doesn't turn up.

"I feel bad for them," said Michael Wurts, superintendent of the waste treatment plant, who ruefully recalls promoting sludge as an agricultural soil additive to growers in the community. "The city didn't do anything malicious. We had no clue this was going on."

Lapeer isn't alone. For decades, sewage sludge from thousands of wastewater treatment plants has been used nationwide as cropland fertilizer. It's also applied to sports fields, golf courses and backyard gardens.

About half of the 7 million tons generated annually in the U.S. is applied to farm fields and other lands, the Environmental Protection Agency says. While the sludge offers farmers a cheap source of fertilizer, there long have been concerns about contaminants in the material — and attention of late has turned to perfluoroalkyl and polyfluoroalkyl substances, or PFAS.

The city of Marinette, Wisconsin, has stopped distributing sewage waste, also called "biosolids," to farms after getting high PFAS readings. In Maine, a dairy farm was forced to shut down after sludge spread on the land was linked to high levels of PFAS in the milk.

"It's been devastating. We kind of get treated like we are criminals," said Stoneridge Farm's Fred Stone, whose blood has also tested high for PFAS from what he believes was drinking contaminated water and milk over the years.

The concern is that certain PFAS chemicals, which studies have associated with increased risk of cancer and damage to organs such as the liver and thyroid, could be absorbed by crops grown in soils treated with polluted sludge and wind up in foods. The Food and Drug Administration this year reported finding substantial levels of the chemicals in random samples of grocery store meats, dairy products, seafood and even off-the-shelf chocolate cake, although the study did not mention any connection to sewage waste.

"The FDA continues to work with other federal agencies to identify sources and reduce or eliminate pathways for dietary PFAS exposure including through use of biosolids," spokeswoman Lindsay Haake said.

The extent of any threat to the food supply is unknown because so little testing has been done, scientists say.

"We don't have a lot of data but the data we have suggests it's a problem," Linda Birnbaum, director of the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, said at a recent conference in Boston. "We are finding that there are elevated levels of different PFAS in biosolids. We clearly need more research in this area."

Studies have documented PFAS absorption by some crops — lettuce, tomatoes and radishes among them — from soils fertilized with sewage byproducts. And the EPA's inspector general reported last year that the agency was falling short in tracking hundreds of pollutants in sludge, including PFAS.

Yet despite growing evidence that at least some sludge is contaminated, the federal government hasn't limited PFAS in fertilizer or developed a standard for determining safe levels. That leaves fertilizer companies and farmers wondering what to do and fearful of consumer backlash.

"If you want to destroy agriculture in Michigan, start talking about, 'Hey, it could be contaminated with PFAS,'" said Laura Campbell, agricultural ecology manager for the Michigan Farm Bureau. "People will see that and say, 'Oh, we can't trust them, we'll buy from elsewhere,' even though the problem is no worse in Michigan than it is anywhere else."

Studies going back almost two decades found PFAS in sludge, primarily from industrial wastewater that flows to municipal treatment facilities. Residential sewage is another source — from carpets, clothes and other household items containing PFAS. The grease- and water-resistant compounds, known as "forever chemicals" because they don't degrade naturally and are believed capable of lingering indefinitely in the environment, also are found in firefighting foam used at military bases and airports.

Evidence of a link between PFAS-laced sludge and food emerged in 2008, when the EPA found elevated levels of several compounds in sludge that a Decatur, Alabama utility had spread on 5,000 acres of farmland. They were detected in nearby waters and vegetation from the fields. The chemicals were traced to several companies that manufactured and used PFAS.

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"I'm very concerned about replicating that in other states," EPA's Andrew Lindstrom, whose lab ran tests there, said at the Boston conference. Milk from one dairy contained 270 parts per trillion of PFAS — almost four times the agency's nonbinding health risk level of 70 ppt for PFOA and PFOS, the two best-known chemicals in the class.

An EPA "action plan" in February acknowledged "information gaps" about tainted sludge. It said the agency was developing better detection methods and assessing risks posed by PFOA and PFOS, which no longer are manufactured in the U.S. but remain widespread in the environment.

"We are studying the potential pathways by which PFAS are getting into biosolids and we are researching alternative methods for removing or destroying PFAS in biosolids if analysis indicates that detected levels are of risk and need reduction," the agency told The Associated Press in a statement.

Advocacy groups say EPA also should look at chemicals developed as replacements for PFOA and PFOS, which studies found accumulate in edible parts of plants.

"At least EPA should require that sludge be tested for PFAS before being applied to farm fields," said Colin O'Neil, legislative director with the Environmental Working Group.

Its inspector general reported last year that the EPA had identified 352 pollutants, including PFAS, in biosolids. But the report concluded the agency had too little data and other tools to assess their safety. Regulations require testing for only nine pollutants in sludge, all heavy metals.

Several states are examining sewage sludge for PFAS contamination and assessing potential dangers. Maine has enacted a nonbinding advisory level for PFAS in sludge and New Hampshire is working with the U.S. Geological Survey on a soil study whose results will help them set a standard.

Maine also found most biosolids from more than 30 wastewater treatment plants were above the state's advisory level while neighboring New Hampshire detected PFAS in tests of sludge from two dozen permit holders. Neither state found traceable levels of PFAS in the milk tested.

Based on sludge tests at 41 plants, Michigan ordered several to stop distributing it to farms.

After the state's environmental department ordered some plants to trace PFAS sent to them, several installed treatment systems that sharply reduced their pollution output, spokesman Scott Dean said.

Among them was Lapeer Plating & Plastics, the automotive chrome manufacturer that caused the Lapeer contamination.

But City Manager Dale Kerbyson said the company has reneged on a promise to help cover Lapeer's costs of dealing with the pollution and a lawsuit may be coming. "I don't think the citizens of our city should have to pay for this," Kerbyson said.

Lapeer Plating & Plastics did not respond to email and phone messages seeking comment.

Although they complain about a lack of government standards, some cities and towns fear strict rules that could force costly infrastructure upgrades or sending sludge to out-of-state landfills. And companies worry they will be put out of business.

"This is the biggest issue that has hit the biosolids recycling profession in North America ever, because of regulatory overreaction," said Ned Beecher, executive director of the North East Biosolids and Residuals Association.

Companies that manufacture compost — some from sewage sludge — contend tough standards are premature until scientists determine acceptable PFAS levels.

"We don't want people jumping to conclusions," said Frank Franciosi, executive director of the U.S. Composting Council. If EPA cracks down on anyone, he said, it should be those who manufacture and use PFAS chemicals that enter the waste stream.

Casey reported from Boston. AP reporter Ellen Knickmeyer contributed to this story from Washington, D.C.

Follow John Flesher on Twitter: @johnflesher and Michael Casey at @mcasey1.

Some Democrats concerned as Judiciary sets impeachment rules

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Judiciary Committee is preparing for its first impeachment-related vote, set to define procedures for upcoming hearings on President Donald Trump even as some moderates in the caucus are urging the panel to slow down.

The vote Thursday, while technical, is an escalation as the Judiciary panel has said it is examining whether to recommend articles of impeachment. It would allow the committee to designate certain hearings as impeachment hearings, empower staff to question witnesses, allow some evidence to remain private and permit the president's counsel to officially respond to testimony.

As the committee moves forward, some moderate House Democrats — mostly freshmen who handed their party the majority in the 2018 election — are concerned about the committee's drumbeat on impeachment and the attention that comes with that continued action. Several of the freshmen met with House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler on Wednesday and expressed concerns about the path ahead.

"It's sucking the air out of all the good stuff that we're doing, so that's our concern," said Florida Rep. Donna Shalala, a freshman Democrat who attended the meeting. She said very few constituents in her swing district asked her about impeachment over the August recess.

Rep. Anthony Brindisi, a freshman Democrat from New York who was also at the meeting, said that the people in his district "are calling for action on prescription drug prices, health care, border security and infrastructure — not clamoring for impeachment probes and investigations. Congress should be focused on getting things done that can improve the lives of working people."

The vote signals that the Judiciary Committee, which is comprised of some of the caucus's most left-leaning members, is serious about moving forward with an impeachment process. But it's still very unclear whether that process will ever move beyond the panel's work, given that House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has urged caution. She has told her colleagues that the public still isn't supportive of taking those steps.

The committee would still have to introduce impeachment articles against Trump and win approval from the House to bring charges against the president. The Republican-led Senate is extremely unlikely to convict him and remove him from office.

Still, the committee has persistently advanced the impeachment issue — partly to bolster two lawsuits against the Trump administration as the White House has repeatedly blocked witness testimony and document production. The lawsuits say the material is needed so the panel can decide whether to recommend articles of impeachment.

Pelosi has said she wants to see what happens in court before making any decisions on impeachment. But she said Monday that she had signed off on the Judiciary vote, saying that "it's a logical thing for a committee to establish its rules of procedure."

The committee says the resolution is similar to procedural votes taken at the beginning of the impeachment investigations into Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton.

"The adoption of these additional procedures is the next step in that process and will help ensure our impeachment hearings are informative to Congress and the public, while providing the president with the ability to respond to evidence presented against him," Nadler, D-N.Y., said in a statement. "We will not allow Trump's continued obstruction to stop us from delivering the truth to the American people."

The resolution that the committee will consider would set parameters for the panel's impeachment hearings in an attempt to give lawmakers more powers to investigate the president. It would allow committee lawyers to question witnesses for an additional hour — 30 minutes for each side — beyond the five minutes allowed for committee lawmakers. Evidence would be allowed in private session to protect the confidentiality of sensitive materials, and any full committee or subcommittee hearing could be designated by Nadler as part of the committee's probe into whether to recommend articles of impeachment.

The first hearing under the new impeachment rules would be with Corey Lewandowski on Sept. 17. Lewandowski was frequently mentioned in special counsel Robert Mueller's report, which the committee

has been investigating. According to Mueller's report, Trump asked Lewandowski to deliver a message to then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions asking him to limit Mueller's probe.

Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman contributed to this report.

Abortion, border wall put major spending bills into disarray

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Fights over abortion and President Donald Trump's U.S.-Mexico border wall have thrown Senate efforts to advance \$1.4 trillion worth of agency spending bills into disarray, threatening one of Washington's few bipartisan accomplishments this year.

A government shutdown remains unlikely, but agencies face weeks or months on autopilot while frozen at this year's levels if the logjam isn't broken.

At issue are 12 annual budget bills to fund the day-to-day operations of the government. The bills are needed to fill in the details of this summer's budget and debt deal, which reversed cuts scheduled to slash the Pentagon and domestic programs and increased the government's borrowing cap so it won't default on its payments and Treasury notes.

Sweeping votes on July's budget blueprint were a kumbaya moment in Trump's polarized capital. But the Senate Appropriations Committee, tasked with filling in the details, has been beset by infighting in advance of a bill drafting session on Thursday.

Democrats complain that panel chairman Richard Shelby, R-Ala. — following the lead of Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. — is shortchanging the popular health and education measure to fund Trump's \$5 billion request for his border wall. They are also furious about Trump's moves to raid \$3.6 billion in military base construction projects to pay for 11 additional border fence segments totaling 175 miles in Texas, New Mexico and Arizona.

"That's created a real problem," said Sen. Patrick Leahy, D-Vt., the most senior member of the Appropriations Committee. "To take money from substandard schools for children of military people ... that's left a very bad taste."

Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., is poised with an amendment to an almost \$700 billion Pentagon funding bill to block Trump's unprecedented fiscal maneuvers, and he has several potential GOP allies on the committee.

Durbin's threat doesn't seem to have Republicans on edge, but Republicans say that Democrats such as Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a savvy panel insider, are breaking summertime promises to avoid adding "poison pills" to the measures that could bog them down or attract Trump veto promises.

In particular, Murray is pressing to overturn a Trump executive order that takes away federal family planning funds from organizations like Planned Parenthood that counsel women about their abortion options.

The stakes were raised last month when Planned Parenthood announced it would stop accepting Title X federal family planning funds rather than comply with a Department of Health and Human Services edict to comply with the abortion counseling ban. Two Planned Parenthood clinics in Ohio closed this week.

Murray's amendment would likely pass the Appropriations panel, where two pro-abortion rights GOP women would likely side with her. Facing that prospect, Shelby dropped the health funding measure from the agenda, along with a foreign aid bill that also faced an abortion controversy.

"His gag order changed Congress' intent" to award family planning grants to organizations such as Planned Parenthood, Murray said. "Title X has had bipartisan support forever."

The panel has a long history of smoothing over its differences on abortion in the interest of getting its legislation passed, however, and both sides want to press on and work out the challenges. House members like Appropriations Committee Chairwoman Nita Lowey, D-N.Y., are eager to start House-Senate conference committee talks aimed at legislation both chambers can pass, as is McConnell.

"We're hopefully going to get past this little rough patch and get back to the agreement we all signed onto," McConnell said Wednesday.

"We'll get it done because there's a desire to get it done," Leahy said. "We know how to do it."

Russian spy case provides test for news outlets

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — He may be A spy. But is he THE spy?

That's the question bedeviling news organizations reporting on a story about the U.S. extracting a Russian official who provided information about Kremlin interference in the 2016 presidential election. CNN on Monday revealed the secret mission to remove the man and his family out of Russia for fear his life was in danger.

The network did not identify the alleged spy. With government secrets and lives at stake, espionage is usually shrouded in secrecy.

Yet the Russian newspaper Kommersant on Tuesday named an individual it said was a missing member of Vladimir Putin's administration and suggested that he was an agent who provided the United States with information about the election.

That night, NBC News posted a story about a "former senior Russian official" who was living in the Washington area under U.S. government protection, citing current and former government officials.

NBC reporter Ken Dilanian went to the house where this person supposedly lived, although no one was home. He wrote about ringing the doorbell and waiting for five minutes, until two men who identified themselves as friends of the owner drove up and asked what he was doing there. The NBC story speculated that the men were U.S. government agents.

But NBC said it was withholding the Russian's name and other details at the request of the U.S. government, which said such reporting could endanger the person's life.

"I wanted to knock on the door hoping he would come out and talk to me, even if we didn't identify him," Dilanian said. "Just so people understand, we didn't out him. My sources are telling me the Russians surely know where he was because it wasn't a secret. If you Googled the name, you could find where he was living."

The story, however, led Washington Post media critic Erik Wemple to post his own take headlined, "NBC News wanted a part of the Russian spy story. So it did something really stupid."

Wemple questioned how the public benefited from the reporting, other than the knowledge that the spy wasn't well-protected. "Must we know that this fellow is using his actual name? Eh," he wrote. "Must we know that he is living in the Washington area? Negative. Must we know anything aside from what CNN and the New York Times reported? Perhaps, but Dilanian isn't providing it."

