

Groton Daily Independent

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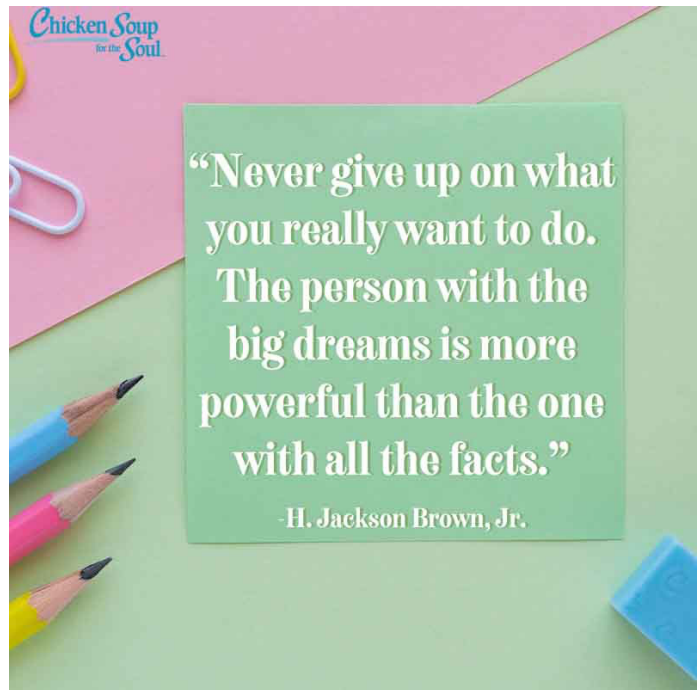
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Living Christmas Tree rehearsals start soon!

Choir rehearsals start Sunday, October 27th, at 3:00 pm, and Monday, October 28th, 7:00 pm.

Children's Choir rehearsals start Monday, October 28th, 6:30-7:15 pm, at the Aberdeen Recreation & Cultural Center.

Hope to hear you there!"



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

Groton boys to Host First Round Soccer Playoff

Fourth Seeded Groton Area will host fifth seeded Vermillion in the first round of the soccer playoffs on Tuesday. The winner of that game will play at Sioux Falls Christian on Saturday, Oct. 12. Earlier in the season, Groton Area defeated Vermillion, 2-0.

Class A

Top 6 (based on seed points) qualify for playoffs

School	Seed Points	W-L-D
1 SF Christian	43.417	10-2-0
2 Tea Area	42.273	5-4-2
3 St. Thomas More	40.214	5-7-2
4 Groton Area	39.350	5-4-1
5 Vermillion	39.111	3-4-2
6 James Valley Christian	38.375	2-5-5

Netters take down Clark/Willow Lake; remain undefeated in NEC

Groton Area's volleyball team posted a 3-0 win over Clark-Willow Lake in action played Thursday in Clark.

The Cyclones took an early 3-0 lead and lead by as many as five, 8-3, in the first game. The Tigers rallied to score six straight points to take the lead, 9-8. The game was tied six times with the last tie at 17 and then rolled to a 25-19 win. In the first game, Eliza Wanner had four kills while Kaylin Kucker had two kills and two ace serves, Indigo Rogers had two kills, Nicole Marzahn had a kill and an ace serve and Madeline Flihs had a kill.

Groton Area had the early lead in the second game, but the Cyclones rallied and tied the match at 12, but never took the lead. Groton Area won the second game, 25-20. Nicole Marzahn and Madeline Flihs each had four kills, Eliza Wanner, Indigo Rogers and Stella Meier each had a kill and Payton Colestock had an ace serve.

Clark/Willow Lake had a 3-1 lead in the third game and Groton Area came back to tie it at four and then took the lead for good. The Tigers won the third game, 25-14. Nicole Marzahn and Eliza Wanner each had five kills, Indigo Rogers had two kills, Payton Colestock had two ace serves and Kaylin Kucker had a kill.

Colestock had three ace serves, Kucker had two and Marzahn had one. Kucker had 34 of the 35 assists with Glover having one. Wanner finishes officially with 15 ace serves while Marzahn had nine. Unofficially Flihs had six kills, Rogers five, Kucker three and Meier one. Wanner had 23 digs and Kucker had 13. Flihs had one block.

Olivia Sass led the Cyclones with seven kills and four blocks.

Groton Area, now 9-3 on the season, will play in the Redfield Tournament on Saturday.

Groton Area won the junior varsity match, 25-13 and 25-21, and also the C match, 26-24 and 25-21. Both junior high teams also won their matches.

Games on Saturday will have Groton Area playing Warner at 9 a.m., Potter County at 10:40 a.m.; Redfield at 1:10 p.m. and Belle Fourche at 2 p.m. Depending on the pool play, there could be a match at 2:50 p.m.

It's Volleyball Action on GDILIVE.COM

9 a.m.: Warner

10:40 a.m.: Potter County

1:10 p.m.: Redfield

2 p.m.: Belle Fourche

and maybe at 2:50 p.m.

VS



Groton Area Tigers

Saturday, Oct. 5, 2019 at Redfield

7:00 p.m. at Doney Field, Groton

SPONSORED BY TYSON DeHOET TRUCKING

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It's Football Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Roncalli
Cavaliers** VS



Groton Area Tigers

Friday, Oct. 4, 2019

7:00 p.m. at Doney Field, Groton

Broadcast Sponsors

Abeln Seed

Aberdeen Chrysler Center

Allied Climate Professionals

Bahr Spray Foam

BaseKamp Lodge

DeHoet Trucking

Groton Auto Works

Hanlon Brothers

John Sieh Agency

Milbrandt Enterprises

Mike-N-Jo's Body-N-Glass

Olson Development

Professional Management Services

S & S Lumber & Hardware Hank

Touchdown Sponsor - Patios Plus

Johnson Praises Administration's Biofuels Agreement

Washington, D.C. – Today U.S. Representative Dusty Johnson (R-S.D.) applauded the administration's announcement to expand ethanol blending beginning in 2020. The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will partner to improve the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS) and implement it as intended.


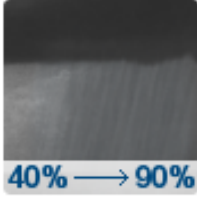



"Today's announcement is a win for South Dakota farmers, ethanol producers and anyone that cares about a strong rural economy and job growth," said Johnson. "I'm proud of the coalition of farm-state members that made it clear that we must maintain the integrity of the RFS as Congress intended."

"By maintaining the integrity of the RFS and preventing the abuse of Small Refinery Exemptions (SREs), as well as forward-looking proposals that cut red tape and build biofuel infrastructure, the Administration showed they are committed to rural America."

In May, Johnson and Agriculture Committee Chairman Rep. Collin Peterson (D-MN) introduced H.R. 3006 – the Renewable Fuels Standard Integrity Act of 2019. The bill would reallocate gallons lost through SREs that undermine the integrity of the RFS, ensuring lost gallons are included in any final Renewable Volume Obligations (RVOs). Today's announcement follows that intent and restores the integrity of the RFS by reallocating gallons on a three-year rolling average of waived gallons. Furthermore, the plan will roll-back regulations that have stood in the way of higher blends of ethanol and promote infrastructure investments for greater use here and abroad.

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This Afternoon	Tonight	Saturday	Saturday Night	Sunday
				
Mostly Cloudy and Breezy	40% → 90% Breezy. Chance Showers then Showers	70% → 40% Breezy. Showers Likely then Chance Showers	Mostly Clear and Breezy then Mostly Clear	Mostly Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy
High: 56 °F	Low: 48 °F	High: 56 °F	Low: 43 °F	High: 57 °F

Rain Likely Tonight & Saturday...Dry Sunday

Today 50-65°F	Saturday 51-63°F	Sunday 52-63°F
		
Milder/Breezy	Widespread Showers Early, Ending Afternoon & Evening	Breezy & Milder

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 10/4/2019 4:49 AM Central



Published on: 10/04/2019 at 12:50AM

Today will be breezy and partly sunny. However, for tonight and Saturday, showers and a few thunderstorms will develop and move across the region. Rainfall amounts UP to a half inch are possible. Sunday should be dry but breezy.

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Today in Weather History

October 4, 2005: A strong low-pressure system developed over the Central Rockies and moved through the Northern Plains, bringing heavy snow to much of the northern Black Hills and far northwest South Dakota. Precipitation started as rain during the day and changed over to snow during the late afternoon and early evening, mixed with freezing rain and sleet. Heavy snow fell during the night and ended in the morning. Snowfall amounts were generally in the 6 to 12-inch range, with locally heavier amounts across northern and western Harding County. The heavy, wet snow resulted in many downed trees, large branches, and power lines. The heavy snow caused numerous power outages and some minor property damage. A few locations had some of the highest daily snowfall amounts ever recorded in October. Camp Crook received 12 inches of snow, which tied the daily record for snow in October. Redig also tied its record for most snowfall in one day in October with 9 inches. Lemmon had its second highest daily total snowfall for October (6.5 inches). Bison received 6 inches, which was tied for the 3rd highest daily total in October. Spearfish tied for the 8th highest daily snow total for October with 7 inches.

1777: The Battle of Germantown was fought in a morning fog that grew denser with the smoke of battle, causing great confusion. Americans firing at each other contributed to the loss of the battle.

1869 - A great storm struck New England. The storm reportedly was predicted twelve months in advance by a British officer named Saxby. Heavy rains and high floods plagued all of New England, with strong winds and high tides over New Hampshire and Maine. Canton CT was deluged with 12.35 inches of rain. (David Ludlum)

1969 - Denver, CO, received 9.6 inches of snow. October of that year proved to be the coldest and snowiest of record for Denver, with a total snowfall for the month of 31.2 inches. (Weather Channel)

1986 - Excessive flooding was reported along the Mississippi River and all over the Midwest, from Ohio to the Milk River in Montana. In some places it was the worst flooding of record. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - A storm brought record snows to the northeastern U.S. Snowfall totals ranged up to 21 inches at North Springfield VT. It was the earliest snow of record for some locations. The storm claimed 17 lives in central New York State, injured 332 persons, and in Vermont caused seventeen million dollars damage. The six inch snow at Albany NY was their earliest measurable snow in 117 years of records. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Southern California continued to "shake and bake". An earthquake was reported during the morning, the second in a matter of days, and during the afternoon temperatures soared well above 100 degrees. Highs of 100 degrees at San Francisco, and 108 degrees at Los Angeles and Santa Maria, were October records. San Luis Obispo was the hot spot in the nation with an afternoon high of 111 degrees. (The National Weather Summary).

1988 - Temperatures dipped below freezing in the north central U.S. Five cities in North Dakota and Nebraska reported record low temperatures for the date, including Bismarck ND with a reading of 17 degrees above zero. Low pressure brought snow and sleet to parts of Upper Michigan. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably cold weather continued in the north central U.S., with freezing temperatures reported across much of the area from eastern North Dakota to Michigan and northwest Ohio. Thirteen cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Saint Cloud MN, which was the cold spot in the nation with a morning low of 19 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2005: Hurricane Stan, a minimal Category 1 Hurricane with 75 mph maximum sustained surface winds, made landfall near Punta Roca Partida, Mexico at 4 AM EDT on this day. While not a particularly strong hurricane the torrential rains caused flooding and landslides, which resulted in 1,513 deaths in Guatemala.

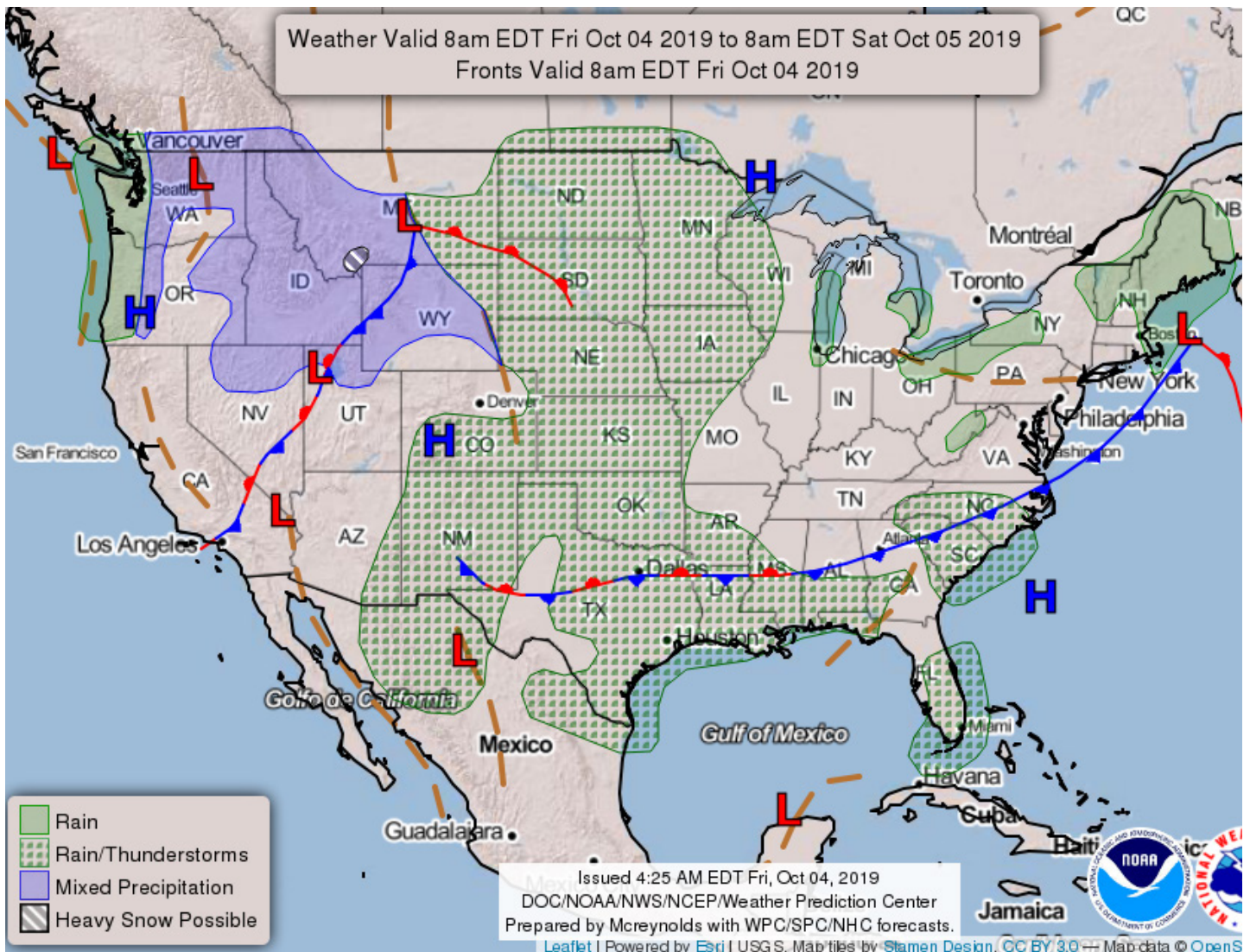
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 46 °F at 5:08 PM
Low Temp: 35 °F at 6:08 AM
Wind: 12 mph at 2:17 AM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 93° in 1975
Record Low: 13° in 1894
Average High: 64°F
Average Low: 38°F
Average Precip in Oct.: 0.25
Precip to date in Oct.: 0.38
Average Precip to date: 18.73
Precip Year to Date: 25.40
Sunset Tonight: 7:09 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:37 a.m.