Yet a half hour earlier, Wemple's own newspaper posted a story by Shane Harris and Ellen Nakashima identifying the Russian and the town where he lived. They went to the house, too, and no one was there. Spotting toys and clothing strewn across the yard, they wrote that "the family seems to have left in a hurry." The Post reporters quoted a neighbor who talked about the person.

Wemple told The Associated Press that his story was being edited when the Harris and Nakashima piece was posted. He said he had no idea his newspaper was working on it.

"They do their thing and we do our thing," he said. "The messiness of this situation attests to the separation between our ranks."

One thing the Post and NBC stories had in common: They said they could not confirm that the person whose home they visited was the spy who gave the CIA information about election interference. NBC wrote that "he fits the profile of someone who may have had access to information about Putin's activities and who would have been recruited by American intelligence officials." The Post quoted unnamed officials saying the person "was almost certainly a valuable CIA asset."

Some other news organizations, including The Associated Press and NPR, cited the inability to definitively tie the spy to the CIA's extraction mission as the reason why they have not used the person's name. NPR said the name was mistakenly used once in a report filed from Moscow, but wasn't repeated.

The Post noted that by the time its story was published, the person's name had been reported by many other outlets.

"The question of protecting his identity was moot," spokeswoman Molly Gannon said.

Tom Bettag, former producer of ABC's "Nightline" and now a journalism professor at the University of

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Maryland, put up a caution flag.

"Everyone has left the impression that this is the guy," Bettag said. "It would be a terrible thing if it turns out that he's not. I think you have to be super-careful."

In the back of many minds is the 2018 poisoning in Britain of Sergei Skripal, a former Russian military officer and double agent for that country's intelligence service. He and his daughter survived the nerve agent attack.

CNN noted in its original story that it was careful not to include information that could lead to identifying the agent involved. The network used some of that information later when it came out in the Times — the person's length of service and ability to collect images of material on Putin's desk — in order to make the point that the spy had a high-level job. The network has not sought to name the person.

The New York Times used the Washington-area Russian's name Wednesday afternoon in a story headlined, "What Spy? Kremlin Mocks Aide Recruited by C.I.A. as a Boozy Nobody."

The story said the Times was not able to independently confirm that the "boozy nobody" was the spy extracted by the United States.

7 questions heading into 10-candidate Democratic debate

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — And then there were 10.

The Democratic Party's strongest presidential contenders — according to polls and fundraising, at least — meet on the same debate stage for the first time Thursday night.

The lineup in Houston will be different but the dynamic familiar: Former Vice President Joe Biden will fight to preserve his front-runner status as a crowded stage of lower-tier candidates scrap for attention and momentum any way they can. Opportunities and risks abound for a race that is far from settled.

Seven big questions heading into the third Democratic debate, to be carried on ABC:

HOW WILL INTERNAL DIVISIONS PLAY OUT WITH A COMPLETELY NEW GROUP?

These 10 have never shared the stage before. Biden and Elizabeth Warren will stand shoulder-to-shoulder for the first time and may attract much of the pre-event hype, but any number of significant friction points could emerge in a group that highlights the extraordinary diversity of the 2020 class. There will be three women on stage, four racial minorities, one gay man and an age gap that spans four decades. Don't forget about the ideological divide that features a democratic socialist on one side and an establishment-backed moderate on the other. There will almost certainly be fireworks on multiple fronts, especially with the second-tier candidates desperate for a breakout moment.

WHERE HAVE ALL THE MODERATES GONE?

This moment marks a dramatic contraction of the Democratic Party's 2020 class, which has essentially been cut in half — for now, at least. Suddenly gone are several outspoken moderate voices — former Colorado Gov. John Hickenlooper, former Maryland Rep. John Delaney and Ohio Rep. Tim Ryan — who were not shy in previous debates about warning the party against nominating someone too far to the left. Their absence leaves Biden with far fewer allies in his push for pragmatism over ideological purity. And it may make it easier for progressive policy besties Bernie Sanders and Warren to continue pulling the party leftward on health care, taxes, immigration and education. President Donald Trump is only too happy to let Democrats showcase their plans to transform America.

HOW FRAGILE IS THE FRONT-RUNNER?

Biden holds a significant lead over the crowded field, despite signs of soft support, a weak organization and repeated missteps. His performance on Thursday will either create more anxiety for his supporters or strengthen his claim on the mantle of undisputed front-runner. What's clear is that Biden will be at the center of the action. He plans to be aggressive if provoked, and his opponents are prepared to test him. Kamala Harris wounded Biden in a testy exchange over race in June, but Biden effectively deflected at-

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tacks in last month's meeting. Which Biden will show up?

CAN WARREN WIN?

Of all the candidates, Warren has shown the most upward trajectory so far, still trailing Biden but consistently placing among the top three. But that status will invite more scrutiny, including on the debate stage, of her many plans and the price tags they carry — issues that Trump could easily use against her in a general election. And unfortunately for Warren, no quality matters more to Democratic primary voters in the age of Trump than the ability to win. Warren has a prime-time opportunity to answer that question directly as she stands alongside Biden for the first time on the debate stage. Can she stand up to him, literally and figurately, to help convince skeptical voters that she can take down an older, outspoken and unapologetic man?

DOES AGE MATTER?

South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg has something the rest of the top tier does not: youth. At just 37 years old, he's more than three decades younger than Biden, Sanders and Warren. He has so far been reluctant to seize on his opponents' age to help himself, but with voting set to begin in less than five months, he's under increasing pressure to use his comparative advantage more aggressively — especially as the 76-year-old Biden faces increasing questions on the campaign trail about whether he's lost a step after four decades in politics. It's a delicate issue that cuts both ways. But the generational divide is a key factor as Democrats work to reassemble the coalition that twice elected President Barack Obama.

DO THEY REALLY WANT DIVERSITY?

Democrats were quick to highlight the diverse slate of candidates they sent to Congress last year, but the top tier of the Democrats' 2020 presidential field has been dominated by white people. The people of color in the race — Kamala Harris, Cory Booker, Julián Castro and Andrew Yang — are fighting to change that. But Harris' early-summer surge has disappeared, and the others have been mired in the single digits. That's even as they have proved to be dynamic candidates on the campaign trail. But as Trump embraces a strategy that focuses almost exclusively on winning white voters, Harris, Booker and other minority candidates are tasked with convincing voters that diversity is both the nation's strength and its future.

CAN ANYONE IN THE LOWER TIER BREAK OUT?

Ten candidates have already been cut from the debate stage altogether (yes, a few may return next month). But anyone on stage has a path to the nomination — on paper, at least. But time is getting short for those now participating in their third debate and still stuck in low single digits like Booker, Amy Klobuchar, Beto O'Rourke, Castro and Yang. It's quickly becoming time to put up or shut up. To break out they may have to get creative. Reports suggest that Yang, who has been captured on video crowd-surfing in recent days, is promising to do something Thursday night that's never been done by a presidential candidate before.

Government plans to ban flavors used in e-cigarettes

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The federal government will act to ban thousands of flavors used in e-cigarettes, President Donald Trump said Wednesday, responding to a recent surge in underage vaping that has alarmed parents, politicians and health authorities nationwide.

The surprise White House announcement could remake the multibillion-dollar vaping industry, which has been driven by sales of flavored nicotine formulas such as "grape slushie" and "strawberry cotton candy."

The Food and Drug Administration will develop guidelines to remove from the market all e-cigarette flavors except tobacco, Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar told reporters during an Oval Office appearance with the president, first lady Melania Trump and the acting FDA commissioner, Ned Sharpless.

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Trump, whose son Barron is 13 years old, said vaping has become such a problem that he wants parents to be aware of what's happening. "We can't allow people to get sick and we can't have our youth be so affected," he said.

Melania Trump recently tweeted her concerns over the combination of children and vaping, and at the meeting, the president said, "I mean, she's got a son — together — that is a beautiful, young man, and she feels very, very strongly about it."

Trump's first public comments on vaping come as health authorities investigate hundreds of breathing illnesses reported in people who have used e-cigarettes and other vaping devices.

No single device, ingredient or additive has been identified, though many cases involve marijuana vaping.

The restrictions announced by Trump officials would only apply to nicotine vaping products, which are regulated by the FDA.

The FDA has had the authority to ban vaping flavors since 2016, but has previously resisted calls to take that step. Agency officials instead said they were studying if flavors could help smokers quit traditional cigarettes.

But parents, teachers and health advocates have increasingly called for a crackdown on flavors, arguing that they are overwhelmingly to blame for the explosion in underage vaping by U.S. teens, particularly with small, discrete devices such as Juul's.

"It has taken far too long to stop Juul and other e-cigarettes companies from targeting our nation's kids with sweet-flavored, nicotine-loaded products," said Matthew Myers, of the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids, in a statement.

Federal law prohibits e-cigarette and all other tobacco sales to those under 18.

But federal health officials said Wednesday that preliminary data shows more than 1 in 4 high school students reported vaping this year, compared with 1 in 5 students in 2018. Federal health officials have called the trend an "epidemic," and they fear teenagers who vape will eventually start smoking.

More than 80 percent of underage teens who use e-cigarettes say they picked their product because it "comes in flavors that I like," according to government surveys.

A ban on flavors would be a huge blow to companies like San Francisco-based Juul, which sells mint, fruit and dessert flavored-nicotine pods.

Juul and others have argued that their products are intended to help adult smokers wean themselves off traditional paper-and-tobacco cigarettes.

But a Juul spokesman said in a statement that the company "strongly" agreed with the need for "aggressive action" on flavors.

"We will fully comply with the final FDA policy when effective," he stated.

The Vapor Technology Association said in a statement the flavor ban would force smokers "to choose between smoking again ... or finding what they want and need on the black market." The group represents vaping manufacturers, retailers and distributors.

Some health experts have seen vaping as offering an "off ramp" for smokers, but the proposed ban casts enormous uncertainty over those hopes.

A 2009 law banned all flavors from traditional cigarettes except menthol. But that law did not apply to e-cigarettes, which were then a tiny segment of the tobacco market.

"We simply have to remove these attractive flavored products from the marketplace until they can secure FDA approval, if they can," Azar said.

Azar said flavored products could apply for FDA permission to reenter the market. But under agency standards, only products that represent a net benefit to the public health can win FDA clearance.

Azar said the administration would allow tobacco-flavored e-cigarettes to remain available as an option for adult smokers until May 2020, before undergoing their own mandatory FDA review. But he said that if children begin using those products, "we will take enforcement action there also."

It will take several weeks to develop the flavor restrictions. Azar said the policy could be implemented as soon as 30 days after it is finalized.

Significantly, the Trump plan is expected to bar menthol and mint vaping flavors. FDA officials have pre-

viously exempted those products from any sales restrictions because they were thought to be useful to adult smokers. Anti-vaping advocates criticized that decision, pointing to survey data showing more than half of teens who vape use mint and menthol.

"Finally, the FDA is doing its job," said Sen. Dick Durbin, D-Ill., who has prodded the agency for months to take action on flavors.

Scott Gottlieb, who stepped down as FDA commissioner in April, said in a tweet that Juul bore particular responsibility for forcing the administration's hand.

"Unfortunately the entire category of e-cigs was put at risk largely as a result of the youth abuse of mostly one manufacturer's products," Gottlieb said.

Wednesday's announcement came despite months of aggressive lobbying by Juul, which spent \$1.9 million in the first half of the year to try and sway the White House, Congress and the FDA.

Several former White House officials, including communications aide Josh Raffel, and Johnny DeStefano, who served as counselor to Trump, have gone on to work for Juul.

A few local governments, including San Francisco, have passed bans on flavored tobacco. And this month Michigan moved to become the first state to ban flavored electronic cigarettes.

E-cigarettes have been on the U.S. market for more than a decade. But FDA officials have repeatedly delayed enforcing regulations on them, referencing industry fears that regulation could wipe out thousands of small companies.

Most experts agree the aerosol from e-cigarettes is less harmful than cigarette smoke since it doesn't contain most of the cancer-causing byproducts of burning tobacco. E-cigarettes generally heat liquid containing nicotine. But there is virtually no research on the long-term effects of vaping.

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter: @AP_FDawriter

Vaping group plotted lobbying efforts at Trump's DC hotel

By BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — America's vaping industry has in recent years taken its fight to fend off regulation directly to President Donald Trump's doorstep, with a lobbying group twice booking annual meetings at his Washington hotel and e-cigarette maker Juul hiring two of his former White House officials.

In 2017 and 2018, the Vapor Technology Association met at Trump's hotel to strategize how to lobby the administration, with a Republican lawmaker at one conference advising it to emphasize jobs created by the growing industry and how regulation could devastate hundreds of small vaping businesses.

An intensive, multimillion-dollar lobbying effort by the industry in the last two years alone had largely been successful, until an outcry over hundreds of breathing problems and at least six deaths among users of e-cigarettes and similar devices led the Trump administration to crack down Wednesday with a proposal to ban flavored e-cigarettes popular with teens.

Ethics experts point to vaping as a glaring example of what they were worried about from the moment Trump took office — an industry seeking to shape government policy while putting money in the president's pocket by holding events, booking rooms and paying for food at one of his properties.

"Whether it is foreign governments or e-cigarette companies, there is a perception that staying at a Trump hotel benefits the patron in some way," said Matthew Sanderson, a former legal adviser to several Republican presidential campaigns. "This cuts to the heart of why there are concerns about the president having active business interests."

The Vapor Technology Association did not reply to an email and phone request for comment on its lobbying efforts but told The Associated Press last year that it booked Trump's hotel for budget reasons and its proximity to Capitol Hill. This year's meeting will be held next week at Washington's Hotel Fairmont.

As for Trump's proposed ban, the group said in a statement that there was no evidence that vaping is to

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blame for recent cases of lung illness and urged the president to reverse course before "small businesses around the country are forced to close their doors, and tens of thousands of people are laid off."

Anticipating such criticism, Trump appeared to walk a line Wednesday between acknowledging the wealth created by the burgeoning industry and the growing health dangers.

"They've become very rich companies very fast. The whole thing with vaping is ... it's been very profitable," Trump said. "But we can't allow people to get sick, and we can't have our youth to be so affected."

The Vapor Technology Association has spent \$678,000 on federal campaigns in the past three years, with Juul pitching in \$3.7 million more.

Last year, Juul hired former Trump communications aide Josh Raffel and, earlier this year, Johnny DeStefano, who served as counselor to the president.

Among those lobbying on Juul's behalf are Jim Esquea, who worked during the Obama administration as an assistant secretary at the Department of Health and Human Services, and Ted McCann, who was a top policy aide to former House Speaker Paul Ryan.