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BEGINNING AT THE END

One day a grief-stricken man prayed, "Dear Lord, I'm at the end of all my resources. I have nothing left."

"My child," answered the Lord, "when you come to the end of your resources, you are just at the beginning of mine."

One of God's great gifts is allowing us to come to the place of hopelessness and helplessness. When we realize that we have nothing left to cling to, and no one else to depend on, we will realize how much we need the Lord. There are many times in our lives when we are convinced that we are brave or strong, energetic or invincible, only to have the "rug pulled out from under us." We are left feeling alone or abandoned, deserted or defeated.

It has been said that it is easier for someone to stand adversity with God than prosperity without Him. We learn in times of trouble and trials that "my grace is sufficient" or "Lo, I am with you always." In times of plenty, we may be forced to realize that "life does not consist in the abundance of things." And, actually, that may be what is best for us at that time.

Eventually, we as Christians may come to the place where we realize that "all things" are possible with and through Christ. But rarely do we realize this until we get to the other side of "whatever" may have brought us to the "end of our resources." Thank God for our "ends."

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for those times in life when we exhaust our resources and know that we need Yours to grow in Your grace and stand in Your strength. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Mark 10:27 Jesus looked at them intently and said, "Humanly speaking, it is impossible. But not with God. Everything is possible with God."

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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)

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News from the Associated Press

FBI report shows violent crime declining in South Dakota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The estimated number of violent crimes is down in South Dakota.

U.S. Attorney Ron Parsons said Friday the newly-released FBI crime report shows the number of violent crimes in South Dakota in 2018 dropped for the first time in five years, declining about 5% compared to the year before.

The report shows the estimated rate of violent crime in the state was about 405 offenses per 100,000 residents. The most dramatic drop was in the number of murders and non-negligent homicides, which dropped 56 percent from 2017 to 2018.

Nationally, the estimated number of violent crimes as a whole decreased 3.3 percent in 2018 from the prior year.

Delta flight diverted to Sioux Falls for medical emergency

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Pilots of a Delta flight had to make an emergency landing in Sioux Falls because a passenger had an urgent medical condition.

The flight from Chicago to Seattle was over Pierre Thursday when the pilots diverted to Sioux Falls. Regional Airport executive director Dan Letellier says the 63-year-old male passenger was conscious when the plane landed and was taken to a hospital. There's no word on his condition.

Letellier tells the Argus Leader the Sioux Falls airport gets one or two medical diversions a month.

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

Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

Volleyball

Aberdeen Central def. Mitchell, 25-16, 25-20, 25-10
Arlington def. Colman-Egan, 19-25, 19-25, 25-20, 25-23, 15-13
Bon Homme def. Menno, 25-14, 25-17, 18-25, 27-25
Bridgewater-Emery def. Alcester-Hudson, 25-11, 25-10, 25-13
Burke def. Boyd County, Neb., 25-14, 25-20, 17-25, 25-19
Castlewood def. Estelline/Hendricks, 25-20, 20-25, 25-21, 20-25, 15-13
Chamberlain def. Gregory, 22-25, 25-23, 25-23, 25-23
Chester def. Beresford, 25-10, 25-19, 25-13
Corsica/Stickney def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-21, 25-21, 25-16
Deubrook def. Lake Preston, 25-12, 25-7, 28-26
Dupree def. Bison, 25-19, 25-15, 25-20
Elkton-Lake Benton def. Flandreau, 25-7, 25-11, 25-18
Ethan def. Freeman, 25-23, 25-11, 25-19
Faith def. Harding County, 25-23, 25-9, 25-12
Faulkton def. Aberdeen Christian, 25-9, 25-7, 25-17
Great Plains Lutheran def. Florence/Henry, 25-15, 25-23, 25-18
Groton Area def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-19, 25-20, 25-14
Hill City def. Belle Fourche, 25-10, 25-19, 25-16
Howard def. Mitchell Christian, 25-16, 25-22, 15-25, 25-21
Huron def. Sioux Falls Washington, 25-23, 25-23, 25-21

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Irene-Wakonda def. Centerville, 25-13, 25-11, 25-14
Kimball/White Lake def. Hanson, 25-15, 25-20, 18-25, 28-30, 15-9
Langford def. Waubay/Summit, 25-14, 25-21, 25-19
Lead-Deadwood def. Custer, 25-20, 25-15, 18-25, 17-25, 15-12
Lemmon def. Stanley County, 25-16, 25-17, 25-23
Lennox def. Dell Rapids, 26-24, 25-21, 20-25, 25-22
Madison def. Hamlin, 25-20, 25-23, 25-17
McCook Central/Montrose def. Tri-Valley, 25-23, 25-12, 29-27
Newell def. Wall, 21-25, 25-18, 25-19, 20-25, 15-10
Oldham-Ramona/Rutland def. Dell Rapids St. Mary, 25-22, 23-25, 25-21, 18-25, 17-15
Parker def. Garretson, 25-15, 25-18, 15-25, 25-22
Pierre def. Brandon Valley, 25-19, 26-28, 25-22, 26-24
Redfield def. Britton-Hecla, 25-22, 25-13, 25-15
Sioux Falls Christian def. Elk Point-Jefferson, 25-14, 25-14, 25-18
Sturgis Brown def. Douglas, 25-19, 23-25, 25-16, 25-20
Takini def. Wakpala, 25-20, 25-8, 25-13
Tea Area def. Canton, 25-23, 25-13, 25-18
Warner def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-11, 25-14, 25-20
Watertown def. Brookings, 25-8, 25-9, 25-4
Waverly-South Shore def. Wilmot, 25-20, 25-16, 25-13
Pierce Triangular

Dakota Valley def. Pierce, Neb., 21-25, 25-10, 25-15
Dakota Valley def. Ponca, Neb., 25-21, 25-21

Woman dies in pickup crash in Spearfish Canyon

SPEARFISH, S.D. (AP) — A 57-year-old woman has died in a pickup crash in Spearfish Canyon. The woman was driving southbound on U.S. Highway 14A southwest of Spearfish on Wednesday afternoon when she went off the road while trying to make a left-hand turn and hit several trees. Authorities say the woman was thrown from the pickup and died. She was not wearing a seat belt. The name of the victim was not released. The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating.

10 years for man accused of trying to cause explosion

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls man accused of trying to ignite an explosion at a gas station last year has been sentenced to 10 years in prison.

Mark Einerwold was given credit for 440 days he spent in jail on a charge of reckless burning during sentencing Wednesday. The 44-year-old was charged in July 2018 after police discovered bomb-making material, several illegal guns and a manifesto detailing his hatred of "police, fire and government" at his home.

The Argus Leader says a gas station employee twice kicked an explosive device away from a gas meter before any damage could occur at the Get 'n Go gas station.

Einerwold was given a suspended sentence of seven years for burglarizing the Pizza Ranch. Einerwold apologized in court and told the judge he was ready to go home and make amends.

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

Ukraine reviews cases on owner of firm that hired Biden son

By YURAS KARMANAU and NATALIYA VASILYEVA Associated Press

ZHYTOMYR, Ukraine (AP) — Ukraine's top prosecutor said Friday his office is reviewing several cases related to the owner of a gas company where the son of former Vice President Joe Biden sat on the board, but he added that he wasn't aware of any evidence of wrongdoing by either Biden.

U.S. President Donald Trump had asked for an investigation of Biden, his Democratic rival, in a July 25 phone call with new Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy at a time when millions of dollars in U.S. military assistance to the country was being held up. That has prompted the U.S. Congress to begin an impeachment inquiry against Trump.

The move by Prosecutor General Ruslan Ryaboshapka was seen by political analysts in Kyiv not as a new investigation to dig up dirt on the Bidens but rather an attempt to stay in the good graces of the White House at a time when Ukraine needs Western help to deal with an uprising by pro-Russia separatists.

Ryaboshapka told reporters that his office was "auditing" relevant cases that were closed, dismissed or put on hold by his predecessors.

Several of the cases under audit are related to Mykola Zlochevsky, owner of the gas company Burisma that hired Hunter Biden in 2014, the same time his father was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Ukraine.

"We are now reviewing all the cases that were closed or split into several parts or were investigated before, in order to be able to rule to reverse those cases where illegal procedural steps were taken," Ryaboshapka said.

Asked if the prosecutors had evidence of any wrongdoing on Hunter Biden's part, he said: "I have no such information."

The Prosecutor General's Office said in a statement that among the cases being reviewed are 15 in which Zlochevsky is mentioned. None of the Zlochevsky-related cases has been revived yet, the office said.

They did not specify how many, if any, were related to Hunter Biden's work at Burisma.

Trump has said that the United States has an "absolute right" to ask foreign leaders to investigate corruption cases.

Asked about that by The Associated Press, Zelenskiy said during an appearance in the Ukrainian city of Zhytomyr that all cases under investigation are "transparent."

"Chief prosecutors could pull their efforts together, we have all cases open," Zelenskiy said.

Zelenskiy and Ryaboshapka denied being under any foreign pressure over corruption investigations, although text messages released Thursday in the U.S. showed American diplomats pushing for an investigation of Biden's son. House investigators released a cache of text messages provided by Kurt Volker, the former special U.S. envoy to Ukraine who has stepped down.

In the messages, Volker encouraged an aide to Zelenskiy to conduct an investigation linked to Biden's family in exchange for getting the president a high-profile meeting to Washington with Trump.

Ryaboshapka insisted Friday he did not feel any pressure over the Burisma case.

"Not a single foreign or Ukrainian official or politician has called me or tried to influence my decisions regarding specific criminal cases," he said when asked if Trump's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani or any other people had urged him to investigate Hunter Biden.

Analysts in Kyiv saw the remarks by Ryaboshapka and Zelenskiy as an attempt by the Ukrainian government to maintain good relations with Trump and avoid taking sides in a U.S. political dispute.

"Ryaboshapka's statements mean that the (criminal) cases are allegedly being investigated and Kyiv is open for cooperation with U.S. counterparts, but we shouldn't expect any tangible results of the probe until after the election in the U.S.," said Volodymyr Fesenko of the Penta Center think tank in Kyiv.

"Zelenskiy doesn't want to be involved in the U.S. political battles, but he's already in the game and has to be flexible."

Thousands protest mask ban as HK leader toughens stance

By JOHN LEICESTER and EILEEN NG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Defiant masked protesters rampaged, police fired tear gas, and a teen was wounded by gunfire hours after Hong Kong's embattled leader banned masks at rallies, invoking rarely used emergency powers to quell four months of anti-government demonstrations.

Challenging the ban, which went into effect Saturday, thousands of protesters crammed streets in the central business district and other areas, shouting "Hong Kong people, resist!" Two activists filed legal challenges on grounds the ban would instill fear and curtail freedom of speech, but a court denied their request for an injunction.

Pockets of angry protesters attacked Chinese bank outlets and shops, vandalized subway stations and set street fires, prompting police to respond with tear gas in many areas. An officer fired a live shot in self-defense after he was attacked by protesters in the northern Yuen Long district, the government said in a statement.

A police official, who requested anonymity because he wasn't authorized to speak to the news media, said a 14-year-old boy was wounded but that he couldn't say if he was shot by the officer or hit by a stray bullet. The teen is the second victim of gunfire since pro-democracy protests began in June, three days after an 18-year-old protester was shot by a riot police.

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam told a news conference Friday that the mask ban, imposed under a colonial-era Emergency Ordinance that was last used over half a century ago, would be "an effective deterrent to radical behavior."

"We must save Hong Kong — the present Hong Kong and the future Hong Kong," she said. "We must stop the violence. ... We can't just leave the situation to get worse and worse."

Lam said she would seek the legislature's backing for the ban later. She insisted the semiautonomous Chinese territory was not in a state of emergency but wouldn't rule out a further toughening of measures if violence continued. She dismissed suggestions that she should resign, saying it would be unhelpful at a time when Hong Kong is in "a very critical state of public danger."

Face masks have become a hallmark of protesters in Hong Kong, even at peaceful marches, amid fears of retribution at work or of being denied access to schooling, public housing and other government-funded services. Some young protesters also wear full gas masks and goggles to protect against tear gas. Many are concerned their identities could be shared with the massive state-security apparatus that helps keep the Communist Party in power in mainland China, where high-tech surveillance including facial recognition technology is ubiquitous.

Lam's ban applies to all public gatherings, both unauthorized and those approved by police. It makes the wearing of any face coverings, including face paint, punishable by one year in jail. A six-month jail term could be imposed on people who refuse a police officer's order to remove a face covering for identification. Masks will be permitted when wearers can prove they need them for work, health or religious reasons.

Thousands of masked protesters marched before Lam spoke. The rallies spread to many areas as protesters vowed not to be cowed. Many blocked traffic, smashed up shops and public properties, and set fires at streets and subway exits.

"Will they arrest 100,000 people on the street?" said a protester who gave his surname as Lui. "The government is trying to intimidate us, but at this moment, I don't think the people will be scared."

A protester who identified himself as Ernest Ho noted that Hong Kong police wear masks "and they don't show their pass and their number."

"So, I will still keep my mask on everywhere," Ho said.

Analysts said the use of the Emergency Ordinance set a dangerous precedent. The law, a relic of British rule enacted in 1922 to quell a seamen's strike and last used to crush riots in 1967, gives broad powers to the city's chief executive to implement regulations in an emergency.

"If the anti-mask legislation proves to be ineffective, it could lead the way to more draconian measures

such as a curfew and other infringement of civil liberties," said Willy Lam, adjunct professor at the Chinese University and no relation to Carrie Lam.

British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said Lam's government should avoid aggravating tensions and that "political dialogue is the only way" out. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, the world's oldest leader, said Lam should resign and predicted Beijing would send in its military to end the crisis.

Carrie Lam bristled at a suggestion that the mask ban nudged Hong Kong closer to authoritarian rule. She insisted she was not acting under orders from Beijing, which she visited this week when Communist Party leaders celebrated 70 years in power on Tuesday. But Yang Guang, a Chinese spokesman for Hong Kong affairs, expressed support late Friday, saying it was time for stern measures to end the conflict.

The ban came after widespread violence Tuesday across Hong Kong that marred China's National Day, when a police officer shot a protester at close range, escalating the violence since protests started over a now-shelved extradition bill. The wounded teenager was charged with attacking police and rioting.

The government last month withdrew the extradition bill, which would have allowed suspects to be sent to mainland China for trial, but the movement has snowballed into an anti-China campaign amid anger over what many view as Beijing's interference in Hong Kong's autonomy. Protesters have widened their demands to include direct elections of the city's leader and police accountability.

More than 2,100 people have been detained so far, including 204 charged with rioting, which carries a penalty of up to a decade in prison.

Diversity of jury seen as key factor in officer's conviction

By TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

The questioning dragged on all day and into the evening as lawyers queried hundreds of prospective jurors for potential bias in the trial of Amber Guyger, the white Dallas police officer who fatally shot a black neighbor in his own living room.