The 2017 vaping conference at the Trump International Hotel in Washington featured a keynote address from Sen. Ron Johnson, a Wisconsin Republican pushing the Food and Drug Administration to pull back on a 2016 rule requiring e-cigarette makers get federal approval.

Ten days later, the FDA did just that, announcing that manufacturers of e-cigarettes and cigars already on the market would get a reprieve of four years — since changed to three years — before they would be required to get agency approval.

Tony Abboud, executive director of the Vapor Technology Association, told the AP last year that it was "overly simplistic" to suggest the event at Trump's hotel had anything to do with the FDA delay.

In June last year, the group held a second two-day conference at Trump's Washington hotel, with speakers lined up to talk about such topics as "ending improper marketing," "reclaiming the public health narrative" and "defending flavors."

The keynote speaker, then-U.S. Rep. Ryan Costello of Pennsylvania, was quoted by the business magazine Fast Company as saying that the industry needed to talk about jobs if they hoped to fight off regulation.

"If there's one thing elected officials want to be on the right side of, it's job creation," Costello said. "Lead with: improved public health outcomes from those switching, and then the economic impact. How many jobs will this legislation cost? How many small businesses will close? That's what legislators need to know."

Associated Press writers Jill Colvin and Matthew Perrone contributed to this report from Washington.

18 years later, America vows to 'never forget' 9/11

By KAREN MATTHEWS and JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — People who were too young on 9/11 to even remember their lost loved ones, and others for whom the grief is still raw, paid tribute with wreath-layings and the solemn roll call of the dead Wednesday as America marked the 18th anniversary of the worst terror attack on U.S. soil.

"Eighteen years. We will not forget. We cannot forget," Bud Salter, who lost his sister, Catherine, said at ground zero.

President Donald Trump laid a wreath at the Pentagon, telling victims' relatives: "This is your anniversary of personal and permanent loss."

"It's the day that has replayed in your memory a thousand times over. The last kiss. The last phone call. The last time hearing those precious words, 'I love you,'" the president said.

Later, former President George W. Bush, who was in office on 9/11, and then-Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld attended another wreath-laying at the Pentagon.

Near Shanksville, Pennsylvania, the third site where planes crashed on Sept. 11, 2001, Vice President Mike Pence credited the crew and passengers who fought back against the hijackers with protecting him and others in the U.S. Capitol that day.

"I will always believe that I and many others in our nation's capital were able to go home that day and

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hug our families because of the courage and selflessness of your families," said Pence, who was an Indiana congressman at the time. Officials concluded the attackers had been aiming the plane toward Washington.

Nearly 3,000 people were killed when terrorist-piloted planes slammed into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and the field in Pennsylvania.

After reading part of the long list of names, Parboti Parbhu choked up as she spoke from the ground zero podium about her slain sister, Hardai. Even after nearly two decades, "there's no easy way to say goodbye," she said.

By now, the heritage of grief has been handed down to a new generation, including children and young adults who knew their lost relatives barely or not at all.

Jacob Campbell was 10 months old when his mother, Jill Maurer-Campbell, died on 9/11.

"It's interesting growing up in a generation that doesn't really remember it. I feel a connection that no one I go to school with can really understand," Campbell, a University of Michigan sophomore, said as he attended the ceremony.

Like the families, the nation is still grappling with the aftermath of Sept. 11. The effects are visible from airport security checkpoints to Afghanistan, where the post-9/11 U.S. invasion has become America's longest war. The aim was to dislodge Afghanistan's then-ruling Taliban for harboring al-Qaida leader and Sept. 11 mastermind Osama bin Laden.

Earlier this week, Trump called off a secret meeting at Camp David with Taliban and Afghan government leaders and declared the peace talks "dead." As the Sept. 11 anniversary began in Afghanistan, a rocket exploded at the U.S. Embassy just after midnight, with no injuries reported.

Al-Qaida's current leader used the anniversary to call for more attacks on the U.S. and other targets.

In New York, Nicholas Haros Jr., who lost his mother, Frances, reminded the audience of the al-Qaida attackers and tore into Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota over her recent "Some people did something" reference to 9/11.

"Our constitutional freedoms were attacked, and our nation's founding on Judeo-Christian values was attacked. That's what 'some people' did. Got that now?" he said to applause.

Omar, one of the first Muslim women elected to Congress, has said she didn't intend to minimize what happened on Sept. 11, and accused critics of taking her words out of context. She tweeted Wednesday that "September 11th was an attack on all of us."

The dead included Muslims, as Zaheda Rahman underscored after reading names at ground zero. She called her uncle, Abul Chowdhury, a "proud Muslim-American man who lived his life with a carefree nature, a zeal for adventure and a tenacity which I emulate every single day."

Others made a point of spotlighting the suffering of firefighters, police and others who died or fell ill after being exposed to the smoke and dust at ground zero.

A compensation fund for people with potentially Sept. 11-related health problems has paid out more than \$5.5 billion so far. More than 51,000 people have applied. Over the summer, Congress made sure the fund won't run dry. The sick also gained new recognition this year at the World Trade Center site, where a memorial glade was dedicated this spring.

Associated Press writer Michael R. Sisak contributed.

Ministry had growing empire before forced-labor charges

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A Southern California ministry whose leaders are charged with using deadbolt locks to detain homeless residents and making them turn over panhandling money was no fly-by-night operation. Imperial Valley Ministries was known in the remote desert region for decades of work helping drug addicts turn their lives around.

The ministry operated a ranch for men, a group home for women and a small headquarters office on

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one of the busiest streets in El Centro, a city of 45,000 people in a region of scorching summers, high unemployment and bountiful winter harvests that supply supermarkets across the United States. Residents were seen at intersections in burgundy T-shirts with the ministry's name emblazoned in white letters, asking idled motorists for money in exchange for a flier about the ministry's work and a choice of peanuts or candy.

It became so successful that it established a network of about 30 affiliate churches across the country in cities as far-flung as Charlotte, North Carolina, and Las Vegas.

A list of 29 house rules cited in an indictment unsealed Tuesday describes how the ministry kept a tight hold on residents in a cult-like atmosphere. They were prohibited from discussing "things of the world" and reading anything but the Bible, forced to surrender all identification and personal belongings, avoid family contact for the first 30 days and relinquish all earnings.

"You can't leave the house unless accompanied by someone and with the permission from the director -- never by yourself," the rules sheet read. "You can't go to the front yard, unless told so by the counselor."

Victor Gonzalez, the ministry's 40-year-old former pastor of Brownsville, Texas, his 39-year-old wife, Susan Christine Leyva, and 10 others have pleaded not guilty to crimes including forced labor and benefits fraud. The defendants allegedly confiscated magnetic-striped cards that are used for the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program, commonly known as food stamps.

Gonzalez, his wife and nine others appeared Wednesday at federal court in Brownsville and El Centro. Five defendants in El Centro were found to be in the country illegally and denied bond because they were considered flight risks. No one responded to phone and email messages left Wednesday with the ministry, and it was unclear if the defendants had attorneys.

For all the horrors outlined in a 29-page indictment, the ministry drew little public suspicion until the FBI raided its properties in May 2018.

"We certainly encountered a lot of people who were very appreciative of going cold turkey and getting off of drugs," Christopher Tenorio, an assistant U.S. attorney based in San Diego, said Wednesday.

The ministry was founded in the 1970s and opened its first group home in 1992. Tenorio said the founders, who were not named in the indictment and are now elderly, turned over the reins to Gonzalez, a resident, in 2013, which is when abuses began to escalate.

Windows were nailed shut at some group home locations, leading a 17-year-old victim to break a window, escape, and run to a neighboring property to call police, authorities say. Ministry members allegedly told people that they would not receive transportation home, that loved ones had rejected them and they must stay because only God loved them. Punishments included withholding food.

Residents panhandled up to 54 hours a week to provide money to the church, according to the indictment. Some were refused medical treatment.

The ministry expanded to about 30 cities through affiliates allied with the Christian Restoration Movement, none of whom have been charged. Locations included Los Angeles; San Jose, California; Phoenix; Oklahoma City; St. Louis; Louisville, Kentucky; and Memphis, Tennessee.

The ministry sent someone from Imperial Valley to establish the affiliates, who were required to send back 10% of their tithes, Tenorio said. Some affiliates broke ties after the FBI raids.

The ministry allegedly recruited homeless people from the streets from far-flung cities, offering help and driving them in white vans to El Centro. It operated a home in Chula Vista, a San Diego suburb, for people to stay temporarily.

Spread the Love Charity, which provides day shelter, counseling and other services to homeless people, noticed about two years ago that former residents of Imperial Valley Ministries were showing up, saying they wanted to go home but had no money, said Jessica Solorio, its founder. She called the ministry but no one responded to her messages until the FBI raid, after which time Gonzalez came to her office and reimbursed her for dozens of bus tickets.

"I never knew of anything bad," said Solorio, who opened her charity in 2015. "They tried to help people off the streets. They had a ranch with animals to keep them busy. There was never anything from the outside looking in that looked horrible."

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The FBI asked Solorio to let them know when people came from the ministry. Agents interviewed former residents, leading to the raid.

At the time, Gonzalez publicly pinned the raid on a woman who, he said, claimed in 2016 that her daughter was being held against her will.

"We tried to help her out as much as we could," Gonzalez said, as reported by KYMA-TV of Yuma, Arizona. "We tried to help her out even to bring her son, and the mom was always in denial."

The ministry drew mixed reviews online. One woman who called it "a cult" said she was grateful that her daughter turned sober during a 7-month stay but that the ministry pitted her child against her family and forced residents to stay on the streets peddling candy until they met a quota.

Tentative list of the missing in Bahamas has 2,500 names

FREEPORT, Bahamas (AP) — An estimated 2,500 people are listed as missing in the Bahamas in Hurricane Dorian's aftermath, the government said Wednesday. But it cautioned that the names had yet to be checked against the rosters of people evacuated from the devastated islands or staying in shelters.

Carl Smith, a spokesman for the country's National Emergency Management Agency, said he expected the list to shrink as the names are checked.

More than a week after Dorian smashed thousands of homes on the country's Grand Bahama and Abaco islands, the death toll stood at 50 and was expected to rise, with search-and-rescue crews still making their way through the ruins.

"The number of deaths is expected to significantly increase," Prime Minister Hubert Minnis said in a national address Wednesday night.

He said the Bahamas would hold a national day of prayer, and named hurricane response coordinators for the two most-affected islands.

While power has returned to much of Grand Bahama, Smith said the electrical infrastructure around Marsh Harbour, Abaco's largest city, was destroyed.

In Freeport, the largest city on Grand Bahama, rental car company driver Clifton Williams said he was driving home Monday when he saw an illuminated streetlight for the first time since the hurricane.

"I was happy to see that. I didn't expect that so quickly," he said. "First thing I do, I cut on the fan and cool off myself," he added, saying he slept well for the first time in more than a week thanks to the fan.

Others in Freeport didn't have power yet.

"It's the same as it was a week ago. It's very hot," said Samuel Antonio.

AP Analysis: N. Carolina flashes warnings for Trump and Dems

By LISA MASCARO, JOSH BOAK and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — North Carolina's special election results are flashing 2020 warning signs for Republican President Donald Trump — and also for his Democratic foe, whoever that turns out to be.

Even though Republicans won Tuesday's race for a House seat, the narrow victory for Dan Bishop underscored the president's problems with suburban voters who took a chance on Trump in 2016 but seem to be shifting toward Democrats. In Charlotte's sprawling Mecklenburg County, there was a 14-point swing toward the Democrats, and there are many similar suburbs across Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania battlegrounds that will be key to Trump's reelection.

At the same time, Democrats are watching uneasily as rural voters slip further away, hardening the political realignment of 2016 when Trump peeled off disgruntled Democrats to build his base.

Special elections are always unique, experts say. This one, on a sleepy late-summer Tuesday with relatively few people focused on politics, can hardly foreshadow next year in any deep way. But both parties poured millions of dollars into it, and they're trying to read the outcome's signs for 2020.

"What's at stake is suburban voters," said Rick Tyler, a Republican operative. Trump's coalition appears to be shifting as suburban women move away from the president, he said. Less clear is if they're decidedly turning to Democrats.

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"That ought to worry Trump, and it ought to worry Democrats," he said.

Other Republicans say that some regions appear to be going "Trumpier," as one strategist put it, and big turnouts of rural voters can offset losses in the suburbs. Also, GOP deserters will be fewer if Democrats pick a presidential nominee -- Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders -- who will be portrayed as too liberal.

"We don't really look at it suburban-versus-rural areas or whatever," said Chris Carr, the political director of the Trump campaign and the Republican National Committee. He said the party has moved away from geographic targeting and is more focused on turning out individual voters.

"So there's a new math there," said Trump campaign adviser Bill Stepien. "And I think we need to throw out the old way we look at how elections are won and lost."

But is that just wishful thinking?

The race in North Carolina was the Republicans' to lose. The seat has been held by Republicans for decades and was only contested because the 2018 midterm results were tossed out amid allegations of voter fraud by the former GOP candidate's campaign.

The do-over matched another Republican, state Sen. Bishop, who authored a controversial bathroom bill that mandated which facilities transgender people can use, against Democrat Dan McCready, a Marine veteran and businessman.

McCready is just the kind of Democratic candidate who helped the party gain control of the U.S. House in the 2018 midterms, a newcomer with a national security background. But his appeal, while strong in the suburbs, was not enough to overpower Trump's candidate in the rural regions.

The president touched down for a big rally in the district on the eve of Election Day, aiming to turn out the vote. Republicans say his ability to push people to the polls cannot be overstated and they saw increases in same-day voting.

Democrats, though, contend the president's arrival had the opposite effect in the suburbs, where he is "the biggest unifier," as one operative put it, pushing Democrats and independents to vote against him.

And the big-money, one-seat campaign is hardly typical of what can be expected in districts across the country next year.

"Republicans in Washington had to spend over \$6 million to barely scrape by in a district President Trump once carried by nearly 12 points," said Rep. Cheri Bustos, D-Ill., chair of the House Democrats' campaign committee. "There are certainly a lot of Republicans asking themselves whether the seat they currently hold is one they can defend in 2020."

Suburbs were once a bulwark for Republicans in battleground states, but they have become more of a liability during the Trump era.

In North Carolina's 9th congressional district, McCready received 55.9% of the vote in Mecklenburg County, home to the state's largest city, Charlotte, and much of its suburban area. The outcome marked a sharp reversal from the 2016 congressional when the Democratic candidate got just 41.9% of the vote in the county, a 14-point swing.