Finally, the judge sent everyone home except the attorneys, who made their final selections in private.

It wasn't until jurors filed into the courtroom for opening statements that the public got its first look at something many had hoped for: a panel that was as racially diverse as Dallas County.

On Wednesday, the jury composed largely of people of color and women sentenced Guyger to 10 years in prison, a day after convicting her of murder in the September 2018 killing of her upstairs neighbor, Botham Jean, after she said she mistook his apartment for her own.

"This trial had a magnifying glass on it," and jury selection was a fairer process because of that, said Alex Piquero, a criminologist at the University of Texas at Dallas. He said prosecutors and defense attorneys likely realized there would be a huge public outcry if the jury turned out mostly white.

"There were so many different eyes looking at this case, it was hard not to play by the rules," he said.

Guyger, 31, was still in her police uniform after a long shift when she shot Jean, a 26-year-old accountant from the Caribbean island nation of St. Lucia, after pushing open the unlocked door to his apartment. She was soon fired from the force and charged with murder.

She testified at her trial that she mistook Jean's home for her own, which was one floor below, and thought he was a burglar.

From the beginning, the jury's demographics were bound to be closely watched in a case that ignited debate over race and policing. Critics, including Jean's family, questioned why Guyger was not taken into custody immediately after the shooting and whether race played a factor in her decision to use deadly force.

Research suggests that more diverse juries make decisions differently than all-white juries, said Samuel R. Sommers, a Tufts University professor who has studied jury diversity. For example, an all-white jury is more likely to convict a black defendant.

"Race and ethnicity influence our perceptions and judgment all the time in our daily lives," he said.

"Nothing makes those biases disappear when we enter a jury room."

Guyger's attorneys tried unsuccessfully to get the trial moved to another county, arguing that pretrial publicity made a fair trial in Dallas County impossible. Moving the trial to a suburban county also would

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have all but guaranteed a whiter, more conservative jury, which could have led to a different outcome, experts said.

Dallas County is about 29% non-Hispanic white.

While awaiting the jury's sentence, an attorney for Jean's family, Ben Crump, said the panel's diversity would help them "see past all the technical, intellectual justifications for an unjustifiable killing."

But another Jean family attorney, Daryl Washington, said Thursday that the jury also represented Guyger because it included eight women.

"It was very important to have jurors representative of the county they served in ... but this wasn't just about black and white," Washington said.

Some outside court reacted angrily Wednesday to Guyger's 10-year sentence, arguing it was too lenient. Prosecutors had asked for 28 years, Jean's age if he were still alive.

But two jurors who spoke to ABC News said the panel tried to consider what Jean would have wanted, saying they were moved by testimony from Jean's family and friends, who described his deep faith and caring nature.

"We all agree that (the shooting) was a mistake, and I don't think (Jean) would want to take harsh vengeance," said one of the jurors, a white man who wasn't named by the network.

The other juror, a black woman, said her reaction to prosecutors' sentencing request was: "I can't give her 28 years."

"I know a lot of people are not happy," but she felt this case was different from those of other unarmed black men killed by police in recent years.

"Those officers that killed unarmed black men, when they got out, they went back to living their lives," she said. "Amber Guyger, ever since she killed that man, she has not been the same. She showed remorse and that she's going to have to deal with that for the rest of her life."

One of Guyger's lawyers and the president of the Dallas Police Association, which paid for her legal defense, did not respond to calls and text messages seeking comment Wednesday and Thursday.

Prosecutors historically have tried to get all-white juries because they were more likely to support law enforcement, said Kerri Anderson Donica, president of the Texas Criminal Defense Lawyers Association.

"I think it's so ingrained in prosecutors' minds that it's probably a bias they don't even realize exists," said Donica, who is white.

Former Dallas County prosecutor Heath Harris, who is black, said all attorneys seek jurors who will "rule how you want." Harris, now a defense attorney, said it's just as common for attorneys of minority clients to try to limit conservative white jurors. And though he believes Guyger would probably have been acquitted if the trial were held elsewhere, he thought there was enough evidence to justify either an acquittal or conviction.

The case also illustrates how much Dallas County has changed.

A 1986 Dallas Morning News investigation found that prosecutors routinely manipulated the racial makeup of juries through legal challenges, excluding up to 90% of qualified black candidates from felony juries. The U.S. Supreme Court had ruled that jurors could not be excluded solely based on race.

The newspaper also cited a treatise on jury selection written in the 1960s and credited to a Dallas County assistant district attorney. It advised prosecutors to not allow any minorities on a jury "no matter how rich or how well-educated."

Community activist Changa Higgins, who leads the Dallas Community Police Oversight Coalition, said he was still shocked when the Guyger jury returned a conviction.

"This is one of the very few times I've seen the justice system work the way it's supposed to work for us, or the way it works for white people," he said.

Webber reported from Chicago. Associated Press writer Jake Bleiberg in Dallas contributed.

Violence escalates in Iraq even after top cleric urges calm

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Security forces opened fire directly at hundreds of anti-government demonstrators Friday in central Baghdad, killing at least 10 protesters and injuring dozens, hours after Iraq's top Shiite cleric warned both sides to end four days of violence "before it's too late."

The deaths raised to 53 the number of people killed in clashes during the continuing protests and marked a sharp escalation in the use of force against unarmed protesters. The violence showed both sides to be unwilling to back down from the unrest that marks the most serious challenge for Iraq since the defeat of the Islamic State group two years ago.

In a televised address to the country early Friday, Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi said the protesters' "legitimate demands" had been heard, adding that the security measures used against the demonstrations were like "bitter medicine" that needs to be swallowed. Authorities have shut the internet and imposed an around-the-clock curfew in the capital in a desperate attempt to curb the rallies.

Gunfire rang out in Baghdad on Friday, as security forces battled and chased groups of protesters. Security forces fired directly at people trying to reach the central Tahrir Square, which was sealed off, hitting two protesters directly in the head and killing them, according to witnesses as well as to security and hospital officials.

The military's media arm said two policemen and two civilians were killed by sniper fire.

The protesters, many of whom had camped on the streets overnight, gathered before noon near Tahrir in defiance of Abdul-Mahdi's call and the curfew announced a day earlier. Around sunset, following Friday prayers, the number of protesters grew to more than 1,000 as security forces opened fire in side streets to prevent more people from reaching the square. Tahrir, or Liberation square, is famous for its monument known as the Freedom Statue that depicts key events in Iraqi history before it became a republic starting in 1958.

"There's no electricity, no jobs, people are dying of starvation, and people are sick. It is a curse," said one young protester, who declined to be identified for fear of reprisal.

"I am taking part in the demonstrations because of unemployment and corruption," said Rasoul Saray a 34-year-old unemployed Baghdad resident who wore a green mask. He vowed to continue protesting despite the crackdown.

As a group of journalists were interviewing a protester in the square, a policeman opened fire and wounded the youth in the leg. None of the Iraqi journalists were hit.

Since the spontaneous rallies began Tuesday, security forces have fired live rounds and tear gas every day to disperse them in multiple provinces. The mostly young demonstrators are demanding jobs, improved services like electricity and water, and an end to corruption in the oil-rich country.

Iraq's most senior Shiite spiritual leader Grand Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani urged both sides to end the violence, and he blamed politicians, particularly lawmakers, for failing to enact promised reforms on the economy and corruption. The comments were his first since the protests began, and many across Iraq's predominantly Shiite south had looked to the influential cleric for guidance.

Al-Sistani singled out the leaders of the two biggest parliament blocs.

"The government and the political sides have not fulfilled the demands of the people to fight corruption," al-Sistani said in his Friday sermon, delivered by his representative Ahmed al-Safi in the Shiite holy city of Karbala.

Al-Sistani urged the government to "carry out its duty" to ease people's suffering and reiterated his call for a committee of technocrats to make recommendations on fighting corruption as a way out of the current crisis.

It was not immediately clear whether his comments would give momentum to protesters or help resolve the situation.

Later, an influential Shiite cleric whose Sairoon political bloc came in first in last year's national elections said he was suspending participation in parliamentary activities until the government introduces a program

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that serves Iraqi aspirations.

Muqtada al-Sadr asked members of his coalition to boycott sessions until the government issues a program acceptable to the people. Sairoon won the largest single bloc of seats last year, with 54 of the 329-seat parliament.

Meanwhile, Iraqi hospital officials reported nine more deaths in the southern city of Nasiriyah, about 320 kilometers (200 miles) southeast of Baghdad.

Hospital officials said the deaths occurred Thursday night in the city, which has seen the most violence with at least 25 people killed, including a policeman. The officials spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

In his address, Abdul-Mahdi said there was "no magic solution" to Iraq's problems but pledged to work on laws granting poor families a basic income, provide alternative housing to violators and fight corruption.

"We will not make empty promises ... or promise what we cannot achieve," said Abdul-Mahdi, a native of Nasiriyah.

"The security measures we are taking, including temporary curfew, are difficult choices. But like bitter medicine, they are inevitable," he said. "We have to return life to normal in all provinces and respect the law."

He also defended the security forces, saying they abide by strict rules against use of "excessive violence." He blamed protesters for escalating the bloodshed.

He also said, without elaborating, that he "regrets some have successfully derailed some of the protests from their peaceful path" in order to "exploit" the violence for political reasons.

Abdul-Mahdi's government has been caught in the middle of increasing U.S.-Iran tensions in the region. Iraq is allied with both countries and hosts thousands of U.S. troops, as well as powerful paramilitary forces allied with Iran.

The mostly leaderless protests have been concentrated in Baghdad and the south, bringing out jobless youths and university graduates who are suffering under an economy reeling from graft and mismanagement.

In Nasiriyah, protester Haidar Hamid dismissed the prime minister's speech, saying he was looking to Shiite religious leaders for a resolution.

"If the government is not dissolved, we will avenge our martyrs," said Hamid, who is 32 and unemployed.

A group that monitors internet and cybersecurity, NetBlocks, said the internet in most of Iraq was briefly restored before Abdul-Mahdi's speech but access was shut down again by the time he was onscreen, apparently after new videos of the protests emerged. The internet in Iraq's northern Kurdish region has not been affected.

Associated Press writer Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed.

Trump formally objecting to probe, won't say he'll cooperate

By ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Friday the White House is preparing a letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi formally objecting to the Democrats conducting their impeachment inquiry without an official vote. The letter is expected to say the administration won't cooperate with the probe without that vote — but Trump also said he believes it will pass.

Trump acknowledged that Democrats in the House "have the votes" to begin a formal impeachment inquiry, but said he is confident they don't have the votes to convict in the GOP-controlled Senate. And he said he believes the move will backfire on Democrats politically.

"I really believe that they're going to pay a tremendous price at the polls," he said.

In announcing that the House was beginning the probe, Pelosi didn't seek the consent of the full chamber, as was done for impeachment investigations into former Presidents Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton.

In the inquiry itself, House investigators released a cache of text messages late Thursday that showed

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top U.S. diplomats encouraging Ukraine's newly elected president to conduct an investigation linked to Joe Biden's family in return for a high-profile visit with Trump in Washington.

The release followed a 10-hour interview with one of the diplomats, Kurt Volker, who stepped down as special envoy to Ukraine amid the Democrats' impeachment inquiry.

Trump said anew on Friday that he was pressing Ukraine to investigate corruption, not trying to undermine Biden, who could be his 2020 presidential election opponent.

As Republicans search for a response to the fast-moving impeachment inquiry, the absence of a procedural vote to begin the probe has been a main attack line against Democrats.

Pelosi swatted the need for such a vote back as unnecessary, saying the House is well within its rules to pursue the inquiry without it.

"The existing rules of the House provide House Committees with full authority to conduct investigations for all matters under their jurisdiction, including impeachment investigations," Pelosi wrote Thursday in a letter to House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy after he, too, pressed for a floor vote.

Pelosi has sought to avoid a vote on the impeachment probe for the same reason she resisted, for months, liberal calls to try to remove the president: It would force moderate House Democrats to make a politically risky vote.

The White House, meanwhile, is trying to force the question on Democrats, as it seeks to raise the political cost for their impeachment investigation and to animate the president's supporters ahead of the 2020 election.

Trump allies have suggested that without a formal vote, the House is merely conducting standard oversight, entitling lawmakers to a lesser level of disclosure from the administration. The Justice Department raised similar arguments last month, though that was before Pelosi announced the impeachment investigation.

Two days after telling reporters, "Well, I always cooperate," Trump struck a different note on cooperating with the House probe. "I don't know," he said. "That's up to the lawyers."

Democrats have warned that the Trump administration's obstruction of the congressional probe is, on its own, a potentially impeachable office. The administration was expected to miss various deadlines Friday to comply with House investigators' requests for documents.

There's no clear-cut procedure in the Constitution for launching an impeachment inquiry, leaving many questions about possible presidential obstruction untested in court, said Allan Lichtman, a history professor at American University.

"There's no specification in the Constitution in what does and does not constitute a more formal impeachment inquiry or investigation," he said.

Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal attorney, dismissed the entire premise of the impeachment inquiry, which is centered on Trump asking Ukraine to investigate his possible political rival, Democratic former Vice President Biden.

"The president was not tasking Ukraine to investigate a political opponent," Giuliani told The Associated Press on Thursday. "He wanted an investigation into a seriously conflicted former vice president of the United States who damaged the reputation of the United States in Ukraine."

Democrats have sought to use their declared impeachment investigation to bolster their case to access all sorts of documents from the administration, most recently secret grand jury information that underpinned special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election. They have also threatened to use the administration's refusal to turn over documents and make witnesses available to potentially form an article of impeachment over obstruction of the congressional inquiry.

Where courts have generally required congressional oversight requests to demonstrate a legitimate legislative purpose, impeachment requests could be wide-ranging.

It is unclear if Democrats would wade into a lengthy legal fight with the administration over documents and testimony — or if they would just move straight to considering articles of impeachment.

___ Lemire reported from New York. AP writers Lisa Mascaro and Mark Sherman contributed.

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Diahann Carroll, Oscar-nominated, pioneering actress, dies

By NEKESA MUMBI MOODY AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Diahann Carroll, the Oscar-nominated actress and singer who won critical acclaim as the first black woman to star in a non-servant role in a TV series as “Julia,” has died. She was 84.

Carroll’s daughter, Susan Kay, told The Associated Press her mother died Friday in Los Angeles of cancer.

During her long career, Carroll earned a Tony Award for the musical “No Strings” and an Academy Award nomination for best actress for “Claudine.”

But she was perhaps best known for her pioneering work on “Julia.” Carroll played Julia Baker, a nurse whose husband had been killed in Vietnam, in the groundbreaking situation comedy that aired from 1968 to 1971.

“Diahann Carroll walked this earth for 84 years and broke ground with every footstep. An icon. One of the all-time greats,” director Ava DuVernay wrote on Twitter. “She blazed trails through dense forests and elegantly left diamonds along the path for the rest of us to follow. Extraordinary life. Thank you, Ms. Carroll.”