The results weren't enough to take the North Carolina seat. McCready, for example, got less than 40% of the vote in more rural Union County.

The special election's returns fit a developing pattern of suburban voters chafing against the president's leadership and casting their lot with the Democrats. His challenge for 2020 can be seen in must-win states such as Michigan and Pennsylvania.

Last year, Michigan's once reliably Republican 8th congressional district on the outer edges of the Detroit suburbs voted 50.6% for Democrat Elissa Slotkin.

Out in the Philadelphia suburbs of Chester County, Pennsylvania, Democrat Chrissy Houlahan won 59% of the vote last year, up from 45.5% for the Democratic candidate in 2016.

Statewide, in Georgia, a hotly contested governor's race drew record midterm turnout, with Democrat Stacey Abrams exceeding her party's 2016 presidential vote by 45,000 votes, even in defeat. Republican Brian Kemp watched rural and small-town turnout swell, and he won an even larger share than the usual GOP vote in those counties. It was enough to preserve a narrow victory, even as a metro Atlanta boost

shifted one House seat to Democrats.

David Wasserman, an analyst for the Cook Political Report, said the results from Tuesday show there's a "five-alarm fire" for Trump in the suburbs. But there's also a "real constituency" of Trump Democrats in the more rural regions.

The divide between the suburbs and the rural voters is "going to be wider" in 2020, he said. "We just don't know who that benefits."

Associated Press writers Alan Fram in Washington and Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

T. Boone Pickens, oilman and renewables advocate, dies at 91

By CLIFF BRUNT Associated Press

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — T. Boone Pickens, a brash and quotable oil tycoon who grew even wealthier through corporate takeover attempts, died Wednesday. He was 91.

Pickens was surrounded by friends and family when he died of natural causes under hospice care at his Dallas home, spokesman Jay Rosser said. Pickens suffered a series of strokes in 2017 and was hospitalized that July after what he called a "Texas-sized fall."

An only child who grew up in a small railroad town in Oklahoma, Pickens followed his father into the oil and gas business. After just three years, he formed his own company and built a reputation as a maverick, unafraid to compete against oil-industry giants.

In the 1980s, Pickens switched from drilling for oil to plumbing for riches on Wall Street. He led bids to take over big oil companies including Gulf, Phillips and Unocal, castigating their executives as looking out only for themselves while ignoring the shareholders.

Even when Pickens and other so-called corporate raiders failed to gain control of their targets, they scored huge payoffs by selling their shares back to the company and dropping their hostile takeover bids.

Former President George W. Bush said in a statement that Pickens became a household name because he was "bold, imaginative and daring."

"He was successful, and more importantly, he generously shared his success with institutions and communities across Texas and Oklahoma," Bush said. "He loved the outdoors, his country and his friends and family, and Laura and I send our condolences."

Later in his career, Pickens championed renewable energy including wind power. He argued that the United States needed to reduce its dependence on foreign oil. He sought out politicians to support his "Pickens Plan," which envisioned an armada of wind turbines across the middle of the country that could generate enough power to free up natural gas for use in vehicles.

"I've been an oilman all my life, but this is one emergency we can't drill our way out of," he said in 2009.

Pickens' advocacy for renewable energy led to some unusual alliances. He had donated to many Republican candidates since the 1980s, and in the 2004 presidential campaign he helped bankroll television ads by a group called Swift Boat Veterans for Truth that attacked Democratic nominee John Kerry. A few years later, Pickens endorsed a Kerry proposal to limit climate change.

Pickens couldn't duplicate his oil riches in renewable energy. In 2009, he scrapped plans for a huge Texas wind farm after running into difficulty getting transmission lines approved, and eventually his renewables business failed.

"It doesn't mean that wind is dead," Pickens said at the time. "It just means we got a little bit too quick off the blocks."

Pickens flirted with marketing water from West Texas, acquiring water rights in the early 2000s in hopes of selling it to thirsty cities. But he couldn't find a buyer, and in 2011 he signed a deal with nearby regional water supplier to sell the water rights beneath 211,000 acres for \$103 million.

In 2007, Forbes magazine estimated Pickens' net worth at \$3 billion. He eventually slid below \$1 billion and off the magazine's list of wealthiest Americans. In 2016, the magazine put his worth at \$500 million.

Besides his peripatetic business and political interests, Pickens made huge donations to his alma mater,

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Oklahoma State University — the football stadium bears his name, and he gave \$100 million for endowed faculty positions.

“He was the ultimate Cowboy,” university President Burns Hargis said in a statement. “It is impossible to calculate his full impact on Oklahoma State. His historic gifts to academics and athletics not only transformed the university, they inspired thousands of others to join in the transformation.”

Pickens’ foundation gave \$50 million each to the University of Texas’ M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston and UT Southwestern Medical Center at Dallas. He was among those who signed a “giving pledge” started by billionaire investor Warren Buffet and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates, promising to donate a majority of his wealth to charity.

“I firmly believe one of the reasons I was put on this Earth was to make money and be generous with it,” he said on his website.

Pickens was born in 1928 in Holdenville, Oklahoma. His father was a landman, someone who secures mineral-rights leases for oil and gas drilling. His mother ran a government office that handled gasoline-rationing coupons for a three-county area during World War II.

A child of the Depression, Pickens credited his father with teaching him to take risks and praised his grandmother for lessons in being frugal. If young Boone continued to leave the lights on after leaving a room, she declared, she would hand the electric bill to the boy so he could pay it.

Pickens went to work by age 12, getting a newspaper route. He expanded it by buying the routes on either side of his — marking his first venture into acquisitions.

Although only 5-foot-8, Pickens was a star guard on his high school basketball team in Amarillo, Texas, and earned a sports scholarship to Texas A&M University. He lost the scholarship when he broke an elbow, and he transferred to Oklahoma A&M, now Oklahoma State.

After graduating with a degree in geology, he joined Phillips Petroleum Co., where his father, T. Boone Pickens Sr., was working. The younger Pickens was unhappy with his job from the start.

After just three years, he borrowed some money and found two investors to start his own business, called Petroleum Exploration. That was a predecessor to Mesa Petroleum, an oil and gas company in Amarillo, which Pickens took public in 1964.

By the 1980s, the stock of the major petroleum producers was so cheap that it became cheaper to get new oil reserves by taking over a company than by drilling. Pickens set his sights on acquiring other companies.

In 1984, Mesa Petroleum made a profit of more than \$500 million from a hostile bid for Gulf Corp., then the fifth-largest oil company in the United States, when Gulf maneuvered to sell itself instead to Chevron. Before that, Pickens earned \$31.5 million by driving Cities Service into the arms of Occidental Petroleum.

Later that year, Pickens launched a bid for his old employer, Phillips Petroleum. It was an unpopular move in Bartlesville, Oklahoma, where Phillips was headquartered. Residents held 24-hour prayer vigils to support the company.

Pickens’ methods angered his targets.

“He’s only after the almighty buck,” G.C. Richardson, a retired executive of Cities Services, said in 1985. “He’s nothing but a pirate.”

Pickens insisted that he was a friend of ordinary shareholders, who benefited when his forays caused the stock price of a company to rise.

Pickens’ star faded in the 1990s. He lost control of debt-ridden Mesa, and his bullishness on natural gas prices turned out to be a costly mistake.

After leaving Mesa, Pickens in 1996 started BP Capital Management, a billion-dollar hedge fund focused on energy commodities and equities that delivered mammoth gains.

There were difficult times in his personal life. In 2005, Pickens looked on as one of his sons, Michael, was arrested on securities-fraud charges — he pleaded guilty and was sentenced to five years’ probation and ordered to repay \$1.2 million.

Pickens owned a ranch in the Texas Panhandle, another in Oklahoma, and a vacation retreat in Palm Springs, California.

After his fall in July 2017, he wrote on LinkedIn that he was still mentally strong, but "I clearly am in the fourth quarter."

Associated Press writers David Koenig and David Warren in Dallas and Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City, and former AP writer Betsy Blaney contributed to this report.

UK court: Boris Johnson's suspension of Parliament unlawful

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A Scottish court dealt another blow to Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Brexit plans Wednesday, ruling that his decision to suspend Parliament less than two months before the U.K. is due to leave the European Union was an unlawful attempt to avoid democratic scrutiny.

The government immediately said it would appeal, as the political opposition demanded Johnson reverse the suspension and recall lawmakers to Parliament.

With Brexit due in 50 days, the court ruling deepened Britain's political deadlock. Johnson insists the country must leave the EU on Oct. 31, with or without a divorce deal to smooth the way. But many lawmakers fear a no-deal Brexit would be economically devastating, and are determined to stop him.

Their case got a boost late Wednesday as the government gave in to a demand from lawmakers and published a document showing that a hard exit could lead to logjams for freight, shortages of some foods and medicines, major travel disruptions and possible rioting.

The document's release was the day's second setback for Johnson and followed the surprise judgment by Scotland's highest civil court, which found that the government's action suspending lawmakers was illegal "because it had the purpose of stymieing Parliament."

Johnson claims he shut down the legislature this week so that he can start afresh on his domestic agenda at a new session of Parliament next month. But the five-week suspension also gives him a respite from rebellious lawmakers as he plots his next move to break the political impasse over Brexit and lead Britain out of the EU by Oct. 31, "do or die."

But a panel of three Court of Session judges in Edinburgh said "the only inference that could be drawn was that the U.K. government and the prime minister wished to restrict Parliament."

One of the judges, Philip Brodie, said it appeared the suspension was intended "to allow the executive to pursue a policy of a no-deal Brexit without further parliamentary interference."

The judges declared the suspension "null and of no effect," but said Britain's Supreme Court must make the final decision at a hearing starting Tuesday.

Johnson denied he was being anti-democratic.

"If opposition members of Parliament disagree with our approach, then it is always open to them to take up the offer that I've made twice now — twice! — that we should have an election," he said in an online question-and-answer session. "There is nothing more democratic in this country than a general election."

Opposition politicians, however, insisted that the government must recall Parliament. Lawmakers were sent home this week despite the objections of House of Commons Speaker John Bercow and opposition lawmakers, who held up signs in the chamber saying "Silenced."

"He should do the right thing now, which is to reopen Parliament, let us back to do our job and to decide what to do next," said Labour Party Brexit spokesman Keir Starmer.

Dominic Grieve, one of 21 lawmakers kicked out of the Conservative group in Parliament by Johnson last week after voting against the government, said it was possible the prime minister had misled Queen Elizabeth II — whose formal approval is needed to suspend Parliament — about his motives.

He said if that turned out to be true, the prime minister would have to "resign — and very swiftly."

The court ruling came after more than 70 opposition lawmakers challenged the government's decision to shut down Parliament until Oct. 14 — just over two weeks before Britain is due to leave the EU.

Last week, a court in Edinburgh rejected the lawmakers' challenge, saying it was a matter for politicians, not the courts, to decide. But that was overturned Wednesday on appeal.

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The British government said it was disappointed by the decision and would appeal to the Supreme Court. It noted that another challenge to the suspension, brought by transparency campaigner Gina Miller, was rejected at the High Court in London last week by judges who said the decision was inherently political and "not a matter for the courts."

Catherine Haddon, a senior fellow at independent think-tank the Institute for Government, tweeted that the Scottish ruling "does not (yet) change the prorogation itself. Though of course will add to pressure."

Britain's 2016 decision to leave the European Union has left the country's politics gridlocked and tested to the limit the U.K.'s largely unwritten constitution.

With a no-deal Brexit looming, rebel members of the governing Conservatives joined with the opposition to deliver a series of blows to Johnson in the days before Parliament was suspended. They passed a law that orders the government to seek a three-month delay to Brexit if no agreement has been reached by late October, and twice rejected Johnson's call for a snap general election.

The latest setback came with the forced release of the government's own assessment of the fallout from a hard Brexit, which found that the number of trucks crossing the main freight route between Calais and Dover would drop by between 40% and 60% within a day, with disruptions possibly lasting with up to three months. The supply of certain types of fresh foods and essential medicines would decrease, prices would go up and poor people would be hit hardest.

The paper, dated Aug. 2, sets out the government's "reasonable worst-case planning assumption" for a no-deal Brexit and describes major disruption for travelers between Britain and the EU, uncertainty for U.K. citizens living in Europe, and says attempts to maintain an open border between Ireland and Northern Ireland would probably fail. It also says a no-deal exit could trigger major protests and even riots.

The government refused to comply with another part of Parliament's demand — that it hand over emails and texts among officials and aides discussing the decision to suspend Parliament. Michael Gove, the minister in charge of Brexit planning, said the request was inappropriate and disproportionate.

More than three years after Britain voted to leave the EU, voters of all stripes are fed up and both the Conservatives and main opposition Labour Party are divided.

Johnson, one of the leaders of the 2016 "leave" campaign, is trying to deliver Brexit and counter an electoral threat from the newly founded Brexit Party. Its leader Nigel Farage took out newspaper ads Wednesday, offering an electoral pact with the Conservatives if Johnson backed a "clean break" — a no-deal Brexit.

But Johnson's office said "the PM will not be doing a deal with Nigel Farage."

Johnson says he wants to strike a new deal with the bloc after the agreement made by his predecessor Theresa May was rejected three times by Britain's Parliament.

He said Wednesday that talks with the 27 other EU nations were making progress.

"The mood is changing, the ice floes are cracking," he said.

But EU officials say the U.K. has made no concrete new proposals.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said Wednesday that "we still have a chance to achieve this in an orderly way," but that Germany was also prepared for a no-deal Brexit.

Frank Jordans in Berlin contributed to this story.

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On 9/11, Trump consoles victims, has tough words for Taliban

By DEB RIECHMANN and DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Like his two most immediate predecessors, President Donald Trump marked the anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks in a speech at the Pentagon and, like them, still unable to end America's longest war, in Afghanistan.

Trump's 9/11 speech on Wednesday came just five days after he called off U.S. talks with the Taliban,

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abruptly ending nearly a year of hopeful negotiations by a State Department envoy who said he was on the "threshold" of a peace agreement aimed at ending the conflict.

It has been 18 years since al-Qaida hijackers commandeered four U.S. commercial airliners and crashed them into the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Shanksville, Pennsylvania. Nearly 3,000 people were killed in the largest attack on American soil.

Like Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush, Trump remembered the victims, first responders and U.S. troops who have battled in Afghanistan, where the Taliban hosted al-Qaida leaders as they plotted 9/11.

"For the families who join us, this is your anniversary of personal and permanent loss," Trump said. "It's the day that has replayed in your memory a thousand times over. The last kiss. The last phone call. The last time hearing those precious words, 'I love you.'"

"Then the attack, the anguish of knowing your family member had boarded one of these flights or was working at the World Trade Center or serving right here at the Pentagon," he said. "You waited. You prayed. You answered that most dreaded call, and your life changed forever."

Trump said he went to the scene of the downed twin towers and saw the first responders working.

"I went down to ground zero with men who worked for me to try to help in any little way that we could," Trump said. "We were not alone. So many others were scattered around trying to do the same. They were all trying to help."

Some of Trump's statements about his 9/11 experiences cannot be verified, including claims that he sent construction crews to help clear the site, that he had "hundreds" of friends die at ground zero and that he witnessed television coverage of Muslims in the U.S. cheering the destruction.

The moment of silence at the Pentagon is traditionally observed at 9:37 a.m., the time when a plane was flown into the building. But this year, the anniversary was observed 10 minutes late, at 9:47 a.m., with Trump running behind schedule.

In his speech, he had tough words for the Taliban following the end of peace talks.

"If anyone dares to strike our land, we will respond with the full measure of American power and the iron will of the American spirit," Trump said.

"If, for any reason, they come back to our country, we will go wherever they are and use power the likes of which the United States has never used before, and I'm not even talking about nuclear power," Trump said without elaborating on what he meant.

Despite Trump's verbal threats, his envoy, Zalmay Khalilzad, has been sitting across the table from Taliban leaders in Doha, Qatar, for months discussing a U.S. troop withdrawal and Taliban guarantees to keep Afghanistan from again becoming a launch pad for global terror attacks.

Those talks came to an abrupt halt last weekend when Trump tweeted that he had canceled a proposed meeting with the Taliban and members of the Afghan government at the Camp David presidential retreat in Maryland.

Many Afghans fear his canceling the talks will mean more carnage as the U.S. and Taliban, as well as Afghan forces, step up their offensives and civilians die in the crossfire.

Trump said he canceled the talks after the Taliban detonated a car bomb on Sept. 5 and killed two troops — one American and one Romanian — and 10 civilians in a busy diplomatic area near the U.S. Embassy in Kabul.

Trump's continued reference to ending the talks after one American service member was killed has upset many Afghans, who witness near-daily attacks.

As America mourned 9/11, weary Afghans are watching their own toll from the aftermath continue to rise exponentially. The Taliban and U.S. and Afghan forces are all to blame.

For the first time, more Afghan civilians have been killed by international and Afghan forces than by the Taliban and other insurgents, the United Nations said of the first three months of this year, with thousands more wounded by insurgent attacks.

Several hours after Trump left the Pentagon memorial, Bush, who was president during the Sept. 11,

2001, attacks, visited for a separate, private wreath-laying. Bush was joined by former Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld, who was in his Pentagon office when the plane hit the building.

Associated Press writer Lolita C. Baldor contributed to this report.

The DIY foreign policy president: Bolton ouster confirms it

By MATTHEW LEE AP Diplomatic Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump has said he doesn't mind if the U.S. is on its own in the world. Now, it seems he doesn't mind running American foreign policy on his own as well.

With the ouster of John Bolton as his national security adviser, the president has again pushed away an experienced hand in international affairs and a counter-weight to his DIY approach to Iran, North Korea, China and more.

Trump told reporters Wednesday that Bolton had made "some very big mistakes," did not get along with others in the administration and was out of step with him on policy. "John wasn't in line with what we were doing," the president said.

Bolton is a hardliner with well-known hawkish views, working for a president known more for improvisation than ideology. His departure, as world leaders prepare to converge on New York for the annual United Nations General Assembly this month, produces new uncertainty in international affairs already clouded by Trump's do-it-yourself instincts.

"The president doesn't have any fixed views on anything, so that people around him are constantly trying to get into his good graces by playing to his whims, and because his whims are all over the map, their policy positions end up being all over the map," said Stephen Biddle, a professor of international and public affairs at Columbia University.

Bolton is just the latest in a parade of seasoned foreign policy hands leaving the Trump administration as the president has grown more comfortable in his own decision-making and resistant to internal dissent. Bolton's ouster leaves Secretary of State Mike Pompeo at the top of the foreign policy chart, but he is only nominally at the wheel of an apparatus that is driven by the president alone and to which he accommodates.

With nearly all of the administration's international initiatives incomplete or stalled, Trump faces a series of critical decisions without a national security adviser, an experienced defense secretary or permanent director of national intelligence.

He said Wednesday he's considering five people to replace Bolton.

With the exception of Pompeo, Trump has dispatched experienced top aides at an unprecedented rate. In less than three years, he's run through three national security advisers and is on his second secretary of state and secretary of defense. The national security adviser and director of national intelligence posts are now vacant and being handled by officials in "acting" capacities.

Nearly all of those who have left have had significant policy differences with Trump, including Secretary of State Rex Tillerson, Defense Secretary James Mattis, Director of National Intelligence Dan Coats and now Bolton.

Early in his tenure, Bolton succeeded where his predecessor, H.R. McMaster, failed in managing-up to Trump, dropping McMaster's formal and professorial stylings for smaller, free-wheeling meetings that Trump found more engaging. But that process, more ad hoc, steamrolled elements of the vast security bureaucracy and earned him few friends in other agencies.

Trump had recently come to believe, with the prodding of Bolton opponents, that his national security adviser had crossed the line between adviser and principal, and that he was trying to use the NSC bureaucracy to implement his own, rather than Trump's, foreign policy. Some administration officials have sought to use Bolton's internal differences with the president's national security team to pin the NSC as the source of embarrassing leaks in recent weeks — including Trump's musings about buying Greenland or using nuclear weapons to break up hurricanes.

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Pompeo has persevered, however, as Trump considers him more of a loyalist, willing to carry out his decisions without protest.

As for U.S. foreign policy, Bolton focused on principles, Trump on personality, namely building relationships with foreign heads of state. Bolton repeatedly balked at Trump having meetings with leaders of troublesome nations like North Korea, which Trump has now done three times.

In addition, the president has abruptly backtracked or shifted course so many times it's led to confusion among friends and foes as they seek coherence in the policies of the world's superpower.

Bolton and Trump sparred on a variety of issues from Afghanistan and Iran to North Korea, Russia and Venezuela .

On Wednesday, Trump blamed Bolton for scaring North Korean leader Kim Jong Un away from negotiations by mentioning the "Libya model" in an interview last year about what a successful agreement to denuclearize North Korea might look like. Libyan leader Moammar Gadhafi was overthrown and killed in 2011, eight years after renouncing weapons of mass destruction and turning over chemical and nuclear-related weapons material to the United States and Britain.

Trump said Kim wanted "nothing to do with John Bolton."

But, of all the urgent issues confronting Trump ahead of the U.N. General Assembly, Iran is the one over which the president and Bolton most vehemently disagreed.

White House officials suggest Bolton's opposition to Trump's consideration of hosting the Taliban at Camp David was the precipitating cause of his ouster. But Republicans and officials familiar with the many policy divergences between the two say Iran policy and Trump's desire for a meeting with Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, possibly at the U.N., was the core issue.

Two administration officials said Bolton was deeply resistant to the idea of offering Rouhani anything to encourage him to a meeting that French President Emmanuel Macron has proposed. The officials, who were not authorized to discuss internal deliberations publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity, said one of Bolton's concerns was that Macron might try to lure Trump into a "spontaneous" three-way meeting with Rouhani on the sidelines of the General Assembly.

Trump on Wednesday would not rule out the possibility of easing sanctions on Iran in order to get Rouhani to the table, something Bolton fiercely opposed.

"We'll see what happens. We'll see what happens," Trump said.

Bolton had also strongly resisted a proposal from Sen. Rand Paul, R-Ky., to which Trump had initially assented, to invite Iran's foreign minister to Washington last month, the officials said.

Indeed, Bolton's departure has already sparked near-panic among hawkish lawmakers and others, particularly those opposed to the Iran nuclear deal who fear Trump may now make concessions to Tehran.

"I sincerely hope his leaving the White House does not mean that the deep-state forces at State and Treasury—who have been fighting tooth and nail to preserve the Obama Iran nuclear deal—have finally convinced the president to go soft on Iran," said Sen Ted Cruz, R-Texas, a leading hawk on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee.

That question and others are still to be answered. Michael O'Hanlon, a defense and national security expert at the Brookings Institution, said Bolton's exit does not necessarily portend a less hawkish U.S. foreign policy, given that Pompeo is hawkish, too. O'Hanlon said he believes Bolton's departure "has more to do with internal chemistry and Trump's own style - and his relative lack of loyalty to people."

Associated Press writers Bob Burns, Jonathan Lemire, Zeke Miller and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

Democratic debate: Top 2020 contenders finally on same stage

By **BILL BARROW** Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Despite the miles traveled, the tens of millions of dollars raised and the ceaseless churn of policy papers, the Democratic primary has been remarkably static for months with Joe Biden leading in polls and Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders vying to be the progressive alternative. That stability is under threat on Thursday.

All of the top presidential candidates will share a debate stage, a setting that could make it harder to avoid skirmishes among the early front-runners. The other seven candidates, meanwhile, are under growing pressure to prove they're still in the race to take on President Donald Trump next November.

The debate in Houston comes at a pivotal point as many voters move past their summer vacations and start to pay closer attention to the campaign. With the audience getting bigger, the ranks of candidates shrinking and first votes approaching in five months, the stakes are rising.

"For a complete junkie or someone in the business, you already have an impression of everyone," said Howard Dean, who ran for president in 2004 and later chaired the Democratic National Committee. "But now you are going to see increasing scrutiny with other people coming in to take a closer look."

The debate will air on a broadcast network with a post-Labor Day uptick in interest in the race, almost certainly giving the candidates their largest single audience yet. It's also the first debate of the 2020 cycle that's confined to one night after several candidates dropped out and others failed to meet new qualification standards.

If nothing else, viewers will see the diversity of the modern Democratic Party. The debate, held on the campus of historically black Texas Southern University, features several women, people of color and a gay man, a striking contrast from the increasingly white and male Republican Party. It will unfold in a rapidly changing state that Democrats hope to eventually bring into their column.

Perhaps the biggest question is how directly the candidates will attack one another. Some fights that were predicted in previous debates failed to materialize with candidates like Sanders and Warren in July joining forces to take on their rivals.

The White House hopefuls and their campaigns are sending mixed messages about how eager they are to make frontal attacks on anyone other than President Donald Trump. That could mean the first meeting between Warren, the rising progressive calling for "big, structural change," and Biden, the more cautious but still ambitious establishmentarian, doesn't define the night. Or that Kamala Harris, the California senator, and Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana, look to reclaim lost momentum not by punching upward but by reemphasizing their own visions for America.

Biden, who has led most national and early state polls since he joined the field in April, is downplaying the prospects of a titanic clash with Warren, despite their well-established policy differences on health care, taxes and financial regulation.

"I'm just going to be me, and she'll be her, and let people make their judgments. I have great respect for her," Biden said recently as he campaigned in South Carolina.

Warren says consistently that she has no interest in going after Democratic opponents.

Yet both campaigns are also clear that they don't consider it a personal attack to draw sharp policy contrasts. Warren, who as a Harvard law professor once challenged then-Sen. Biden in a Capitol Hill hearing on bankruptcy law, has noted repeatedly that they have sharply diverging viewpoints. Her standard campaign pitch doesn't mention Biden but is built around a plea that the "time for small ideas is over," an implicit criticism of more moderate Democrats who want, for example, a public option health care plan instead of single-payer or who want to repeal Trump's 2017 tax cuts but not necessarily raise taxes further.

Biden, likewise, doesn't often mention Warren or Sanders. But he regularly contrasts the price tag of his public option insurance proposal to the single-payer system that Warren and Sanders back. The former vice president, his aides say, is willing to have discussion over health care, including with Warren.

Ahead of the debate, the Biden campaign also emphasized that he's released more than two decades of tax returns, in contrast to the president. That's a longer period than Warren, and it could reach back

into part of her pre-Senate career when she did legal work that included some corporate law.

Biden's campaign won't say that he'd initiate any look that far back into Warren's past, but in July, Biden was ready throughout the debate with specific counters for rivals who brought up weak spots in his record.

There are indirect avenues to chipping away at Biden's advantages, said Democratic consultant Karen Finney, who advised Hillary Clinton in 2016. Finney noted Biden's consistent polling advantages on the question of which Democrat can defeat Trump.

A Washington Post-ABC poll this week found that among Democrats and Democratic-leaning voters, Biden garnered 29% support overall. Meanwhile, 45% thought he had the best chance to beat Trump, even though just 24% identified him as the "best president for the country" among the primary field.

"That puts pressure on the others to explain how they can beat Trump," Finney said.

Voters, Finney said, "want to see presidents on that stage," and Biden, as a known quantity, already reaches the threshold. "If you're going to beat him, you have to make your case."

Some candidates say that's their preferred path.

Harris, said spokesman Ian Sams, will "make the connection between (Trump's) hatred and division and our inability to get things done for the country."

Buttigieg, meanwhile, will have an opportunity to use his argument for generational change as an indirect attack on the top tier. The mayor is 37. Biden, Sanders and Warren are 76, 78 and 70, respectively — hardly a contrast to the 73-year-old Trump.

There's also potential home state drama with two Texans in the race. Former Rep. Beto O'Rourke and former Obama housing secretary Julian Castro clashed in an earlier debate over immigration. Castro has led the left flank on the issue with a proposal to decriminalize border crossings.

For O'Rourke, it will be the first debate since a massacre in his hometown of El Paso prompted him to overhaul his campaign into a forceful call for sweeping gun restrictions, complete with regular use of the F-word in cable television interviews.

O'Rourke has given no indication of whether he'll bring the rhetorical flourish to broadcast television.

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

A gene-editing first: scientists tried CRISPR to fight HIV

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

Scientists are reporting the first use of the gene-editing tool CRISPR to try to cure a patient's HIV infection by providing blood cells that were altered to resist the AIDS virus.

The gene-editing tool has long been used in research labs, and a Chinese scientist was scorned last year when he revealed he used it on embryos that led to the birth of twin girls. Editing embryos is considered too risky, partly because the DNA changes can pass to future generations.

Wednesday's report in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, by different Chinese researchers, is the first published account of using CRISPR to treat a disease in an adult, where the DNA changes are confined to that person.

The attempt was successful in some ways but fell short of being an HIV cure.

Still, it shows that gene editing holds promise and seems precise and safe in this patient so far, said Dr. Carl June, a University of Pennsylvania genetics expert who wrote a commentary in the journal.

"That's really good for the field," June said.