Although she was not the first black woman to star in her own TV show (Ethel Waters played a maid in the 1950s series “Beulah”), she was the first to star as someone other than a servant.

NBC executives were wary about putting “Julia” on the network during the racial unrest of the 1960s, but it was an immediate hit.

It had its critics, though, including some who said Carroll’s character, who is the mother of a young son, was not a realistic portrayal of a black American woman in the 1960s.

“They said it was a fantasy,” Carroll recalled in 1998. “All of this was untrue. Much about the character of Julia I took from my own life, my family.”

Not shy when it came to confronting racial barriers, Carroll won her Tony portraying a high-fashion American model in Paris who has a love affair with a white American author in the 1959 Richard Rodgers musical “No Strings.” Critic Walter Kerr described her as “a girl with a sweet smile, brilliant dark eyes and a profile regal enough to belong on a coin.”

She appeared often in plays previously considered exclusive territory for white actresses: “Same Time, Next Year,” “Agnes of God” and “Sunset Boulevard” (as faded star Norma Desmond, the role played by Gloria Swanson in the 1950 film.)

“I like to think that I opened doors for other women, although that wasn’t my original intention,” she said in 2002.

Her film career was sporadic. She began with a secondary role in “Carmen Jones” in 1954 and five years later appeared in “Porgy and Bess,” although her singing voice was dubbed because it wasn’t considered strong enough for the Gershwin opera. Her other films included “Goodbye Again,” “Hurry Sundown,” “Paris Blues,” and “The Split.”

The 1974 film “Claudine” provided her most memorable role. She played a hard-bitten single mother of six who finds romance in Harlem with a garbage man played by James Earl Jones. Carroll says she got the role after the intended lead actress, Diana Sands, became sick and insisted her friend take the role (Sands died in 1973). But Carroll said those behind the movies did not see her in the role because of her work in Julia and made her audition without makeup.

“Give me a chance. Just give me the opportunity to show you that I understand,” she recalled telling them in an interview with the National Visionary Leadership Project. “I’m an actress, singer, from New York City, from the streets of New York, and I pride myself on my work ... I would like to be given the opportunity to stretch my wings.”

She would end up being nominated for her Oscar, and she recalled the filming a magical experience.

“I had such a good time, I almost told them you don’t need to pay me,” she added.

In the 1980s, she joined in the long-running prime-time soap opera “Dynasty” as Dominique Deveraux, the glamorous half-sister of Blake Carrington; her physical battles with Alexis Carrington, played by Joan Collins, were among fan highlights. Another memorable role was Marion Gilbert, as the haughty mother of Whitley Gilbert (played by Jasmine Guy) on the TV series “A Different World.”

“Diahann Carroll you taught us so much. We are stronger, more beautiful and risk takers because of you.

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We will forever sing your praises and speak your name. Love Love Love, Debbie," wrote actress, dancer and director Debbie Allen, who was a producer on "A Different World."

More recently, she had a number of guest shots and small roles in TV series, including playing the mother of Isaiah Washington's character, Dr. Preston Burke, on "Grey's Anatomy" and a stretch on the TV show "White Collar" as the widow June.

She also returned to her roots in nightclubs. In 2006, she made her first club appearance in New York in four decades, singing at Feinstein's at the Regency. Reviewing a return engagement in 2007, a New York Times critic wrote that she sang "Both Sides Now" with "the reflective tone of a woman who has survived many severe storms and remembers every lightning flash and thunderclap."

Carol Diann Johnson was born in New York City and attended the High School for the Performing Arts. Her father was a subway conductor and her mother a homemaker. She recalls when she was around 3 or 4, her parents took her to an aunt in North Carolina and left her in the care of her aunt, without notice, for a year. She said it took a long time to forgive her parents, though she eventually did, and was there for them in their later years.

"It happened, it's over, it's done. A mature person finds a way to let go of that," she told OWN's "Master-class in an interview a few years ago. "They did a lot of wonderful things. They lived, gave me everything they possibly could, and they passed on."

She began her career as a model in a segregated industry; she got much of her work due to publications like the black magazine Ebony. A prize from "Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts" TV show led to nightclub engagements.

In her 1998 memoir "Diahann," Carroll traced her turbulent romantic life, which included liaisons with Harry Belafonte, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Sammy Davis Jr., Sidney Poitier and David Frost. She even became engaged to Frost, but the engagement was canceled.

An early marriage to nightclub owner Monte Kay resulted in Carroll's only child, Suzanne, as well as a divorce. She also divorced her second husband, retail executive Freddie Glusman, later marrying magazine editor Robert DeLeon, who died.

Her most celebrated marriage was in 1987, to singer Vic Damone, and the two appeared together in nightclubs. But they separated in 1991 and divorced several years later.

After she was treated for breast cancer in 1998, she spoke out for more money for research and for free screening for women who couldn't afford mammograms.

"We all look forward to the day that mastectomies, chemotherapy and radiation are considered barbaric," Carroll told a gathering in 2000.

Besides her daughter, she is survived by grandchildren August and Sydney.

Bob Thomas, a long-time and now deceased staffer of the Associated Press, was the principal writer of this obituary.

Dank, the brand that isn't, scrutinized amid vaping illness

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's a widely known vaping cartridge in the marijuana economy, but it's not a licensed brand. And it's got the kind of market buzz no legitimate company would want.

The vaping cartridges that go by the catchy, one-syllable name "Dank" — a slang word for highly potent cannabis — are figuring prominently in the federal investigation to determine what has caused a rash of mysterious and sometimes fatal lung illnesses apparently linked to vaping. Most of the cases have involved products that contain the marijuana compound THC, often obtained from illegal sources.

The suspect Dank vapes are a familiar product in the underground marijuana economy — it's not a legal, tested brand. It's merely a name on a box or a cartridge, packaging that's easily obtained online and used by illicit producers to lure customers.

But with colorful boxes and names like Cherry Kush and Blue Dream, the homemade vapes appear

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convincing on the shelf.

"It doesn't look very different from what you can buy in a (legal) dispensary," said Beverly Hills-based cannabis attorney Allison Margolin.

So far, investigators have not identified a culprit in the illnesses reported in dozens of states. But officials say patients have mentioned the Dank name frequently. Many of the people who got sick in Illinois and Wisconsin, for example, said they used cartridges sold in Dank packaging.

The raw materials to produce a Dank vape aren't hard to find: Ready-to-fill Dank boxes and cartridges can be ordered from Chinese internet sites for pennies apiece. A Craigslist post last week offered a box stuffed with empty Dank packages for \$16. And you can buy the boxes and empty cartridges in shops in downtown Los Angeles.

A rogue producer adds cannabis oil — almost certainly untested — and it's ready for sale.

"It's a generic product name that doesn't really tie back to one store or one distributor," Dr. Jennifer Layden, chief medical officer for the Illinois Department of Public Health, said last month. "Folks are getting it from friends or folks on the street, with no understanding of where it came from prior to that."

The chief selling point for pot vapes in Dank packaging: It's a quick high on the cheap, available for as little as \$20 a gram on the illicit market, roughly one-third of what a customer would pay for a cartridge in a legal marijuana shop in California

But they come with risk: Products in the legal marijuana market are tested for safety and purity, while those in the illicit market are not and could contain pesticides, heavy metals or other dangerous contaminants.

According to California records, no licensed company is manufacturing a cannabis vape carrying the Dank name them in the state.

"It was never a legitimate company," said Los Angeles dispensary owner Donnie Anderson. "It was always an underground brand."

Given the shadowy pedigree of Dank vapes, it's not surprising that details about its history are scarce. In California, the Dank name appears to have emerged during the largely unregulated medical cannabis era, prior to broad legalization that began in 2018.

Dispensary owner Jerred Kiloh, who heads the Los Angeles-based United Cannabis Business Association, recalls seeing Dank vapes for the first time about seven years ago. Kiloh remembers being visited by vendors selling them at his shop, though that stopped long ago.

What remains is the name, which has managed to retain a surprising cachet in the underground industry.

Last month, Wisconsin authorities uncovered an illegal vaping-cartridge operation that they said was producing thousands of cartridges loaded with THC oil every day for almost two years. Photographs released by the Kenosha County Sheriff's Department showed neatly stacked Dank boxes and cartridges, apparently ready for shipment.

Also last month, Minnesota authorities seized nearly 77,000 THC vaping cartridges, some of which were packaged in Dank boxes.

In November 2018, authorities in Lorain County, Ohio, intercepted four packages mailed from California holding individually wrapped and sealed packages of Dank cartridges. They believed numerous similar packages were sent to the area previously.

"Dank Vapes appears to be the most prominent in a class of largely counterfeit brands, with common packaging that is easily available online and that is used by distributors to market THC-containing cartridges with no obvious centralized production or distribution," said a report by Illinois and Wisconsin officials, and from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Doctors say the illnesses resemble an inhalation injury. Symptoms have included shortness of breath, fatigue, chest pain, diarrhea and vomiting.

Ron Gershoni, co-founder of vape producer Jetty Extracts who sits on the board of the California Cannabis Manufacturers Association, said the strictly regulated legal industry has been working to distinguish itself from the underground market that continues to thrive in California.

His company doesn't view Dank vapes as a competitor, but he understands how the name has survived in the illegal market.

They "essentially sell empty packaging, and anyone can fill it," he said. "It's a business model that made sense. Anybody who wanted to make a buck."

Blood is a member of AP's marijuana beat team. Follow the AP's complete marijuana coverage: <https://apnews.com/Marijuana>

Romney, Sasse break from GOP on Trump's China remarks

By **NICHOLAS RICCARDI** and **LISA MASCARO** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Most Republican leaders were silent or supportive of President Donald Trump's public call for another foreign government, China, to investigate his political foe, while a few voiced concern that the president was trying to enlist a rival power in his reelection effort.

Several House and Senate leaders stayed mum Friday as Trump escalated the controversy that has fueled an impeachment inquiry and plowed through another norm of American politics. Foreign interference in elections has long been viewed as a threat to U.S. sovereignty and the integrity of democracy, and soliciting foreign help in an election is illegal.

But Trump found support in his willingness to openly challenge that convention. Vice President Mike Pence made clear he backed the president and believes he is raising "appropriate" issues. Other allies agreed.

"I don't think there's anything improper about doing that," GOP Sen. Ron Johnson, chairman of the Homeland Security Committee, said of Trump's call on China to investigate the business dealings of Hunter Biden, the son of leading Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden.

On Friday morning, Utah Sen. Mitt Romney dissented: "By all appearances, the President's brazen and unprecedented appeal to China and to Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden is wrong and appalling."

He added, in a tweet: "When the only American citizen President Trump singles out for China's investigation is his political opponent in the midst of the Democratic nomination process, it strains credulity to suggest that it is anything other than politically motivated."

Romney and Nebraska Sen. Ben Sasse appeared to be the only Republicans going public with concerns. Sasse said in a statement to the Omaha World-Herald: "Americans don't look to Chinese commies for the truth. If the Biden kid broke laws by selling his name to Beijing, that's a matter for American courts, not communist tyrants running torture camps."

Those concerns did not address new evidence that emerged late Thursday and appeared to corroborate some of the allegations contained in a whistleblower report that helped trigger an impeachment investigation of Trump.

House Democrats released a trove of text messages showing U.S. diplomats conducted a campaign to push Ukraine into launching investigations of the Bidens and the 2016 election. Neither Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell nor House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy responded to a request for comment.

The responses followed a familiar pattern in the age of Trump. As the president broke another political barrier, his party leaders made no public effort to rein him in. Critics have argued that reaction has only emboldened the president, while doing lasting damage to the party and the presidency. Trump allies argue the president's rule-breaking rhetoric is not as important as his policies, which they support.

But the silence this time also reflects a sharper dilemma for Republicans. As Democrats pursue an impeachment investigation, Republicans have been struggling with how best to shield themselves — and the unpredictable president who may decide their political fortunes — from the steady drip of new revelations. With little guidance from the White House, lawmakers have tried to say as little as possible, blame Democrats or express vague optimism about the investigative process. Trump's remarks Thursday demonstrated the limits of that strategy.

Standing outside the White House, Trump defended himself against allegations that he privately pressured Ukraine to investigate the Bidens by inviting a geopolitical rival to launch a probe.

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"China should start an investigation into the Bidens," Trump said after being asked about trade negotiations with the country.

Trump on Friday argued that he not specifically targeting a political foe, but merely pushing countries to clean up corruption. Although there is no evidence that the Bidens were involved in criminal corruption in either Ukraine or China, Republicans quickly took up the explanation.

Pence argued that the Bidens' ties to Ukraine are of interest to the American people.

"There are legitimate questions that ought to be asked. We will continue to ask them because the American people have a right to know whether or not the vice president of the United States or his family profited from his position," he said.

One of the party's most vulnerable senators, Arizona's Martha McSally, stood at Pence's side at the stop in Scottsdale. McSally has blasted Democrats for launching an impeachment investigation focused on Trump's pressure on Ukraine, but has not commented on the whistleblower report and the loose transcript of the phone call that prompted the probe. Her office had no comment about whether she thought Trump's statement Thursday was appropriate.

In North Carolina, Sen. Thom Tillis, whom Democrats hope to topple in 2020, also stood by the president.

"We'll see what comes out of their impeachment inquiry. They're not drawing up articles of impeachment yet," Tillis told The Associated Press in an interview Monday. "What I've said is if they're basing this entire process on a now public, unredacted transcript and the whistleblower complaint, certainly that doesn't rise to a level of impeachment, in my opinion."

Asked about his reaction to the public statements Thursday, Tillis' office responded with a statement: "Democrats and the mainstream media are using anything and everything to justify impeaching the president and removing him from office." His office referred back to that statement Friday morning after the texts were released.

At a town hall meeting in western Iowa, Sen. Joni Ernst was asked about Trump's Ukraine call and request for foreign intervention. "We're going to move onto another question, but what I would say is we can't determine that yet," Ernst said. She said the Senate Intelligence Committee would evaluate it.

She was blunt about the limits of her influence on the president.

"I can yay, nay whatever. The president is going to say what the president is going to do." Ernst said, saying it was up to member of Congress to make sure "we remain strong in the face of adversary."

The office of Sen. Cory Gardner of Colorado, widely considered the most vulnerable Republican senator, issued a statement that didn't reference Trump's request of China. "The Senate Intelligence Committee is a serious and respected body that is looking into this in a bipartisan fashion," the statement said.

The offices of several other senators up for reelection next year alongside the president, including Sen. Susan Collins of Maine, also did not respond.

House Democrats are investigating Trump's July 25 call to Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in which Trump pressed the newly elected leader to look into the Biden family.

Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company at the same time his father was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Kyiv. Though the timing raised concerns among anti-corruption advocates, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either the former vice president or his son.

Riccardi reported from Denver. Associated Press writers Scott Bauer in Madison, Wis.; Sara Burnett in Chicago; Jonathan J. Cooper in Phoenix; Scott McFetridge in Des Moines, Iowa; Lindsay Whitehurst in Salt Lake City; and Gary D. Robertson in Raleigh, N.C., contributed to this report.