Chinese government grants paid for the research, which was done openly with advance notice on a scientific registry and standard informed consent procedures. Some of those steps were missing or questioned in last year's embryo work.

"There are no ethical concerns on this one," June said.

Gene editing permanently alters DNA, the code of life. CRISPR is a relatively new tool scientists can use to cut DNA at a specific spot.

The new case involves a 27-year-old man with HIV who needed a blood stem cell transplant to treat

cancer. Previously, two other men were apparently cured of both diseases by transplants from donors with natural resistance to HIV because they have a gene mutation that prevents HIV from entering cells. Since donors like this are very rare, the Chinese scientists tried to create similar HIV resistance by "editing" that gene in blood cells in the lab to try to mimic the mutation.

The transplant put the man's cancer in remission, and the cells that were altered to resist HIV are still working 19 months later. But they comprise only 5% to 8% of such blood cells, so they're outnumbered by ones that can still be infected.

"They need to approach 90% or more, I think, to actually have a chance of curing HIV," June said.

Scientists are testing various ways to make the gene editing more efficient, and "our results show the proof of principle" for this approach, one study leader, Hongkui Deng of Peking University in Beijing, wrote in an email.

One very encouraging result: multiple tests show that the editing did not have unintended effects on other genes.

"One of the concerns is that they could make a Frankenstein cell, that they would hit other genes instead of the intended target," so it's good that this did not happen, June said.

China appears to be moving fast on such research and may get treatments approved sooner than the United States, June said. He has financial ties to some gene therapy companies and is leading a different study testing CRISPR to fight cancer in the U.S. Three patients have been treated so far and some results are expected by the end of this year.

Several other U.S. studies have been trying to control HIV by altering patients' own blood cells using a different gene editing tool called zinc finger nucleases. The first such test began a decade ago in the U.S.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed at <http://twitter.com/MMarchioneAP>

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Few turn out as Mugabe is returned to a Zimbabwe in crisis

By ANDREW MELDRUM and FARAI MUTSAKA Associated Press

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — Zimbabwe's founding leader Robert Mugabe made his final journey back to the country Wednesday, his body flown into the capital amid the contradictions of his long, controversial rule.

President Emmerson Mnangagwa, Mugabe's closest ally and vice president before joining the military-led effort to oust him in 2017, addressed the airport gathering of about 1,000, praising Mugabe as "our revolutionary commander ... an icon of pan-Africanism" and "the man who created our nation."

The former guerrilla leader, who died Friday at 95 in a hospital in Singapore, led the fight to end white-minority rule in what was then Rhodesia, and ruled Zimbabwe from its independence in 1980 until he was deposed. During his 37-year authoritarian leadership, Zimbabwe descended from prosperity to economic crisis marked by hyperinflation, unemployment and a drastic drop in living conditions for its 16 million people.

Wednesday's subdued airport gathering was a far cry from the tumultuous crowd of 100,000 that swarmed the airport in January 1980 to welcome Mugabe back after years in exile. That boisterous greeting rocked Rhodesia and was a dramatic signal that its days of white minority rule were numbered. Within months Mugabe was elected president and sworn in as the leader of the new nation of Zimbabwe.

By contrast, no supporters were seen lining the streets of Zimbabwe's capital on Wednesday to mark the passing of the country's founding leader. Harare otherwise bustled with residents scrambling to cope with the country's economic deterioration, with vehicles lined up for scarce fuel, people gathering to pump water from neighborhood wells because of a widespread shortage and currency dealers selling cash.

The shortages and power cuts lasting up to 19 hours a day are the latest symptoms of Zimbabwe's economic decline that began in 2000 when Mugabe launched the seizures of farms owned by whites. The chaotic, often violent confiscations triggered a collapse of the once productive agricultural sector and began a downward economic spiral. Further mismanagement brought about hyperinflation reaching more than a

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billion percent in 2009, which was only halted when the country abandoned its currency for the U.S. dollar.

Mnangagwa has vowed to return Zimbabwe to affluence but in his nearly two years in power he has not succeeded in eradicating corrosive corruption or achieving substantial economic growth.

Mugabe's body was to be displayed at several historic locations before burial Sunday at an as yet unannounced site, a sign of the friction between the ex-leader's family and the government.

Widow Grace Mugabe, her face covered in a heavy black veil, sat next to Mnangagwa as Mugabe's casket, draped with a Zimbabwean flag, was wheeled to a podium by top military generals, several of whom had participated in his ouster. Grace Mugabe had bitterly denounced Mnangagwa before her husband's downfall, yet there was no show of antagonism during the short ceremony.

Mugabe's casket was then taken to a nearby military barracks for prayers before going to the family's 25-bedroom home in the posh Borrowdale suburb for an evening gathering. At Blue Roof, Mugabe's expansive mansion named for its striking bright blue Chinese tiled roof, dozens of wailing relatives and friends welcomed Grace and her husband's coffin, carried by members of presidential guard, before a church service got underway.

Many mourners sat on the floor around the casket at the wake, with large portraits of Mugabe flanking the coffin. Mnangagwa was not among those at the Mugabe residence.

Earlier, about 500 mourners gathered in Zvimba, Mugabe's birthplace some 85 kilometers (55 miles) northwest of Harare. The former leader's body was expected to be taken there on Thursday, as well as to a stadium in the capital's poor Mbare neighborhood for public viewing before being moved Saturday to the National Sports Stadium, where African heads of state, dignitaries and the public will attend a service.

Where and when the former strongman will be buried has not been announced, sparking speculation of a disagreement between the government and Mugabe's wife and other family members. The government had earlier stated that Mugabe would be buried at the Heroes' Acre state monument, a burial place reserved for top officials of Zimbabwe's ruling ZANU-PF party who contributed to ending white colonial rule. But some family members said he should be buried at his birthplace, according to Zimbabwean tradition.

Leo Mugabe, Mugabe's nephew and the family's spokesman, told The Associated Press on Wednesday that relations are good between the family and Mnangagwa, but he would not disclose where Mugabe would be buried.

Mnangagwa "has been looking after the president, paying all the bills, sending the charter flight, inviting all the foreign dignitaries — I think he has been extra good," Leo Mugabe said. "We went to thank him yesterday for what he has done this far. Now we really appreciate what the government has done."

The grateful comments appeared to indicate a reconciliation between the family and Mnangagwa. Shortly after Mugabe's death, the nephew had said Mugabe died "a very bitter man" because he felt betrayed by Mnangagwa and the army generals who were his allies for close to four decades before they put him under house arrest and forced him to resign.

It had long been expected that Mugabe would be buried at Heroes' Acre, a monumental burial location atop a prominent hill featuring a grandiose towering sculpture of guerrilla fighters that Mugabe built with help from North Korea. Mugabe's first wife, Sally, is buried there next to a gravesite long reserved for the ex-leader.

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Friendly fire: In trade fights, Trump targets US allies, too

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has risked turmoil in the financial markets and damage to the U.S. economy in waging his trade war with China, America's top strategic rival.

But Trump hasn't exactly gone easy on America's friends, either. From Europe to Japan, the president has stirred up under-the-radar trade disputes that potentially could erupt within weeks or months with damaging consequences.

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The administration is seeking, for example, to tax up to \$25 billion in European Union imports in a rift over the EU's subsidies to the aircraft giant Airbus. It's also threatening to impose tariffs to punish France for a digital services tax that targets U.S. internet giants Google, Amazon and Facebook.

And come November, Trump could take his aggressive policies into uncharted territory by imposing tariffs on foreign autos and auto parts. This move would risk igniting a damaging conflict with Japan and the EU as well as with lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

The president's rough tactics have already shaken markets and paralyzed businesses that are struggling to decide where to expand or invest at a time when the rules of global commerce can be upended with one presidential tweet. Their uncertainty has contributed to a slowdown in global trade and growth.

"He doesn't seem to be deterred," said William Reinsch, a former U.S. trade official who is an analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. "He seems to argue that these things are good and have a positive effect for America."

On trade, Trump is governing as he said he would. He casts the gaping U.S. trade deficit — \$628 billion last year — as indisputable proof that America is being ripped off by its trading partners and that the free-trade deals his predecessors negotiated are rigged against U.S. companies. As a candidate, Trump pledged to forge more U.S.-friendly deals and to deploy tariffs to bend other countries to his will.

Mainstream economists take a decidedly different view of America's trade deficit. They say it reflects a fundamental reality that won't yield to changes in trade policy: Americans consume more than they produce. And imports fill the gap.

Among Trump's numerous trade fights, his standoff with China has drawn by far the most attention. And for good reason: His administration is waging the biggest trade war since the 1930s against the world's second-largest economy in a fight over Beijing's aggressive push to supplant America's technological dominance. Trump has imposed tariffs on \$360 billion in Chinese imports and is preparing to tax the remaining \$160 billion in goods that have so far been spared.

Yet Beijing is hardly the only U.S. trading partner to draw Trump's fury. He has asserted that the EU's trade policies are even worse than China's and has threatened to use tariffs against the 28-country trade bloc, which has long been a vital U.S. ally.

"Sadly, in many cases it is our allies that took the greatest advantage of this country," Trump said at a campaign rally Monday. "Now you have a president who understands I am not supposed to be the president of the world. I'm supposed to be president of the United States."

Trump's Office of the U.S. Trade Representative has drawn up lists of \$25 billion in EU imports — including aircraft, gouda cheese, waffles and olives — that the U.S. could hit with tariffs in retaliation for the bloc's support of Airbus.

Last year, the World Trade Organization ruled that the EU had indeed illegally subsidized Airbus. An arbitrator will decide how much compensation the United States is entitled to but could produce a figure that falls well short of what the Trump administration wants.

A much bigger hammer could drop this fall.

Trump last year ordered the Commerce Department to investigate whether imported autos and auto parts posed a threat to America's national security — a designation that would allow Trump to impose tariffs under a rarely used provision of American trade law. Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross duly decided that foreign cars did imperil the United States. (The administration last year invoked the same justification to tax imported steel and aluminum.)

But the administration in May decided to postpone any action on autos for six months until mid-November.

Tariffs on auto imports would mark a drastic escalation of trade hostilities. The United States last year imported \$192 billion worth of passenger cars and light trucks and an additional \$159 billion in auto parts. Virtually no one outside the White House supports auto tariffs, which would disrupt manufacturing supply chains, raise prices for American consumers and open a diplomatic rift with Europe and Japan.

If Trump proceeds with the taxes, he would likely face pushback in Congress. Lawmakers are already considering legislation to scale back his nearly unlimited authority to impose tariffs on national security

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grounds.

The president is using the looming tariffs to try to pry concessions from Europe and Japan. Last month, the EU agreed to import \$270 million worth of U.S. beef annually. Trump credited his tariff threat.

"The EU has tremendous barriers to us, but we just broke the first barrier," he said then. "Maybe we broke it because of the fact that if I don't get what we want, I put on auto tariffs."

Likewise, Japan hopes to reach an agreement that would exempt it from Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs and from the threat of auto tariffs. In exchange, Tokyo would grant America's farmers greater access to the Japanese market.

But Reinsch, noting that Trump has a history of slamming countries with sanctions even after they've agreed to his terms, said he thought Tokyo would insist that any agreement be "signed in blood."

Pressured by the steel and aluminum tariffs, for instance, Mexico agreed to join Trump's U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement, a revamping of the North American Free Trade Agreement that Trump had condemned as a job-killing disaster.

But just as trade relations between the neighbors appeared to be returning to normal, Trump surprised even his own advisers by threatening to tax all Mexican imports in a totally separate dispute (later resolved) over immigration.

Economists say growing uncertainty from Trump's confrontational trade moves is weakening American manufacturing, which contracted last month for the first time in three years, according to the Institute for Supply Management. Forecasters are downgrading their estimates of global growth, and financial markets appear sensitive to any perceptible rise in trade hostilities.

Philip Levy, chief economist at the freight company Flexport who was an adviser in President George W. Bush's administration, wonders if Trump will rethink his stated belief that trade wars are "good and easy to win." Maybe, Levy suggested, "With your fingers a little singed, you resolve not to touch the hot stove again."

Would Trump still be willing, for instance, to make good on his threat to abandon NAFTA entirely if Congress doesn't approve the new version his team negotiated?

Daniel Ujczko, a trade attorney with Dickinson Wright in Ohio, said "there is a low likelihood that President Trump actually withdraws from NAFTA" — and risks throwing \$1.4 trillion in annual U.S. trade with Canada and Mexico into chaos.

Still, Ujczko suggested, Trump might go through the motions of doing so and start a six-month procedural clock to a pullout in order to intensify pressure on Congress.

Then again, Trump still enjoys almost unwavering support from his base among rank-and-file Republican voters. His supporters, Levy said, "like it when you fight and not when you act meek."

The result, Levy concluded, is that Trump is "much more likely to double-down than reverse course."

Reinsch agreed:

"Until he sees political consequences, you're not going to see a change in strategy."

AP Writer Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Paul Wiseman on Twitter at @PaulWisemanAP

Water, temperature right for life at another star's planet

By **MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — In a tantalizing first, scientists have discovered water at a planet outside our solar system that has temperatures suitable for life.

Two research groups announced this week that they've found water vapor in the atmosphere of a planet 110 light-years away in the constellation Leo. This so-called Super Earth is just the right distance from its star to conceivably harbor life.

It's the only exoplanet known so far to have both water and temperatures needed for life, the University

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College London team reported in the journal *Nature Astronomy* on Wednesday. But lead author Angelos Tsiaras stressed, "This is definitely not a second Earth."

Its star and atmosphere are so different than ours, "Earth-like conditions are not possible," Tsiaras told reporters. "The only question that we're trying to ask here, and we're pushing forward, is the question of habitability."

A Canadian-led team announced similar findings Tuesday. In a paper just submitted to the *Astronomical Journal* for publication, these scientists suggest it might even be raining there.

"This represents the biggest step yet taken toward our ultimate goal of finding life on other planets, of proving that we are not alone," the study's lead astronomer, Bjorn Benneke of the University of Montreal, said in a statement.

Discovered in 2015, the planet known as K2-18b is twice the size of Earth with eight times the mass. While it's thought to be rocky, no one knows if water's flowing on the surface. Its star, a red dwarf, is considerably smaller and cooler than our sun, a yellow dwarf, and its atmosphere is also different than ours.

Nonetheless, Tsiaras said K2-18b could help determine, "Is the Earth unique?"

The results are doubly exciting, Tsiaras noted, given this is not only the first Super Earth with water detected in its atmosphere but the planet also resides within the habitable zone of its star.