US hiring slows but unemployment rate hits fresh 50-year low

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. economy added a modest 136,000 jobs in September, a gain that managed to lower the unemployment rate to a new five-decade low of 3.5% but also suggested rising caution

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among employers.

The additional hiring and the drop in the jobless rate will likely ease worries that an economy weakened by the U.S.-China trade war and slower global growth could be edging toward a potential recession. The government on Friday also revised up its estimate of job growth in July and August by a combined 45,000.

Still, a drop-off in the pace of hiring compared with last year points to rising uncertainty among employers about the job market and the economy in the face of President Donald Trump's numerous trade conflicts. Pay growth has also weakened, reflecting the hesitance of employers to step up wages.

"The September jobs report sent some conflicting signals, but the big picture remains one of a labor market — and an economy — whose growth is downshifting but not collapsing," said Michael Feroli, an economist at JPMorgan Chase.

The comparatively sluggish hiring data makes it likely that the Federal Reserve later this month will cut rates for the third time this year to try to help sustain the expansion. At the same time, the drop in the unemployment rate from 3.7% may embolden some Fed officials who have resisted rate cuts.

Investors appeared pleased that the jobs report at least suggested that the economy remains resilient for now. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up more than 200 points in mid-day trading.

Excluding government hiring, job gains over the past three months have slowed to an average of 119,000 a month, the weakest showing in seven years.

And despite ultra-low unemployment, average wages dipped in September, the Labor Department said. Hourly pay rose just 2.9% from a year earlier, below the 3.4% year-over-year gain at the start of the year.

Julia Pollak, a labor economist at jobs marketplace ZipRecruiter, said the pay that employers are advertising has declined this year after rising sharply in 2018. And she noted that the number of part-time workers who would prefer full-time work has risen over the past two months.

Those trends "show that employers are increasingly risk-averse as global uncertainty and recession fears rise," Pollak said.

Tom Lix, the CEO and founder of Cleveland Whiskey, which distills bourbon and rye whiskeys, said the trade war has shut down markets that his company was developing in Europe and China. This has forced him to postpone hiring and a planned expansion.

"We were going to build a new building, and add a restaurant and bar, which would have expanded our employment significantly," Lix said.

He had also expected to add three distillers to his staff of 15. But that was before Europe and China imposed retaliatory tariffs on U.S. bourbon — after Trump had raised import taxes on their goods. Europe had accounted for about 15% of Lix's sales before the tariffs took effect.

"All of our European connections and all of our Chinese connections — we're not doing business with them right now," he said.

On Sept. 1, Trump hit \$112 billion of Chinese goods with 15% tariffs. He has threatened on Dec. 15 to tax the rest of China's exports to the United States, which would raise prices for U.S. consumers.

The weakest sector of the U.S. economy — manufacturing, which is likely already in recession — cut 2,000 jobs in September. At the same time, retailers shed 11,400 jobs, and employment in mining and logging was unchanged.

The big gains last month were in health care, which added 41,400 jobs, and professional and business services, which include such higher-paying areas as engineering and accounting but also lower-paying temp work. That sector added 34,000 positions.

Friday's jobs data underscored the benefits of a hot job market for lower-paid Americans and traditionally disadvantaged workers. The unemployment rate for workers without high school diplomas fell to 4.8%, the lowest level on records dating to 1992. The rate for Latinos fell to 3.9%, also a record low.

Amy Glaser, senior vice president at Adecco USA, a staffing firm, says companies are still willing to raise pay for blue collar workers. Some are also paying retention and signing bonuses and in some cases double pay for overtime.

"We're still seeing strong demand, we're still seeing more job opportunities out there than candidates,"

Glaser said.

The employment figures carry more weight than usual because worries about the health of the economy are mounting. A measure of factory activity fell in September to its lowest level in more than a decade, while a similar gauge of the economy's vast services sector slowed sharply in September, falling to its lowest point in three years.

The job market is the economy's main bulwark. As long as hiring is solid enough to keep the unemployment rate from rising, most Americans will likely remain confident enough to spend, offsetting other drags and propelling the economy forward.

But a slump in hiring or a rise in the unemployment rate in coming months could discourage consumers from spending as freely as they otherwise might during the holiday shopping season.

Consumers are still mostly optimistic, and their spending has kept the economy afloat this year. But they may be growing more cautious. Consumer confidence dropped sharply in September, according to the Conference Board, a business research group. And their spending in August slowed.

There are some bright spots. Home sales, for example, have rebounded as mortgage rates have fallen, helped in part by the Fed's two interest rate cuts this year. And Americans are also buying cars at a still-healthy pace. Consumers would typically be reluctant to make such major purchases if they were fearful of a downturn.

NYPD officer killed by friendly fire is hailed as a hero

By RYAN TARINELLI Associated Press

MONROE, N.Y. (AP) — As bagpipers marched silently to the beat of a somber drum, a New York City police officer killed by friendly fire during a struggle with an armed man was honored at his funeral Friday as a hero and a dedicated, compassionate professional who put his heart into his work.

Officer Brian Mulkeen, who was hit Sunday by two police bullets while wrestling with the man in the Bronx, was the second New York City officer killed by friendly fire this year.

"We are here to honor a hero" and to "celebrate the life of an absolutely remarkable man," said Police Commissioner James P. O'Neill, who choked back emotion as he addressed mourners.

Mayor Bill de Blasio said that Mulkeen "understood that his work required his whole heart and all the compassion that was in him." He kept in touch with a teen he'd arrested, inviting him to play basketball.

"He undoubtedly changed the direction of that young man's life," said de Blasio, adding that the family was "devastated" by Mulkeen's death, "as if they'd lost a family member too."

Officers in dress uniforms stood at attention outside the church in Monroe, north of New York City. They crisply saluted as Mulkeen's flag-draped casket was carried inside.

Mulkeen, who joined the department in January 2013, was working with a plainclothes anti-crime unit when he and his partners encountered the armed man.

The man fled on foot and officers chased him. Mulkeen and the man started to wrestle.

Police have described a chaotic confrontation in which 15 shots were fired in 10 seconds by six officers. Deputy Chief Kevin Maloney said five of those shots came from Mulkeen after the armed man reached toward his waistband.

The armed man was also killed in the gunfire.

Only one person was responsible for Mulkeen's death, O'Neill said at the funeral: the man who "carried a loaded and illegal gun and decided to run from police."

Mulkeen was a graduate of Fordham University's business school, and he worked as a financial adviser for Merrill Lynch from 2007 to 2009. He lived in suburban Yorktown Heights with his girlfriend, who is also a police officer.

Ryan Tarinelli is a corps member for Report for America, a nonprofit organization that supports local news coverage in a partnership with The Associated Press for New York. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Accused of abuse, priests move on to teach, counsel, prey

By **CLAUDIA LAUER** and **MEGHAN HOYER** Associated Press

Nearly 1,700 priests and other clergy members that the Roman Catholic Church considers credibly accused of child sexual abuse are living under the radar with little to no oversight from religious authorities or law enforcement, decades after the first wave of the church abuse scandal roiled U.S. dioceses, an Associated Press investigation has found.

These priests, deacons, monks and lay people now teach middle-school math. They counsel survivors of sexual assault. They work as nurses and volunteer at nonprofits aimed at helping at-risk kids. They live next to playgrounds and day care centers. They foster and care for children.

And in their time since leaving the church, dozens have committed crimes, including sexual assault and possessing child pornography, the AP's analysis found.

A recent push by Roman Catholic dioceses across the U.S. to publish the names of those it considers to be credibly accused has opened a window into the daunting problem of how to monitor and track priests who often were never criminally charged and, in many cases, were removed from or left the church to live as private citizens.

Each diocese determines its own standard to deem a priest credibly accused, with the allegations ranging from inappropriate conversations and unwanted hugging to forced sodomy and rape.

Dioceses and religious orders so far have shared the names of more than 5,100 clergy members, with more than three-quarters of the names released just in the last year. The AP researched the nearly 2,000 who remain alive to determine where they have lived and worked — the largest-scale review to date of what happened to priests named as possible sexual abusers.

In addition to the almost 1,700 that the AP was able to identify as largely unsupervised, there were 76 people who could not be located. The remaining clergy members were found to be under some kind of supervision, with some in prison or overseen by church programs.

The review found hundreds of priests held positions of trust, many with access to children. More than 160 continued working or volunteering in churches, including dozens in Catholic dioceses overseas and some in other denominations. Roughly 190 obtained professional licenses to work in education, medicine, social work and counseling — including 76 who, as of August, still had valid credentials in those fields.

The research also turned up cases where the priests were once again able to prey on victims.

After Roger Sinclair was removed by the Diocese of Greensburg in Pennsylvania in 2002 for allegedly abusing a teenage boy decades earlier, he ended up in Oregon. In 2017, he was arrested for repeatedly molesting a young developmentally disabled man and is now imprisoned for a crime that the lead investigator in the Oregon case says should have never been allowed to happen.

Like Sinclair, the majority of people listed as credibly accused were never criminally prosecuted for the abuse alleged when they were part of the church. That lack of criminal history has revealed a sizable gray area that state licensing boards and background check services are not designed to handle as former priests seek new employment, apply to be foster parents and live in communities unaware of their presence and their pasts.

It also has left dioceses struggling with how — or if — former employees should be tracked and monitored. Victims' advocates have pushed for more oversight, but church officials say what's being requested extends beyond what they legally can do. And civil authorities like police departments or prosecutors say their purview is limited to people convicted of crimes.

That means the heavy lift of tracking former priests has fallen to citizen watchdogs and victims, whose complaints have fueled suspensions, removals and firings. But even then, loopholes in state laws allow many former clergy to keep their new jobs even when the history of allegations becomes public.

"Defrocked or not, we've long argued that bishops can't recruit, hire, ordain, supervise, shield, transfer and protect predator priests, then suddenly oust them and claim to be powerless over their whereabouts and activities," said David Clohessy, the former executive director of the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, who now heads the group's St. Louis chapter.

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"IT WAS SUPPOSED TO MAKE ABUSE HISTORY"

When the first big wave of the clergy abuse scandal hit Roman Catholic dioceses in the early 2000s, the U.S. bishops created the Dallas Charter, a baseline for sexual abuse reporting, training and other procedures to prevent child abuse. A handful of canon lawyers and experts at the time said every diocese should be transparent, name priests that had been accused of abuse and, in many cases, get rid of them.

Most dioceses decided against naming priests, however. And with the dioceses that did release lists in the next few years— some by choice, others due to lawsuit settlements or bankruptcy proceedings — abuse survivors complained about underreporting of priests, along with the omission of religious brothers they believed should be on those lists.

"The Dallas Charter was supposed to fix everything. It was supposed to make the abuse scandal history. But that didn't happen," said the Rev. Thomas Doyle, a canon lawyer who had tried to warn the bishops that abuse was widespread and that they should clean house.

After the charter was established in 2002, some critics say dioceses were more likely to simply defrock priests and return them to private citizenship.

Before 2018's landmark Pennsylvania grand jury report, which named more than 300 predator priests accused of abusing more than 1,000 children in six dioceses, the official lists of credibly accused priests added up to fewer than 1,500 names nationwide. Now, within the span of a little more than a year, more than 100 dioceses and religious orders have come forward with thousands of names — but often little other information that can be used to alert the public.

Some of the lists merely provide names, without details of the abuse allegations that led to their inclusion, the dates of the priests' assignments or the parishes where they served. And many don't disclose the priests' status with the church, which can vary from being moved into full retirement to being banished from performing public sacraments while continuing to perform administrative work. Only a handful of the lists include the last-known cities the priests lived in.

Over nine months, AP reporters and researchers scoured public databases, court records, property records, social media and other sources to locate the ousted clergy members.

That effort unearthed hundreds of these priests who, largely unwatched by church and civil authorities, chose careers that put them in new positions of trust and authority, including jobs in which they dealt with children and survivors of sexual abuse.

At least two worked as juvenile detention officers, in Washington and Arizona, and several others migrated to government roles like victims' advocate or public health planner. Others landed jobs at places like Disney World, community centers or family shelters for domestic abuse. And one former priest started a nonprofit that sends people to volunteer in orphanages and other places in developing nations.

The AP determined that a handful adopted or fostered children, sponsored teens and young adults coming to the U.S. for educational opportunities, or worked with organizations that are part of the foster care system, though that number could be much higher since no public database tracks adoptive or foster parents.

Until February, former priest Steven Gerard Stencil worked at a Phoenix company that places severely disabled children in foster homes and trains foster parents to care for them. Colleagues knew he was a former priest, but were unaware of past allegations against him, according to Lauree Copenhaver, the firm's executive director.

Stencil, now 67, was suspended from ministry in 2001 after a trip to Mexico that violated a diocese policy forbidding clerics from being with minors overnight. Around that time, a 17-year-old boy also complained that Stencil, then pastor of St. Anthony Parish in Casa Grande, Ariz., had grabbed his crotch in 1999 in a swimming pool. The diocese determined it was accidental touching, but turned the allegations over to police. No criminal charges were filed.

Since 2003, Stencil's name has appeared on the Tucson diocese's list of clerics credibly accused of sexually abusing children, and his request to be voluntarily defrocked was granted in 2011.

Copenhaver said Stencil passed a fingerprint test showing he did not have a criminal history when he was first hired part time by Human Services Consultants LLC 12 years ago.

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"We did not have any knowledge of his indiscretions, and had we known his history we would not have hired him," she said, emphasizing that he did not have direct access to children in his job.

Stencil was fired from the company for unrelated reasons earlier this year. He later said in a post on his Facebook page that he was working as a driver for a private Phoenix bus company that specializes in educational tours for school groups and scout troops.

"I have always been upfront with my employers about my past as a priest," Stencil wrote in an email to the AP when asked for comment. He said he unsuccessfully asked years ago for his name to be removed from the diocese's list, adding, "Since then, I have decided to simply live my life as best I can."

The AP's analysis also found that more than 160 of the priests remained in the comfortable position of continuing to work or volunteer in a church, with three-quarters of those continuing to serve in some capacity in the Roman Catholic Church. Others moved on as ministers and priests in different denominations, with new roles such as organist or even as priests in Catholic churches not affiliated with the Vatican, sometimes despite known or published credible accusations against them.

In more than 30 cases, priests accused of sexual abuse in the U.S. simply moved overseas, where they worked as Roman Catholic priests in good standing in countries including Peru, Mexico, the Philippines, Ireland and Colombia. The AP found that in all, roughly 110 clergy members moved or were suspected of moving out of the U.S. after allegations were made.

At least five priests were excommunicated from the Roman Catholic Church because of their refusal to stop participating in other religious activity.

More than three decades ago, James A. Funke and a fellow teacher at a St. Louis Catholic high school, Jerome Robben, went to prison for sexually abusing male students together. Funke, released in 1995, was eventually bounced from the priesthood. But years later, the two men joined together again, promoting Robben as the leader of a church of his own making.

Since 2004, Missouri records show that Robben has listed his St. Louis home as the base for a religious organization operating under at least three different names. Beginning in 2014, those papers have identified Funke as the order's secretary and one of its three directors.

Mary Kruger, whose son committed suicide when he was 21 after being abused by the men in high school, said she raised fresh concerns about Robben in 2007 when she heard he was presenting himself as a cleric.

At the time, he was being considered for promotion to bishop in a conservative Christian order based in Ontario, Canada. Kruger said members of the order told her that Robben had dismissed questions about his abuse conviction, claiming he had merely rented an apartment to Funke and that police blamed him for not knowing what went on inside.

Robben eventually was defrocked from the Christian order, and apparently then started his own. Until last year, when its paperwork expired, the group was registered with Missouri officials as the Syrian Orthodox Exarchate. However, a Facebook post from 2017 identified Robben — photographed wearing a crown and gold vestments — as the leader of a Russian Byzantine order raising money to build a monastery in Nevada.

Funke refused comment when approached by an AP reporter, and Robben did not respond to requests for comment.

"If they could wind up in jail next week, I'd be ecstatic," Kruger said. "I think as long as they're alive, they're dangerous."

LEFT THE CHURCH, COMMITTED CRIMINAL OFFENSES

As early as 1981, church officials knew of allegations that Roger Sinclair had acted inappropriately with adolescent boys. Two mothers at St. Mary's Parish in Kittanning, Penn., wrote a letter to the then-bishop saying that Sinclair had molested their sons, both about 14 at the time.

Sinclair played a game where he would shake hands and then try to shove his hand at their genitals, the mothers said in their letter, parts of which were made public last year as part of the landmark report in Pennsylvania. They said he also tried to put his hands down one of the boy's pants.

Other accusations emerged about Sinclair showing dirty movies to boys in the rectory, exposing himself

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and possibly molesting a teen he had taken on a trip to Florida a few years earlier. After a group of mothers called the police for advice, the police chief told them he had heard the rumors but took no action, according to documents reviewed by the Pennsylvania grand jury.

The church sent Sinclair for treatment, returned him to ministry and provided him with a letter that listed him as a priest in good standing so he could be a chaplain in the Archdiocese of Military Services, according to the grand jury. That assignment took him to at least four different states, including Kansas, where in the early '90s he was a chaplain at the Topeka State Hospital, a now-closed state mental hospital that had a wing for teenagers.

He was fired from that assignment in 1991 after trying multiple times to check out male teenage patients to go see a movie. Administrators said he had managed "to gain access to a locked unit deceitfully."

Sinclair was removed from ministry in 2002 while the diocese investigated claims from a victim who said the priest sexually abused him in the rectory and on field trips beginning at Sinclair's first assignment as a priest. He resigned a few years later, before the church concluded proceedings to defrock him.

When he started serving on the board of directors of an Oregon senior center and working as a volunteer there, he was required to pass a background check because the center received federal dollars for the Meals on Wheels program. But no flags were raised because he was never charged in Pennsylvania.

According to accounts from both former center staffers and law enforcement officials, Sinclair's downfall began when the center's then-director looked outside and saw him with his hand down the young man's pants. He immediately barred Sinclair from the center, but left it up to the man's family to decide whether to press charges. Three months later, after learning why Sinclair had been absent, an employee went to the police out of fear the former priest would target someone else.

Now-Sgt. Steven Binstock, the lead investigator in Oregon, said Sinclair immediately confessed to committing multiple sexual acts with the developmentally disabled man. He also confessed to sexual contact with minors in Pennsylvania 30 years earlier.

"He was very vague, but he did tell us that it was some of the same type of behaviors, the same type of incidents, that had occurred with the victim that happened here," Binstock told the AP.

The Pennsylvania diocese had never warned Oregon authorities about Sinclair because it stopped tracking him after he left the church. The diocese, which did not tell the public Sinclair had been accused of abuse until it released its list in August 2018, declined to comment on his case.

The AP's analysis of the credibly accused church employees who remain alive found that more than 310 of the 2,000 have been charged with crimes for actions that took place when they were priests. Beyond that, the AP confirmed that Sinclair and 64 others have been charged with crimes committed after leaving the church, with most of them convicted for those crimes.

Some of the crimes involved drunken driving, theft or drug offenses. But 42 of the men were accused of crimes that were sexual in nature or violent, including a dozen charged with sexually assaulting minors. Thirteen were charged with distributing, making or possessing child pornography, and several others were caught masturbating in public or exposing themselves to people on planes or in shopping malls.

Five failed to register in their new communities as sex offenders as required due to their sex crime convictions.

Priests and other church employees being listed on sex offender registries at all is a rarity — the AP analysis found that only 85 of the 2,000 are. That's because church officials often successfully lobbied civil authorities to downgrade charges in exchange for guilty pleas ahead of trials. Convictions were sometimes expunged if offenders completed probationary programs or the charges were reduced below the level required by states for registration.

Since sex offender registries in their current searchable form didn't begin until the 1990s, dozens also were not tracked or monitored, because their original sentences already had been served before the registries were established.

The AP also found that more than 500 of the credibly accused former priests live within 2,000 feet of schools, playgrounds, childcare centers or other facilities that serve children, with many living much closer.

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In the states that restrict how close registered sex offenders can live to those facilities, limits range from 500 to 2,000 feet.

Decades after Louis Ladenburger was temporarily removed from the priesthood to be treated for "inappropriate professional behavior and relationships," he was hired as a counselor at a school for troubled boys in Idaho.

Ladenburger was arrested in 2007 and accused of sexual battery; in a deal with prosecutors, he pleaded guilty to aggravated assault. He served about five months in prison.

According to Bonner County, Idaho, sheriff's reports, students said Ladenburger told them he was a sex addict. During counseling sessions, they said, the former Franciscan priest rubbed their upper thighs and stomachs, held their hands and gave them shoulder and neck massages. If students expressed confusion about their sexual identities, the sheriff's reports say he fondled them and performed oral sex on them.

Ladenburger was fired from the school. In an interview with sheriff's officials at the time, he "admitted being a touchy person," kissing many students and having his "needs met by the physical contact" with the boys.

By then, he'd been gone from the church for more than a decade — in 1996, the Vatican had granted his request to be released from his vows. No officials from his religious order or from the dioceses in six different states where he had served had warned the school or provided details of the allegations against him when he was a priest.

In a lawsuit involving a sexual abuse allegation against another member of the Franciscan order, the complaint cited Ladenburger as an example of the harm done when church officials don't report accusations of abuse to law enforcement, saying he likely never would have been hired at the school if the Franciscans had reported him when they first became aware.

"For all intents and purposes, they set loose a ticking time bomb that exploded in 2007," the lawsuit said.

WHY FORMER PRIESTS AREN'T TRACKED

If priests choose to leave their dioceses or religious orders — or if the church decides to permanently defrock them in a process known as laicization — leaders say the church no longer has authority to monitor where they go.

After the Dallas Charter came a rush to laicize, resulting in more than 220 of the priests researched by the AP being laicized between 2004 and 2010. Roughly 40% of all the living credibly accused clergy members had either been laicized or had voluntarily left the church.

The laicized priests also are increasingly younger, giving them even more years to lead unsupervised lives, according to Deacon Bernie Nojadera, the executive director of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat of Child and Youth Protection.

"That does create an opportunity for them to seek a second career," Nojadera said. "So this is something a number of dioceses are grappling with and trying to figure out."

For priests who don't leave the church, dioceses and religious orders have more options to impose restrictions and monitoring. But how and whether that's done ranges widely from diocese to diocese, since the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops cannot mandate specific regulations or procedures.

The AP found that the dioceses that released lists more than a decade ago have the most robust of the handful of existing programs.

In Chicago, accused priests who are removed from ministry can opt to join a program started in 2008 in which they continue to receive treatment, benefits and help, and get to "die a priest." In exchange, they must sign over their right to privacy and agree to obey rules such as not living near a school.

"The monitoring is intrusive. I track their phone usage, I require daily logs of where they go, I track their internet usage and check their financial information and records. They have to tell me where they are going to be, who they will be with. And they have to meet with me twice a month face-to-face," said Moira Reilly, the case manager in charge of the Chicago Archdiocese's prayer and penance program.

Reilly, a licensed social worker, said many Catholics don't understand why the church runs the program, instead pushing for every priest accused of abuse to be defrocked.

"If we laicize them or if we let them walk away ... no one is watching them," she said. "I do this job

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because I truly believe that I am protecting the community. I truly believe that I am protecting children.”

In 2006, the Archdiocese of Detroit hired a former parole officer to monitor priests permanently removed from ministry after credible abuse allegations. Spokesman Ned McGrath said the program requires monthly written reports from the priests that include any contact or planned contact with minors and information on whether they attended treatment among other things.

In other dioceses, priests are sent to retirement homes for clergy or church properties that are easy to monitor, but also are often in close proximity or even share space with schools or universities.

The analysis found that many of the accused clergy members still receive pensions or health insurance from the church, since pensions are governed by federal statute and other benefits are dictated by the bishops in each diocese.

Victims’ advocates and others have suggested dioceses devise a system in which those benefits are contingent upon defrocked priests self-reporting their current addresses and employment.

“All a bishop has to do is tell a predator: ‘Here’s your choice. You’ll go live where I tell you, and you’ll get your pension, health insurance, etc. and be around your brothers but be supervised,’” SNAP’s Clohessy suggested, adding that if the former priests don’t agree, their benefits could be withheld.

But several church officials and lawyers note that robust federal laws prohibit withholding or threatening pensions.

Other experts who study child abuse have suggested the church create a database similar to the national sex offender registry that would allow the public and employers to identify credibly accused priests. But even that measure would not guarantee that licensing boards or employers flag a priest credibly accused but not convicted of abuse.

Doyle, the canon lawyer, said the bishops might not believe they can monitor defrocked priests, but that they could be forthcoming about allegations when potential employers call and could also be required to call child protective services in the states where laicized priests move.

The bishops also could address the issue of oversight by initiating a new framework along the lines of the groundbreaking Dallas Charter, which was approved by the pope, Doyle said. But he added that he didn’t trust the current church leadership to meaningfully address the issue.

“The bishops will never admit this, but when they do cut them loose, they believe they are no longer a liability,” he said, referring to the defrocked priests. “I severely doubt there is an incentive for them to want to fix this problem.”

Nojadera noted that it isn’t that simple, since decisions default to the individual bishops in each diocese.

“We have 197 different ways that the Dallas Charter is being implemented. It’s a road map, a bare minimum,” he said. “We do talk about situations where these men are being laicized and what happens to them. And our canon lawyers are quick to say there is no purview to monitor them.”

LICENSED TO TEACH AND COUNSEL

In many cases, the priests tracked by the AP went on to work in positions of trust in fields allowing close access to children and other vulnerable individuals — all with the approval of state credentialing boards, which often were powerless to deny them or unaware of the allegations until the dioceses’ lists were released.

The review found that 190 of the former clergy members gained licenses to work as educators, counselors, social workers or medical personnel, which can be easy places to land for priests already trained in counseling parishioners or working with youth groups.

One is Thomas Meiring who, after asking to leave the priesthood in 1983, began working as a licensed clinical counselor in Ohio, specializing in therapy for teens and adults with sexual orientation and gender identity issues.

Meiring maintained his state-issued license even after the diocese in Toledo settled a lawsuit in 2008 filed by a man who said he was 15 when Meiring sexually abused him in a church rectory in the late 1960s.

It wasn’t until 2016 that the Toledo diocese’s request to defrock Meiring was granted. State records show that Ohio’s Counselor, Social Worker and Marriage & Family Therapist Board has never taken disciplinary action against the 81-year-old, who is among several treatment providers listed by a municipal court in

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suburban Toledo.

"We made noise about him years ago and nobody did anything. It's mind-blowing," said Claudia Vercellotti, who heads Toledo's chapter of SNAP.

But Brian Carnahan, the licensing board's executive director, said the law grants the authority to act only when allegations have resulted in a criminal conviction.

Multiple calls to Meiring at his home and office were not returned.

Few state licensing boards for professions like counselors or teachers have mechanisms in their background check procedures that would catch allegations that were never prosecuted. Some standard checks are conducted in every state, but the statutes regulating what can be taken into consideration when granting or revoking licenses vary. And because the lists of priests with credible allegations against them were so thin until the past year, there was little to cross-check.

Danielle Irving-Johnson, the career services specialist for the American Counseling Association, said criminal background checks are standard when licensing counselors, but that dismissing an application due to an unprosecuted allegation would be unusual.

"There would have to be substantial evidence or some form of documentation to support this accusation," Irving-Johnson said.

The Alabama Board of Examiners in Psychology was not aware of the allegations against former priest William Finger when he was licensed as a counselor in 2012. The Brooklyn diocese publicly named Finger only in 2017, even though he had been laicized since 2002 because of abuse allegations.

According to a complaint filed in January with the board, a woman who asked not to be named contacted Finger's employer last year to say he had abused her for a decade, beginning when he was a priest and she was 12 years old. She said he kissed her, fondled her and digitally penetrated her and also alleged he had sexually abused her sister and a female cousin.

The employer fired Finger, now 83, and reported the allegations to the state's licensing board.

In many states, allegations dating from before someone was licensed or that never made it to court would have been dismissed. But Alabama's board issued an emergency suspension because it is allowed to consider issues of "moral character" from any point in a licensed individual's life.

The decision whether to permanently suspend Finger's license is pending. He did not return multiple messages from the AP but denied the allegations in a statement to the licensing board. He also remains licensed as a counselor and hypnotherapist in Florida.

The AP also found that 91 of the clergy members had been licensed to work in schools as teachers, principals, aides and school counselors, only 19 of whom had their licenses suspended or revoked. Twenty-eight still are actively licensed or hold lifetime certifications.

That's almost surely an undercount, since some private, religious or online schools don't require teachers to be licensed and states like New Jersey and Massachusetts don't have public databases of teacher licenses.

School administrators in Cinnaminson, New Jersey, knew for years that sixth-grade teacher Joseph Michael DeShan had been forced from the priesthood for impregnating a teen parishioner. But nearly two decades later, he remained in a classroom.

DeShan, now 60, left the Bridgeport, Connecticut, diocese in 1989 after admitting having sex with the girl beginning when she was 14. Two years later, she got pregnant and gave birth. The diocese did not report DeShan to the police, and he was never prosecuted.

By 2002, he was working as a teacher in Cinnaminson when church disclosures about his past raised alarms. After a brief investigation, administrators allowed DeShan to return to the classroom, where he remained until last year, when a new generation of parents renewed cries for his removal.

The school board tried to fire him, citing both his conduct as a priest and recent remarks to a student about her "pretty green eyes." In April, a state arbitrator ruled against the district, saying it had been "long aware" of DeShan's conduct as a priest.

The state confirmed DeShan, who did not return calls for comment, still holds a valid teaching license,

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but that the licensing board is seeking to revoke it. Parents say he is not in a classroom this fall, but his profile remains posted on the school website and the idea he could be allowed back is troubling, said Cornell Jones, whose daughter was in DeShan's class last year.

"When I found out about this guy being her teacher I was just, 'No way — there's no way possible,'" Jones said. "I get a traffic violation and they make me pay. You violate a child and they just put you in a different zip code. How fair is that?"

The AP determined that one former priest had been licensed as recently as May. Andrew Syring, 42, resigned from the Omaha Archdiocese in November after a review of allegations that included inappropriate conversations with teens and kissing them on the cheeks. No charges were filed.