The research teams used archived data from the Hubble Space Telescope and other spacecraft to analyze the planet's atmosphere. Further observations are needed to determine whether the planet is indeed a true water world, using next-generation observatories like NASA's James Webb Space Telescope and the European Space Agency's Ariel, both due to launch in the 2020s.

Future telescopes on Earth and in space should help uncover more Super Earths orbiting red dwarf stars — believed to be the most common planets and stars in our Milky Way galaxy. Super Earths are defined as having a mass greater than Earth but less than gas giants like Uranus and Neptune; more than 1,260 have been confirmed to date.

While water already has been identified in the atmospheres of hot gas giants circling other stars, the latest findings represent the first detection of water vapor in the atmosphere of another type of exoplanet, Tsiaras said.

A NASA tally currently lists more than 4,000 confirmed exoplanets and another 4,000 potential candidates. Most have been detected using the transit method, where telescopes watch for a slight, fleeting dimming of a star's light as a planet passes in the field of view.

For now, scientists know K2-18b takes 33 days to orbit its star, so one year there is one month here. At this distance, temperatures range from minus-100 degrees to 116 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 73 degrees to 47 degrees Celsius.)

The star, glowing red in the day sky, is believed to bombard the planet with radiation harsh enough to quickly inflict any human visitors with cancer, although "life there may have evolved differently" in order to survive, noted the London team's Ingo Waldmann. A sister planet, meanwhile, orbits closer to the star and is likely too hot to be in the habitable zone.

The cloud cover isn't too thick on K2-18b, otherwise it would have obscured the water vapor in the atmosphere, according to the scientists.

The surface, meanwhile, could be wet or dry. The London data suggest water vapor makes up anywhere between 0.01% and 50% of the atmosphere — "quite a big range," Waldmann acknowledged. Either way, given the planet's mass, it would be difficult to walk on the surface.

"Maybe not quite your vacation destination just yet," Waldmann joked.

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Patriots' Brown faces rape accusations by former trainer

By JAY COHEN AP Sports Writer

New England Patriots wide receiver Antonio Brown has been accused of rape by a former trainer. Britney Taylor says Brown sexually assaulted her on three occasions, according to a lawsuit filed Tuesday in the Southern District of Florida.

Brown has denied the allegations. Darren Heitner, a lawyer representing Brown, told The Associated Press his client plans to countersue.

"He will pursue all legal remedies to not only clear his name, but to also protect other professional athletes against false accusations," Heitner said in a statement.

Heitner said Brown and Taylor had "a consensual personal relationship."

The New York Times first reported about the lawsuit.

The AP does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sexual assault unless they come forward publicly, but Taylor was identified in the federal lawsuit and was quoted in a statement provided by her lawyer, David Haas.

"As a rape victim of Antonio Brown, deciding to speak out has been an incredibly difficult decision," Taylor said. "I have found strength in my faith, my family, and from the accounts of other survivors of sexual assault. Speaking out removes the shame that I have felt for the past year and places it on the person responsible for my rape."

Taylor also said in the statement she will cooperate with the NFL and any other agencies.

A spokesman for the NFL declined to comment, but the Patriots said the league told the team it will launch an investigation.

"We are aware of the civil lawsuit that was filed earlier today against Antonio Brown, as well as the response by Antonio's representatives," the Patriots said in a statement. "We take these allegations very seriously. Under no circumstance does this organization condone sexual violence or assault. The league has informed us that they will be investigating. We will have no further comment while that investigation takes place."

The 31-year-old Brown, a Miami native, was released by Oakland last week after clashing with the team throughout training camp. He agreed to a contract with New England on Saturday but has yet to play for the Patriots.

Brown and Taylor met through a Fellowship of Christian Athletes group at Central Michigan University, according to the lawsuit.

Taylor said Brown reached out to her via Facebook in June 2017 and asked the former gymnast for help with improving his strength and flexibility.

According to the lawsuit, Taylor was sexually assaulted by Brown on separate training trips to Pittsburgh and Florida that same month. The suit includes what it says are text messages from Brown bragging about the second assault.

Taylor says in the suit she then cut off ties with Brown. But she agreed to work with him again after she says he apologized and agreed to provide hotel accommodations for each training trip.

According to the lawsuit, Taylor and Brown were in Miami in May 2018 when he raped her in a bedroom at his home. Taylor says she shouted "no" and "stop," but Brown refused.

Heitner said in his statement Taylor invited herself to join Brown and his friends on a night out on the town, and then came on to Brown before they engaged in consensual sex at his residence.

Brown was approached by Taylor in 2017, according to Heitner, about making a \$1.6 million investment in a business project. But he declined.

Heitner said Taylor reached out to Brown again last year, and she traveled to his residences on multiple occasions. Heitner said she asked for tickets to a Pittsburgh Steelers game.

"Mr. Brown, whose hard work and dedication to his craft has allowed him to rise to the top of his profession, refuses to be the victim of what he believes to be a money grab," Heitner said in his statement.

Brown was originally traded from Pittsburgh to Oakland in the offseason. But a bizarre foot injury, fight

with the NFL over his helmet, skipped practices, multiple fines, a run-in with general manager Mike Mayock and his social media posts ultimately led to the decision to release him.

Brown agreed to a deal with the defending Super Bowl champions hours after the Raiders let him go, granting his request.

AP Sports Writers Bob Lentz and Kyle Hightower contributed to this report.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Police: Texas gunman was violent at psychiatric facility

By JAKE BLEIBERG Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — The gunman who killed seven people in West Texas over Labor Day weekend was hospitalized nearly two decades ago at a psychiatric facility, where he punched a hole in a wall and menaced security staff with a piece of pipe pried from a toilet before being arrested, according to police.

Seth Ator was being treated in July 2001 at an in-patient facility in Waco, about 105 miles (169 kilometers) south of Dallas, when he became so violent that staff called the police, Assistant Chief Robert Lanning said Wednesday.

The next month, Ator, then 18, tried to break into a woman's bedroom after threatening to kill her brother, according to arrest reports obtained by The Associated Press. A day after the attempted break-in, he jumped from a second-floor window to evade authorities but was eventually taken into custody and back to the hospital, where staff determined he had "suicidal tendencies," the documents show.

It is unclear whether the events nearly two decades ago in Waco and the suburb of Lorena have any bearing on the Aug. 31 mass shooting that stretched from Midland to Odessa, some 350 miles (563 kilometers) away. It also is unknown whether the hospitalization affected a federal background check that a law enforcement official said blocked Ator from buying a gun in 2014 because of a "mental health issue."

But an interview with Waco police and reports from the McLennan County Sheriff's Office portray a young man who was deeply troubled 18 years before authorities say he opened fire in a rolling rampage that spanned 10 miles (16 kilometers). They emphasize a long history of alarming and threatening behavior that did not, ultimately, prevent Ator from obtaining an assault-style rifle.

Officers killed Ator, 36, outside a busy Odessa movie theater after shootings that lasted more than an hour and injured around two dozen people in addition to the dead.

Asked about Ator's 2001 arrest, the FBI declined to comment on its investigation into the shooting.

Investigators are looking into how Ator obtained the rifle he used despite failing a background check. Last week, they searched the home of a man in Lubbock, who they believe was involved in the "transfer" of the weapon, a federal law enforcement official previously told the AP. The official said federal agents are investigating whether the Lubbock man has been manufacturing firearms but that there have been no arrests.

Through high school, Ator moved between schools in the Texas Panhandle city of Amarillo and Lorena. He was set to graduate in 2001 but dropped out the preceding November to enroll in a GED program, Lorena Independent School District Superintendent Joe Kucera said in a statement.

The following summer, a family in Lorena, a community with a population of about 1,700 people, had a "series of problems" with Ator based on his "relationship" with their daughter, according to the sheriff's reports obtained through a public records request. The AP is not naming the family because attempts to reach them were unsuccessful.

In July 2001, the mother of the family told a deputy that Ator threatened to kill her son. Two days later, Waco police were called to the psychiatric facility after Ator became so combative and destructive that some staff locked themselves in a nursing station out of fear, Lanning, the assistant chief, said after reviewing reports from the incident. The AP has filed a public records request for the documents.

Lanning said Ator was charged with criminal mischief, but the police records don't indicate why he was

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initially taken to the psychiatric facility or if he had been committed. Officials with Ascension Providence hospital, where Ator was arrested, have not responded to questions.

"I don't know that he was admitted or diagnosed," Lanning said. "In this particular instance, it appears, that before they really had a chance to do anything, he became destructive and so they sent him to jail."

Federal law stipulates a limited number of reasons why someone would be prohibited from buying or having a gun. Among them are if the person has been convicted of a crime punishable by more than a year in prison, has a substance abuse addiction, was dishonorably discharged from the military, was convicted of domestic violence or was the subject of a restraining order, or if they have been involuntarily committed for a mental health issue.

FBI records show that in 2018 more than 26 million background checks were conducted, and fewer than 100,000 people failed. The vast majority of those denied were for a criminal conviction. Just over 6,000 were rejected for a mental health issue.

In August of 2001, Ator tried to break into the bedroom of the family's daughter around 3:30 a.m., removing a window screen "in an attempt to contact her," according to the reports. The daughter told Detective Mylie Hudson that she woke up and then saw Ator driving away in his father's vehicle.

The AP's attempts to reach Ator's parents were unsuccessful.

The next day, officers found Ator locked inside a bedroom at a Waco apartment where his friends lived. As the officers knocked on the door and tried to get Ator to unlock it, he opened a bedroom window and jumped to the ground two stories below, the reports state. Hudson wrote that he and other officers searched the apartment complex's grounds but could not find Ator.

The following day, the reports state, officers arrested Ator at another building for criminal trespass and a "suicide threat." He was then taken to a local emergency room.

Staff at the hospital's psychiatric facility evaluated Ator, and an officer at the county jail was informed of his "suicidal tendencies" when he was moved to the jail that day, according to the reports. Ator's parents also told deputies their son had threatened and tried to take his own life, the reports say.

Ator eventually pleaded guilty to evading arrest and criminal trespass. Court records indicate he was ordered to attend Narcotics Anonymous meetings as part of his probation. It is unclear what became of the criminal mischief charge.

A prosecutor and the attorneys who represented Ator did not respond to requests for comment. The misdemeanors themselves would not have prevented Ator from legally purchasing firearms in Texas.

Hudson, the now-retired sheriff's deputy who investigated Ator, told the AP he remembers few specifics about dealing with the man in 2001.

"He just came across as being a nut who didn't want to take no for an answer," said Hudson, 74. "Obviously he had problems back at that time."

Europe eyes stimulus plan, but ultra-low rates raise doubts

By DAVID McHUGH and MARTIN CRUTSINGER Associated Press

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — The European Central Bank appears to be preparing a new shot of stimulus to try to energize the economy. But the move is sure to renew a nagging question: Can central banks do much good when rates are already ultra-low?

Analysts say the bank is likely to cut a key interest rate further below zero on Thursday and could take other steps, including restarting a bond-buying program to pump newly created money into the economy.

That could help the economy by making money cheaper to borrow, a policy that U.S. President Donald Trump has repeatedly pushed the U.S. Federal Reserve to emulate. Yet some officials question how much good another large blast of stimulus will do.

The possible stimulus has raised uncertainty about exactly how big a package might be decided at the gathering of the ECB's 25-member governing council. It will be President Mario Draghi's next-to-last meeting after an eight-year term as head of the monetary authority for the 19 countries that use the euro.

Draghi gave clear hints in a June speech and after the bank's last meeting, on July 25, that more action

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was on the way to counter the slowdown in economic growth, which has been blamed in large part on the U.S.-China trade dispute.

Analysts think the ECB will at least cut the rate on deposits that it takes from commercial banks from a current minus 0.4% to minus 0.5% or even minus 0.6%. The unusual negative rate — in effect a penalty aimed at pushing banks to lend spare cash rather than let it pile up overnight at the central bank — suggests how stretched monetary policy has become in the wake of the Great Recession.

Beyond that, the ECB's governing council could extend its current promise not to raise rates before mid-2020.

And it could decide to resume bond purchases that were stopped in December before economic data took a turn for the worse. Florian Hense, an analyst from Berenberg Bank, said the ECB could purchase 30 billion euros (\$33 billion) in government and corporate bonds a month for at least 12 months.

The bank purchased 2.6 trillion in bonds (\$2.9 trillion) over almost four years, a step that drives up bond prices and drives down interest yields, since prices and yields move in opposite direction. Anticipation of more purchases has driven government bond yields across Europe below zero, meaning governments get paid to borrow and investors are willing to pay for a safe place to stash their money.

The Fed is also moving in the direction of more stimulus, though Trump would like it to cut rates faster and has praised the ECB's negative rates. The Fed cut its key policy rate in July for the first time in a decade, to a new range of 2% to 2.25%. Markets believe there is a near certainty the Fed will cut rates for a second time at its next meeting Sept. 17-18.

Trump on Wednesday tweeted about the benefits in his view of negative interest rates, calling the U.S. Federal Reserve "Boneheads" for not pushing U.S. rates down to "ZERO or less."

There are doubts, however, about how much monetary policy can do.

Among the big issues hurting business confidence are political standoffs such as the trade war and Britain's uncertain exit from the European Union. Credit is already cheap and abundant for governments and companies with good credit ratings. And low rates can have side effects, such as eroding bank profits and inflating the prices of riskier assets such as stocks.

ECB governing council member Klaas Knot, head of the Dutch central bank, has said the economy isn't weak enough to warrant bond purchases. Another member, Sabine Lautenschlaeger of Germany, has said she opposes re-starting bond purchases.

Private economists took strong issue with Trump's contention that negative rates would be good for the United States.

"Negative interest rates are totally destructive to savings and investment," said economist David Jones, the author of four books on the Federal Reserve. "Money is flowing out of countries that have negative rates."

Jones said rates that are near zero or actually negative in many European countries and Japan are a big reason that U.S. long-term rates are so low, as foreign investors search for better returns in the United States.

As central banks are stretched, the discussion has turned to government spending policy as a way to support growth.

Draghi's designated successor, Christine Lagarde, said during her nomination hearing last month that fiscal policies "need to be available to stabilize our economies through downturns and avoid overburdening monetary policies." She urged governments to make pro-business reforms and spend on growth-friendly investment where possible.

"I'm not a fairy," she said, adding that "central banks are not the only game in town."

Lagarde, who resigned as head of the International Monetary Fund effective Friday after being nominated for the ECB presidency by European governments, will take over from Draghi on Nov. 1.

Draghi has also urged governments that are in good financial shape to spend more on projects that would help growth, but has largely been ignored. Germany, the eurozone's biggest member, continues to run budget surpluses despite urging from the IMF to spend more on infrastructure such as extending high-speed internet to all areas of the country.