Dan Hoelsing, the superintendent of the Schuyler Independent School District in Nebraska, said he could not disqualify Syring when he applied to be a substitute teacher because the former priest had not been accused of outright abuse or criminally charged. But Hoelsing instituted strict rules requiring Syring to be supervised by another adult at all times, even while teaching, and banning him from student bathrooms or locker rooms.

Syring did not return messages for comment left with family members.

In many of the cases where a teaching license was revoked, the AP found the former priests went on to seek employment teaching English as a second language in private clinics, as online teachers or at community colleges.

"If these guys simply left and disappeared somewhere, it wouldn't be a problem," said Doyle, the canon lawyer. "But they don't. They get jobs and create spaces where they can get access to and abuse children again."

FILLING THE VACUUM

To a large extent, nonprofits, survivors groups and victims have stepped in to fill the void in tracking and policing these clergy members while they await stronger action.

Nojadera, with the bishops' youth protection division, said more and more of his emails about priests are from concerned parishioners who are taking up the cause of protecting children.

"The lay faithful definitely seem to be stepping in," he said. "Part of that is the awareness of the community in many ways based on the trainings we are having for our children and others in the parish communities."

Gemma Hoskins, one of the stars of the documentary series "The Keepers" about abuse in a Baltimore Catholic school, also is taking up the cause.

Hoskins and a handful of volunteers have started a homegrown database using spreadsheets of clergy members created by a nonprofit called BishopAccountability.org to locate priests accused of abuse and post their approximate addresses.

"We're careful. If their address is 123 Main Street, we'll say the 100 block of Main Street like the police do," she said. "We don't want any of our volunteers to get in trouble, but it's something all of us feel is necessary. If the priests are laicized, it's even scarier ... because it means the church isn't tracking where they are living. They're out there in the world as unregistered sex offenders."

David Finkelhor, director of the Crimes against Children Research Center at the University of New Hampshire, said reports of abuse in the church have decreased and that all indications are that fresh allegations are being properly reported.

He also said that while keeping tabs on the accused abusers is important, the public shouldn't assume all the former priests pose a big risk, noting that roughly one in every five child molesters reoffends.

"That's lower than for a number of other violent crimes," he said.

Still, he feels church leaders need to do far more to help track these clergy members, since anemic reporting in the past means little now prevents many of the priests from once again getting close to children.

"Tracking them is something they could have done as part of a general display of responsibility for the problem that they had helped contribute to," Finkelhor said.

___ Associated Press writers Sharon Cohen, Gillian Flaccus, Adam Geller, Justin Pritchard, John Seewer and Anita Snow contributed to this report, along with AP news researchers Jennifer Farrar, Randy Herschaft, Monika Mathur and Rhonda Shafner.

Diplomats pushed Ukraine to investigate, dangled Trump visit

By LISA MASCARO, ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top U.S. diplomats encouraged Ukraine's newly elected president to conduct an investigation linked to Joe Biden's family in return for a high-profile visit with President Donald Trump. It soon escalated into what one diplomat feared was a "crazy" swap that risked vital U.S. military aid.

That's according to a cache of text messages released late Thursday by House investigators following a 10-hour interview with one of the diplomats, Kurt Volker, who stepped down as special envoy to Ukraine amid the Democrats' impeachment inquiry.

The pages lay out the raw contours of a potential quid-pro-quo exchange — Trump gets his political investigation of a top Democratic rival in return for granting a favor to Ukraine.

The text messages convey a distinct campaign among the three diplomats, who — apparently against some of their stated better judgment — appear to be trying to help Ukraine reset its relationship with Trump by pushing his interest in investigating his Democratic rival and the 2016 election.

Volker, in a text message on the morning of a planned July 25 phone call between Trump and Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, wrote: "Heard from White House — Assuming President Z convinces trump he will investigate / "get to the bottom of what happened" in 2016, we will nail down date for visit to Washington."

An adviser to the Ukrainian president appeared to go along with the proposal, which entailed investigating Burisma, a Ukrainian gas company where Joe Biden's son Hunter served on the board.

"Phone call went well," wrote Andrey Yermak in a text to Volker later that day after the two presidents spoke. Yermak suggested several dates when Trump and Zelenskyy could meet in September.

But all that planning started to unravel when Zelenskyy's aide tried to lock in a date for the Trump meeting before putting out the statement on the investigations.

"Once we have a date we will call for a press briefing, announcing upcoming visit and outlining vision for the reboot of US-UKRAINE relationship, including among other things Burisma and election meddling in investigations," Yermak wrote two weeks later.

"Sounds great!" texted Volker.

Volker and the two other diplomats — William "Bill" Taylor, the charge d'affaires at the U.S. embassy in Ukraine, and Gordon Sondland, the U.S. ambassador to the European Union — discussed the statement Zelenskyy would issue in support of the investigation. As the negotiations progressed, Sondland said Trump "really wants the deliverable."

Then, Trump put a hold on \$250 million in military assistance to Ukraine, which was depending on the funds as part of its defense against Russia.

"Need to talk with you," Yermak wrote to Volker.

Taylor, the seasoned top diplomat in the Ukrainian embassy, conveyed his concerns and questioned whether the money was being withheld until Ukraine agreed to Trump's demand.

"Are we now saying that security assistance and WH meeting are conditioned on investigations?" he wrote.

"This is my nightmare scenario," Taylor texted his colleagues days later. Taylor said that by withholding the Ukrainian assistance, "we have already shaken their faith in us."

House Democrats launched the impeachment inquiry over the Ukraine matter after a government whistleblower disclosed Trump's call with Zelenskyy and the push to have a foreign government interfere in U.S. elections by digging up dirt on Biden.

As a Democratic front-runner, Biden could be Trump's opponent in the 2020 presidential election. Trump and his lawyer Rudy Giuliani have tried, without evidence, to implicate Biden and his son Hunter in the kind of corruption that has long plagued Ukraine.

Hunter Biden served on the board of Burisma at the same time his father was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Kyiv. Though the timing raised concerns among anti-corruption advocates, there has been no evidence of wrongdoing by either the former vice president or his son. Still, Ukraine's Prosecutor General said Friday that his office is reviewing all the cases closed by his predecessors, including several related to Burisma.

Trump and Giuliani have also promoted an alternative theory of 2016 election interference, which puts Ukraine, not Russia, at the center, at odds with the 2017 findings of the U.S. intelligence community and special counsel Robert Mueller's 2019 report.

Trump has said his call with Zelenskyy was "perfect" and portrays the impeachment inquiry as a sham.

The text messages released Thursday show that within a month of the call, Trump has canceled the visit with Zelenskyy, sending the diplomats into an effort to salvage a meeting with Vice President Mike Pence or possibly Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

What followed was the scramble, and finger-pointing, to apparently fix what had been launched.

Taylor told Sondland he was "counting on you to be right," and Sondland snapped back, "Bill, I never said I was right."

Sondland early on had texted that he wanted to get the conversation started with Ukraine "irrespective of the pretext" because he was "worried about the alternative." Now, he was saying, they have identified the best path forward, and "let's hope it works."

Taylor then texted, "As I said on the phone, I think it's crazy to withhold security assistance for help with a political campaign."

After a more than four-hour pause, Sondland texted Taylor that he was incorrect, and wrote that Trump "has been crystal clear, no quid pro quos of any kind."

He also wrote, "I suggest we stop the back and forth by text."

In releasing the exchanges Thursday, the Democratic committee chairmen said they are "still only a subset of the full body of the materials" provided by Volker, which they hope to make public later.

Rev. Graham's tour evokes evangelical support for Trump

By ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

GREENVILLE, N.C. (AP) — Rev. Franklin Graham did not utter the word "impeachment" as he spoke to thousands of Christians here this week, the latest stop on a long-running tour he has dubbed Decision America — a title with political and religious undertones.

But evangelicals who turned out to see Graham didn't necessarily need his warning that "our country is in trouble" in order to tap into their deep-rooted support for President Donald Trump during an intensifying political crisis hundreds of miles north in Washington.

"I do feel like we are, as Christians, the first line of defense for the president," Christina Jones, 44, said before Graham took the stage. Trump is "supporting our Christian principles and trying to do his best," she added, even as "everybody's against him."

The impeachment furor is the latest test of Trump's seemingly unbreakable bond with conservative evangelical Christians. Trump suggested this week that the peril of impeachment would only cement his ties to that voting bloc, which helped propel him into office, and supporters who have stood by him through accusations of sexual assault and infidelity see no reason to back away from a president they view as unfairly beleaguered.

Frances Lassiter, 65, dismissed Democrats' pursuit of a case against Trump as "all a bunch of crap" designed to push him from office.

Asked about comments Trump circulated from an ally and Southern Baptist pastor who warned of a "civil war-like fracture" if the investigation succeeds, Lassiter and others in the crowd at Graham's tour shared concerns about political polarization putting further strain on the country.

"Could have a war ... you just don't know," Lassiter said. "It's scary."

Graham sounded a similar note in an interview with The Associated Press aboard his tour bus. The 67-year-old evangelist and son of the late Rev. Billy Graham said the inquiry into Trump's solicitation of help from Ukrainian leaders in investigating former Vice President Joe Biden was "a lot over nothing."

"It's going to destroy this country if we let this continue," Graham said of the impeachment investigation, urging Americans "to come together as a nation and focus on the problems" that beset both parties, such as immigration and international trade.

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Graham sought to keep his tour, which he opened in 2016 and took to a half-dozen northeastern states earlier this year, separate from politics. But he also openly echoed arguments Trump has made in pressing unfounded Ukraine-related corruption allegations against Biden.

Trump has tried to sully Biden in scandal, questioning his Democratic rival's role steering the Obama administration's relationship with Kyiv while son Hunter Biden sat on the board of a Ukrainian gas company. Although some anti-corruption watchdogs raised eyebrows, no evidence of improper actions by the Democratic presidential hopeful or his son has materialized.

Graham, for his part, encouraged Trump and others to keep looking, citing the vice president's son's acknowledged drug addiction as a reason Hunter Biden is "suspect."

"So it's probably worth looking into to see what Vice President Biden (did) at the time, what kind of promises he made to help his son with the Ukrainians."

According to the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association, 13,800 people attended Graham's Wednesday event in Greenville, seat of a county that Trump won in 2016. Greenville also hosted a July Trump rally where the audience broke into a derogatory chant against a freshman congresswoman who had drawn Trump's ire. The strong turnout for Graham underscores the formidable reach of the evangelist's message in his home and occasional swing state of North Carolina.

And the programming was as festive as it was introspective. Graham's group counseled the faithful after a Christian singer performed live and the night ended with a fireworks display.

Graham's preaching tour featured another touch, one more reminiscent of a political rally: counter-programming from evangelicals on the left. An hour outside of Greenville, a group of progressive Christians led by Rev. William Barber and his Poor People's Campaign held a "Red Letter Revival" this week to offer an alternate vision of policymaking aligned with Biblical values.

That revival aims to redefine public understanding of issues of faith, encompassing an inclusive immigration agenda as well as more focus on helping the poor and the environment, explained Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, a liberal evangelical preacher helping to organize it.

Wilson-Hartgrove described Graham's tour as a "coordinated effort to intertwine" religion and conservative politics. While he had little hope that supportive evangelicals would abandon the president for "personally offensive" actions — Trump used profanity to slam Democrats this week — Wilson-Hartgrove cast impeachment as "a moral question."

"Does a president of any party have a sort of unquestioned right to, in this case, break (Federal Election Commission) rules and to break the law in order to win an election?" Wilson-Hartgrove asked in an interview. "It's a question of right and wrong which people of faith should have concerns about."

In the crowd at Graham's tour, which will stop in six more North Carolina cities over the next 10 days, believers had reserved their concern for Trump's Democratic antagonists.

"They're just digging things up and making things up just to try to take him down, and I don't think that's fair," said Mike Fitzgerald, 64.

That sentiment tracks with polling which shows an overwhelming majority of white evangelical Protestants consistently expressing approval of Trump's handling of his job since his inauguration. Even among white evangelicals, those who attend church weekly have been just as or even more likely to approve of the president over the course of his term, according to Pew Research Center data.

In August, a Pew Research survey found 77% of white evangelical Protestants approving of Trump's performance. Those who report attending church weekly were more likely to approve than those who attend less often, 81% versus 73%.

Graham has said that he invites all races, religions and sexual orientations to hear him, although he has aired anti-LGBTQ views. He reiterated them when asked about Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Ind., a married gay man and devout Christian seeking the Democratic presidential nomination.

Graham's father, a renowned preacher who died last year, aired regrets later in his life about having "sometimes crossed the line" in his involvement in politics.

Franklin Graham said he is cognizant of his late father's perspective, averring that "you want to be care-

ful, because politicians are going to want to use you.”

But he did not appear to count Trump in that judgment: “One thing I appreciate about President Trump, he’s not a politician. And that’s why he gets in trouble all the time,” Graham said.

Associated Press writer Hannah Fingerhut contributed from Washington.

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

Supreme Court to hear abortion regulation case

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court agreed Friday to plunge into the abortion debate in the midst of the 2020 presidential campaign, taking on a Louisiana case that could reveal how willing the more conservative court is to chip away at abortion rights.

The justices will examine a Louisiana law requiring doctors who perform abortions to have admitting privileges at a nearby hospital. The law is virtually identical to one in Texas that the Supreme Court struck down in 2016, when Justice Anthony Kennedy was on the bench and before the addition of President Donald Trump’s two high court picks, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, who have shifted the court to the right.

The court’s new term begins Monday, but arguments in the Louisiana case won’t take place until the winter. A decision is likely to come by the end of June, four months before the presidential election.

The Supreme Court temporarily blocked the Louisiana law from taking effect in February, when Chief Justice John Roberts joined the court’s four liberal justices to put it on hold. Kavanaugh and Gorsuch were among the four conservatives who would have allowed the law to take effect.

Those preliminary votes do not bind the justices when they undertake a thorough review of an issue, but they often signal how a case will come out.

Roberts’ vote to block the Louisiana law was a rare vote against an abortion restriction in his more than 13 years as chief justice. That may reflect his new role since Kennedy’s retirement as the court’s swing justice, his concern about the court being perceived as a partisan institution and respect for a prior decision of the court, even one he disagreed with.

In the Texas case, he voted in dissent to uphold the admitting privileges requirement.

The Louisiana case and a separate appeal over an Indiana ultrasound requirement for women seeking an abortion, on which the court took no action Friday, were the most significant of hundreds of pending appeals the justices considered when they met in private on Tuesday.

Both cases involve the standard first laid out by the court in 1992 that while states can regulate abortion, they can’t do things that place an “undue burden” on a woman’s right to an abortion. The regulations are distinct from other state laws making their way through court challenges that would ban abortions early in a pregnancy.

Louisiana abortion providers and a district judge who initially heard the case said one or maybe two of the state’s three abortion clinics would have to close under the new law. There would be at most two doctors who could meet its requirements, they said.

But the appeals court in New Orleans rejected those claims, doubting that any clinics would have to close and saying the doctors had not tried hard enough to establish relationships with local hospitals.