The eurozone economy grew a modest 0.2% in the second quarter while Germany shrank 0.1% and could fall into a technical recession, defined as two quarters of contraction, if it drops again in the third quarter.

Crutsinger contributed from Washington.

A shocker: US beaten by France 89-79 in World Cup quarters

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

DONGGUAN, China (AP) — No gold. No medal. No more winning streak.

The U.S. reign atop international basketball has ended — this time, thwarted by France at the World Cup. For the first time since 2006, the U.S. sent NBA players to a major international tournament and won't win gold. Evan Fournier scored 22 points, Rudy Gobert had 21 points and 16 rebounds and France beat the U.S. 89-79 in the World Cup quarterfinals on Wednesday, rallying from a seven-point fourth-quarter deficit to pull off the upset.

"Any loss hurts," U.S. coach Gregg Popovich said. "And in this situation, it hurts more. But life goes on. This is very important and we would have loved to have won ... but we're all grown, we all have families and lives and life goes on."

The U.S. had won 58 consecutive tournament games in FIBA and Olympic competition, starting with the bronze-medal game at the 2006 world championships and continuing through every FIBA Americas, World Cup and Olympics event since. It was bidding to become the first nation to win three consecutive World Cups, after winning three straight Olympic golds in that span.

The best the Americans can do now in China is finish fifth, and they're assured of their worst finish in a big tournament with NBA players since placing sixth at the 2002 world championships. They're going home with a berth in the 2020 Olympics secured but no medal.

Donovan Mitchell scored 29 points for the U.S., all of them coming in the first three quarters. The Americans came up scoreless on six consecutive possessions down the stretch, the drought that allowed the French to take control of a back-and-forth game for the final time.

"Just got to take it like a man at this point," U.S. guard Kemba Walker said. "We lost. There's nothing we can do. We competed. We've been competing since day one that we got to training camp. But we gave it everything we've got. I know we're Team USA and things of that nature and they've been winning for a lot of years, but you know, we didn't get a chance to pull it off."

Nando De Colo scored 18 for France. The French held the U.S. to 4 for 15 shooting in the fourth quarter — and benefited from the Americans going 4 for 11 from the foul line in the final 10 minutes.

"We came here to win gold," Gobert said. "We knew it wasn't going to be easy. A lot of people counted us out, but we got the win."

Gobert said beating the Americans wasn't the goal — winning gold is.

"It doesn't mean anything if you don't win in the end," Gobert said.

France was up 10 early in the second half. The U.S. went on a 31-14 run over the next 10 minutes to go up by seven. And then the French responded with a 15-2 run over the next five minutes, going up 82-76 on a long jumper by Frank Ntilikina with 2:05 left.

Mitchell had a chance to get the U.S. within two with about a minute left, driving against Gobert — but the Utah center read what the Utah guard was going to do perfectly, swatting the try away.

"We beat the U.S., and that's huge, but we haven't won anything yet," France's Nicolas Batum said.

France had been 0-9 against the U.S. in major international play, most of those outcomes one-sided affairs. But the last meeting between the nations was only a 100-97 U.S. win at the Rio de Janeiro Olympics three years ago, and France returned three players — Gobert, De Colo and Batum — who got minutes in that game.

None of the U.S. players who played that afternoon in Rio is on this year's World Cup team.

France outrebounded the U.S. 21-12 in the first half, Gobert found his way to the line 10 times in the game's first 20 minutes and the Americans went into the break trailing 45-39. The U.S. had trailed for 8:25

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in their first five games combined — and trailed for 11:24 in the first half alone on Wednesday.

Fournier's layup with 7:33 left in the third gave France a 53-43 lead, and that's when Mitchell got going. He had 14 points in the third quarter, and his dunk with 2:40 left pulled the U.S. into a 60-60 tie. Marcus Smart made three free throws after getting fouled by Gobert to put the U.S. back on top, and the Americans took a 66-63 lead into the fourth.

But they couldn't finish it off.

"At the end of the day, you've got to tip your cap to them," U.S. guard Joe Harris said. "They outplayed us. They deserved to win. We certainly didn't deserve to win that game."

TIP-INS

France: Gobert played the first 12:26. The longest he went before getting his first break in a Jazz game last season was 11:30. ... Ntilikina scored 11 for France. ... The U.S. didn't turn the ball over at a very high rate — 11 times — but France converted those giveaways into 22 points.

U.S.: Smart scored 11 and Walker had 10 for the U.S. ... Before Mitchell's offensive outburst Wednesday, the previous single-game scoring high for any U.S. player at this World Cup was Jaylen Brown's 20-point game against Japan in the opening group round. ... Jayson Tatum (sprained left ankle) missed his fourth consecutive game.

LAUDING FRANCE

Popovich had the highest praise for France and coach Vincent Collet. "It's the best French team I've seen, because they play on both ends of the court," Popovich said.

OLYMPIC BERTHS

Australia's win over the Czech Republic in the other quarterfinal on Wednesday gave France something else to celebrate — an Olympic berth. Spain and France are assured of being the top two World Cup finishers from Europe, earning them automatic spots into the field for the 2020 Tokyo Games.

Others qualified so far: the U.S., Nigeria, Iran, Australia, Argentina and Japan. The last four spots in the 12-team field will be decided next year.

UP NEXT

France: Faces Argentina in semifinals at Beijing on Friday.

U.S.: Faces Serbia in consolation round at Dongguan on Thursday.

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

Asian shares mixed after China eases trade tensions

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Asian shares were mixed Thursday after China moved to ease trade tensions.

Investors drew encouragement from China's decision to exempt some U.S. products from a recent round of tariffs. Tokyo, Shanghai and Sydney advanced while Hong Kong slipped.

Stocks notched broad gains on Wall Street Wednesday, with technology, health care and communication services stocks powering much of the rally.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index gained 1.1% to 21,825.12 while the Shanghai Composite index picked up 0.2% to 3,014.80. The S&P ASX 200 also rose 0.2%, to 6,651.40. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index slipped 0.2% to 27,118.69. Shares also fell in Singapore and Jakarta but rose in Taiwan and Bangkok.

In New York, the benchmark S&P 500 index, which had been essentially flat since Friday, is on track for its third straight weekly gain.

Wednesday's push into technology companies marked a reversal from the first couple of days of the week, when traders bid up energy, financials and other sectors that had sold off in recent weeks. The tech sector is particularly sensitive to fallout from the trade war between Washington and Beijing because many big companies, such as Apple, manufacture products in China.

The S&P 500 rose 0.7% to 3,000.93, the first time it has finished above 3,000 points since July 30.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average gained 0.8%, to 27,137.04, while the Nasdaq picked up 1.1%, to

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8,169.68.

The Russell 2000 index of smaller-company stocks outpaced the broader market, climbing 2.1%, to 1,575.71.

An escalation in the trade war roiled financial markets this summer as investors fretted that higher tariffs and a slowing global economy could tip the U.S. into a recession. The economic uncertainty has also become a drag on companies.

Some of those trade concerns appeared to ease Wednesday after China said it will exempt American industrial grease and some other imports from tariff increases, though it kept in place penalties on soybeans and other major U.S. exports ahead of negotiations next month.

As a gesture of "goodwill," President Donald Trump said on Twitter on Wednesday that the United States agreed to a two-week delay in a planned increase in tariffs on some Chinese imports.

The moves could indicate that both sides are settling in for an extended conflict even as they prepare for talks in Washington aimed at ending the dispute that threatens global economic growth.

The uncertainties appear likely to persist.

"Just as the presidential tweet on tariffs this morning has injected more momentum into stocks and most likely emerging-market assets, what one hand gives, the other can take away. We are only one social media posting away from a thoroughly unpredictable President turning sentiment on its head," Jeffrey Halley of Oanda said in a commentary.

Investors continue to expect the Federal Reserve will cut interest rates at its meeting next week in another bid by the central bank to help maintain U.S. economic growth. The Fed raised its benchmark interest rate in July by a quarter point. That was its first hike in a decade.

ENERGY: Benchmark crude oil gained 51 cents to \$56.26 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It fell \$1.65 to settle at \$55.75 a barrel on Wednesday. Brent crude oil, the international standard, added 45 cents to \$61.26 per barrel. It dropped \$1.57 to close at \$60.81 a barrel overnight.

The dollar rose to 108.08 Japanese yen from 107.82 yen on Wednesday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1015 from \$1.1010.

AP Business writers Alex Veiga and Damian J. Troise contributed.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Sept. 12, the 255th day of 2019. There are 110 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 12, 2001, stunned rescue workers continued to search for bodies in the World Trade Center's smoking rubble a day after a terrorist attack that shut down the financial capital, badly damaged the Pentagon and left thousands dead. President Bush, branding the attacks in New York and Washington "acts of war," said "this will be a monumental struggle of good versus evil" and that "good will prevail."

On this date:

In 1846, Elizabeth Barrett secretly married Robert Browning at St. Marylebone Church in London.

In 1942, during World War II, a German U-boat off West Africa torpedoed the RMS Laconia, which was carrying Italian prisoners of war, British soldiers and civilians; it's estimated more than 1,600 people died while some 1,100 survived after the ship sank. The German crew, joined by other U-boats, began rescue operations. (On September 16, the rescue effort came to an abrupt halt when the Germans were attacked by a U.S. Army bomber; as a result, U-boat commanders were ordered to no longer rescue civilian survivors of submarine attacks.)

In 1959, the Soviet Union launched its Luna 2 space probe, which made a crash landing on the moon. The TV Western series "Bonanza" premiered on NBC.

In 1962, in a speech at Rice University in Houston, President John F. Kennedy reaffirmed his support for

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the manned space program, declaring: "We choose to go to the moon in this decade and do the other things, not because they are easy, but because they are hard."

In 1974, Emperor Haile Selassie (HY'-lee sehl-AH'-see) was deposed by Ethiopia's military after ruling for 58 years.

In 1977, South African black student leader and anti-apartheid activist Steve Biko (BEE'-koh), 30, died while in police custody, triggering an international outcry.

In 1987, reports surfaced that Democratic presidential candidate Joseph Biden had borrowed, without attribution, passages of a speech by British Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock (KIHN'-ik) for one of his own campaign speeches. (The Kinnock report, along with other damaging revelations, prompted Biden to drop his White House bid.)

In 1992, the space shuttle Endeavour blasted off, carrying with it Mark Lee and Jan Davis, the first married couple in space; Mae Jemison, the first black woman in space; and Mamoru Mohri, the first Japanese national to fly on a U.S. spaceship. Police in Peru captured Shining Path founder Abimael Guzman. Actor Anthony Perkins died in Hollywood at age 60.

In 1994, a stolen, single-engine Cessna crashed into the South Lawn of the White House, coming to rest against the executive mansion; the pilot, Frank Corder, was killed.

In 2003, In the Iraqi city of Fallujah, U.S. forces mistakenly opened fire on vehicles carrying police, killing eight of them.

In 2008, a Metrolink commuter train struck a freight train head-on in Los Angeles, killing 25 people. (Federal investigators said the Metrolink engineer, Robert Sanchez, who was among those who died, had been text-messaging on his cell phone and ran a red light shortly before the crash.)

In 2012, the U.S. dispatched an elite group of Marines to Tripoli, Libya, after the mob attack in Benghazi that killed the U.S. ambassador and three other Americans. President Barack Obama strongly condemned the violence, and vowed to bring the killers to justice; Republican challenger Mitt Romney accused the administration of showing weakness in the face of tumultuous events in the Middle East.

Ten years ago: Tens of thousands of protesters marched to the U.S. Capitol, showing their disdain for President Barack Obama's health care plan. The president, keeping up the drumbeat for his proposal, told a packed rally in Minneapolis, "I will not accept the status quo." Serena Williams' U.S. Open title defense ended with a bizarre loss to Kim Clijsters (KLY'-sturz) after Williams went into a tirade against a line judge who'd called her for a foot fault; following her outburst, Williams was penalized a point for unsportsmanlike conduct, ending the match, 6-4, 7-5.

Five years ago: A South African judge found Oscar Pistorius guilty of culpable homicide, or negligent killing, in the shooting death of girlfriend Reeva Steenkamp and declared the double-amputee Olympian not guilty of murder. (The verdict was overturned and replaced with a murder conviction by South Africa's Supreme Court; Pistorius is serving a 13-year prison sentence.) Ian Paisley, 88, the divisive Protestant firebrand preacher who had devoted his life to thwarting compromise with Catholics in Northern Ireland only to become a pivotal peacemaker in his twilight years, died in Belfast.

One year ago: CBS News fired top "60 Minutes" executive Jeff Fager, who had been under investigation following reports that he groped women at parties and tolerated an abusive workplace. The Food and Drug Administration warned that the use of e-cigarettes by teens was an "epidemic," and ordered manufacturers to take steps to reverse the trend. New York's City Council passed legislation allowing people who were born in the city but who don't identify as male or female to change their gender designation to "X" on their birth certificates; the measure also allowed parents to choose the "X" designation for their newborns.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Ian Holm is 88. Former U.S. Rep. Henry Waxman, D-Calif., is 80. Actress Linda Gray is 79. Singer Maria Muldaur is 77. Actor Joe Pantoliano is 68. Singer-musician Gerry Beckley (America) is 67. Original MTV VJ Nina Blackwood is 67. Rock musician Neil Peart (Rush) is 67. Actor Peter Scolaro is 64. Former Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback is 63. Actress Rachel Ward is 62. Actress Amy Yasbeck is 57. Rock musician Norwood Fisher (Fishbone) is 54. Actor Darren E. Burrows is 53. Rock singer-musician Ben Folds (Ben Folds Five) is 53. Actor-comedian Louis (loo-ee) C.K. is 52. Rock musician Larry LaLonde (Primus) is 51. Golfer Angel Cabrera is 50. Actor-singer Will Chase is 49. Actor Josh Hopkins is 49. Country singer

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Jennifer Nettles is 45. Actress Lauren Stamile (stuh'-MEE'-lay) is 43. Rapper 2 Chainz is 42. Actress Kelly Jenrette is 41. Actor Ben McKenzie is 41. Singer Ruben Studdard is 41. Basketball Hall of Fame player Yao Ming is 39. Singer-actress Jennifer Hudson is 38. Actor Alfie Allen is 33. Actress Emmy Rossum is 33. Atlanta Braves first baseman Freddie Freeman is 30. Country singer Kelsea Ballerini is 26. Actor Colin Ford is 23.

Thought for Today: "Hope, like faith, is nothing if it is not courageous; it is nothing if it is not ridiculous."
— Thornton Wilder, American playwright (1897-1975).

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