In January, the full appeals court voted 9-6 not to get involved in the case, setting up the Supreme Court appeal.

The Hope Medical Group clinic in Shreveport, Louisiana, and two doctors whose identities are not revealed said in their appeal that the justices should strike down the law without even holding arguments because the decision so clearly conflicts with the Texas ruling from 2016.

The court did not follow that path Friday.

There also was no action on a third abortion-related appeal that involves a challenge to a Chicago ordinance that stops protesters from getting within 8 feet (2.4 meters) of people entering abortion clinics and other health care facilities without their consent.

Anti-abortion activists had challenged the Chicago law as a violation of their free speech rights. The federal appeals court in Chicago upheld the law, though grudgingly.

The Supreme Court upheld a similar Colorado law in 2000, but in 2014 struck down a Massachusetts provision that set a fixed 35-foot (10.7-meter) buffer zone outside abortion clinics.

Also Friday, the court agreed to hear an appeal by energy companies and the Trump administration asking the court to overturn an appeals court ruling and reinstate a permit to allow construction of a natural gas pipeline through two national forests, including parts of the Appalachian Trail.

The 605-mile (970-kilometer) pipeline would begin in West Virginia and travel through parts of Virginia and North Carolina. The proposed route, which the administration had approved, would include the George Washington and Monongahela National Forests, as well as a right-of-way across the Appalachian Trail.

Married priests, saviors of the faith or part of an agenda?

By **MANUEL RUEDA Associated Press**

SANTA ROSA, Brazil (AP) — At dusk in this small indigenous village, Antelmo Pereira calls local Catholics to prayer, changes into a white robe and leads a religious service that is the closest thing the faithful in this remote part of the Amazon can get to a proper Mass.

Speaking in the indigenous Ticuna language, he leads a recital of the Lord's Prayer, reads a passage from the Gospel of Matthew and delivers a sermon on accepting Jesus into one's heart, as cicadas chirp loudly in the jungle that lies just beyond the recently built Catholic church.

Pereira, 61, has been a part-time missionary for the past 15 years, volunteering his time on weekends to visit indigenous communities that rarely see a priest. He leads prayer services called Celebrations of the Word but cannot celebrate Mass or hear confessions in the isolated places he visits, because he is married and has nine children, and cannot become a priest.

But that could change if a proposal to ordain married men in remote parts of the Amazon gains traction at a gathering of bishops that opens at the Vatican on Sunday.

More than 100 bishops from South America will convene at the Synod of Bishops for the Pan-Amazon Region. The meeting will discuss social and environmental problems faced by the inhabitants of the Amazon, including the increasing rate of deforestation in the region. But bishops are also looking at ways to introduce changes to official ministries to better serve Catholics in this part of the world.

One item on the synod's agenda is a proposal to study the possibility of priestly ordination for older men who have good standing in their communities and are preferably of indigenous origin, "even if they have an established and stable family."

While the synod proposal would be novel for the Latin Rite church, there are already married priests in Eastern Rite Catholic churches and in cases where married Anglican priests have converted.

Nevertheless, the proposal has set off a firestorm of criticism against Pope Francis, with opponents accusing synod organizers of heresy for even introducing debate on the centuries-old tradition of a celibate priesthood in the Latin Rite church.

For these critics, the Amazon synod is just the latest instance of Francis using the synod process to introduce progressive changes to the church by obtaining the blessing of a carefully chosen group of voting bishops.

On the ground, however, the agenda and focus on the needs of the indigenous have been welcomed.

"It's a possibility that I haven't quite processed in my head yet," said Pereira, who is a member of the Ticuna tribe and would be a clear candidate for ordination if Pope Francis decides to pursue the reform.

"But if I am asked to become a priest I will accept. I will accept," said the devout Catholic, who dreamed of becoming a priest as a youngster.

Since 1970, the number of priests around the world has remained steady, hovering at 400,000 to 415,000,

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according to Catholic Church figures. But the world's Catholic population has doubled to 1.3 billion, leading to shortages of priests in some parts of the globe.

In remote Amazonian communities that are only accessible by boat, villagers can go months without sacraments that only priests can celebrate, including communion and confessions.

"There are many people in small communities that we are not reaching," said Bishop José Javier Travieso, of San José del Amazonas in northern Peru. "We have to think if the way that we have structured our ministries, the way in which men and women participate in the church must remain as it is or if some changes must be made."

The bishop, who will attend the synod, said that it might be time for the Catholic Church to return to some of the practices of early Christian communities that picked elders with families to perform religious duties. His vicariate in the Peruvian Amazon covers an area the size of Portugal, but only has 14 priests to serve a population of approximately 140,000 Catholics.

To keep the faith alive amidst the priest shortages, some clergy have begun training lay members of their parishes to perform Celebrations of the Word that are similar to Mass but do not include the consecration of the Eucharist, which can only be celebrated by a priest.

In Belém do Solimões, a small indigenous town on the banks of the Amazon River, Capuchin Friar Paulo Braghini has trained seven members of his parish, including Pereira, who has also been training to be ordained a deacon, a position in the church open to married men.

On the third weekend of every month, the friar, Pereira and dozens of missionaries leave Belém and fan out into small villages that are located deeper in the jungle. There they conduct religious classes for children and Celebrations of the Word.

"We enjoy these a lot," said Ercilio Gaspar, a public health worker in the village of Novo Cruzador. Gaspar realizes it's not the same as Mass, but said he's happy with what the team of missionaries has accomplished in his village since the church opened in 2011.

"For us, Antelmo (Pereira) and his team are like our priests," he added.

But in other villages along the Amazon River, some churchgoers support the ordination of community elders.

For Policarpa Bautista, a Ticuna leader in the Colombian village of Ararara, sustaining the faith is important, especially given that evangelical churches are gaining a foothold in the region.

Bautista said she doesn't like the evangelical missionaries because they preach against indigenous rituals that can involve drinking large quantities of fermented beverages and revering the spirits of the Amazon jungle.

Catholic missionaries in the region are supportive of these traditions, Bautista said.

"We have been Catholic for a long time, and having two churches will divide our communities," she said.

But Catholic conservatives argue that the church would be abandoning its own beliefs if it begins to ordain married men to make up for priest shortages. They have mounted a campaign in opposition to the synod and its most controversial proposal.

One American cardinal has called for the faithful to pray and fast to prevent "serious theological errors and heresies" from being approved by the synod. Even one of Francis' top advisers at the Vatican, Canadian Cardinal Marc Ouellet, says he is "skeptical" about the married priest proposal and suggested Francis shared his skepticism.

Ouellet praised the evangelical value of the celibate priesthood, noting that indigenous people were first converted to the Catholic faith by celibate priests whose decision to sacrifice a family was a powerful and visible "confession of faith."

His view is shared by some of the more vocal opponents to the synod.

"Priests in the Latin church are celibate because they act as representatives of Jesus Christ and that is the path that he chose," says José Antonio Ureta, a Chilean author who recently wrote a book that calls on Catholics to resist Francis' reforms.

Ureta is a member of the Society for the Defense of Tradition, Family and Property, a Catholic group

that has been highly critical of the synod and recently published a petition calling on bishops attending the meeting to advocate for the Amazon's development, instead of letting it become a "green wasteland, populated by tribal ghettos."

He argues that the proposal to ordain married men is part of a broader agenda pushed by "Marxists" within the Catholic Church that aims to upend its hierarchical structure and turn it into a horizontal church, where community groups have more influence.

"This isn't new," Ureta said of the proposal. "Liberation theologians have been pushing for it since the 1970s."

For Ureta and other conservatives, priest shortages in the Amazon can be solved if bishops there make a greater effort to recruit young people into the priesthood. In the meantime, he says, missionaries can continue to keep the faith alive without being ordained.

"The Eucharist is one of the most important celebrations in the church," Ureta said. "But the main thing is to have faith and to be baptized. That is what leads to salvation."

Pereira says that he wanted to become a priest when he was in his 20s, before he had children.

But he was discouraged because the nearest seminary was a couple days away by boat from his hometown. Back then, he hadn't finished elementary school, which made it unlikely for him to be considered for the priesthood.

That barrier is gone. Pereira completed his basic studies and obtained a university degree in his 50s, majoring in Ticuna language studies.

He teaches Ticuna at the elementary school in Belém do Solimões and recently helped translate a children's catechism book into the indigenous language. Pereira knows little about the debate that will take place in the Vatican this month. But he does acknowledge that becoming a priest would be appealing and fulfill a dream.

"This is a strict path that not everyone is willing to follow," he said. "In my community we need more people to announce the word of God."

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

US sanctions squeezing Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon

By **BASSEM MROUE** Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The conflict between Iran and the U.S. that has created tensions throughout much of the Middle East is now also being felt in Lebanon, where Washington has slapped sanctions on the Iran-backed Hezbollah and warned they could soon expand to its allies, further deepening the tiny Arab country's economic crisis.

The Trump administration has intensified sanctions on the Lebanese militant group and institutions linked to it to unprecedented levels, targeting lawmakers for the first time as well as a local bank that Washington claims has ties to the group.

Two U.S. officials visited Beirut in September and warned the sanctions will increase to deprive Hezbollah of its sources of income. The push is further adding to Lebanon's severe financial and economic crisis, with Lebanese officials warning the country's economy and banking sector can't take the pressure.

"We have taken more actions recently against Hezbollah than in the history of our counterterrorism program," Sigal P. Mandelker, undersecretary for terrorism and financial intelligence at the U.S. Treasury, said in the United Arab Emirates last month.

Mandelker said Washington is confident the Lebanese government and the central bank will "do the right thing here in making sure that Hezbollah can no longer have access to funds at the bank."

Hezbollah, whose Arabic name translates into "Party of God," was established by Iran's Revolutionary Guard after Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982. The group, which enjoys wide support among Lebanon's Shiite community, runs institutions such as hospitals, clinics and schools _ but it also has tens of thousands

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of missiles that Hezbollah's leadership boasts can hit anywhere in Israel.

The group is designated as a terrorist organization by the United States, some Gulf Arab countries and few Latin American nations, while the European Union considers only Hezbollah's military wing of the group to be a terrorist group.

Today, it is among the most effective armed groups in the Middle East with an arsenal more powerful than that of the Lebanese army, and has sent thousands of its fighters to Syria to back President Bashar Assad's forces in that country's civil war. Hezbollah and its allies have more power than ever in parliament and government and President Michel Aoun is a strong ally of the group.

Hezbollah has acknowledged the sanctions are affecting them, but it says it has been able to cope with sanctions imposed by the U.S. for years. The group, however, warned that it is the job of the Lebanese state to defend its citizens when they come under sanctions simply because they belong to the group, are Shiite Muslims, or are Hezbollah sympathizers.

In July, the Treasury Department targeted two Hezbollah legislators, Amin Sherri and Mohammad Raad, in the first such move against lawmakers currently seated in Lebanon's parliament. A month later, the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control sanctioned Jammal Trust Bank for what it called "knowingly facilitating banking activities." The bank, which denied the charges, was forced to close afterward.

Neither Sherri nor Raad responded to requests for comment from The Associated Press.

So far, all the figures who have come under sanctions have been either Hezbollah officials or Shiite Muslim individuals who Washington says are aiding the group.

Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah said the group will "study well our alternatives" now that the U.S. is targeting banks that Hezbollah does not own or deal with, as well as rich individuals and merchants simply because of their religious affiliation.

"We said it in the past that when we are subjected to injustice we can be patient, but when our people are subjected to injustice we should behave in a different way," he said.

Nasrallah said the state and the government should defend Lebanese citizens. In an apparent reference to the Lebanese central bank that implements U.S. sanctions, Nasrallah said: "Some state institutions should not rush to implement the American desires and orders this way."

Walid Marrouch, an associate professor of economics at the Lebanese American University, says Lebanon's economy is 70% dollarized and since Lebanon is using this currency, Beirut has to abide by (U.S.) laws.

"We're already living in a crisis and it will only make it worse," he said of sanctions and if Lebanon decides to stop abiding by U.S. Treasury Department orders.

Antoine Farah, who heads the business section of the daily Al-Jourhouria newspaper, wrote that if Hezbollah's desires turn out to be orders, "we will be facing a confrontation such that no one would want to be in our shoes."

"If Hezbollah decides to fight America with the money of the Lebanese we guarantee a quick collapse and staying at the bottom for a long time, like Venezuela," he wrote.

During a visit to Beirut, David Schenker, the U.S.'s assistant secretary of state for near eastern affairs, said Washington will designate in the future "individuals in Lebanon who are aiding and assisting Hezbollah, regardless of their sect or religion."

Schenker did not elaborate in his interview with local LBC TV but local TV stations said Washington could start targeting Christian allies of the militant group, which has 14 members in parliament and three Cabinet ministers, including the Health Ministry.

Health Minister Jamil Jabbak, who is not a member of Hezbollah but is believed to be close to the group's leader, was not granted a U.S. visa to attend the U.N. General Assembly in late September.

Treasury Assistant Secretary for Terrorist Financing Marshall Billingslea visited Lebanon last week and a U.S. Embassy statement said he would "encourage Lebanon to take the necessary steps to maintain distance from Hezbollah and other malign actors attempting to destabilize Lebanon and its institutions."

At the end of his visit, Billingslea met a group of journalists representing local media and told them that the U.S. Treasury was posting a \$10 million reward for anyone who provides "valuable information on

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Hezbollah's finances," according to the Daily Star.

He said the main goal of the U.S. Treasury "was to deprive Hezbollah of all financial support, whether from Iran or through any other means." Billingslea said Iran used to send the group \$700 million a year, adding that U.S. sanctions on Iran have "diminished considerably" the cash inflow.

Imad Marmal, a journalist close to Hezbollah who has a talk show on the group's Al-Manar TV, wrote that the group wants the Lebanese state to put forward a national plan to face the "American siege" that will end up affecting not only Shiites but the country's economy generally. He added that those who are being targeted by the sanctions are Lebanese citizens, whom the state should protect.

Hezbollah "is not going to scream in pain as the United States is betting, neither today nor tomorrow and not even in a hundred years."

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

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

1. AMERICAN DIPLOMATS DANGLED TRUMP MEETING FOR UKRAINE PROBE

Kurt Volker and other U.S. envoys encouraged Kyiv's newly elected president to conduct an investigation linked to Joe Biden's family in return for a visit to Washington with President Trump.

2. HOW GOP IS RESPONDING TO TRUMP

Republican leaders have two reactions to Trump's public call for a foreign government to investigate political rival Joe Biden: silence and support.

3. HONG KONG LEADER BANS MASKS

Carrie Lam bans protesters from wearing masks in a hardening of the government's stance on the territory's most disruptive crisis since it reverted to Chinese rule in 1997.

4. HUNDREDS OF ACCUSED PRIESTS LIVING UNDER RADAR WITH NO OVERSIGHT

The AP finds that nearly 1,700 clergy members considered credibly accused of child sexual abuse now hold jobs like teaching middle-school math and counseling sexual assault survivors.

5. DIVERSITY OF JURY SEEN AS KEY FACTOR IN OFFICER'S CONVICTION

Experts say intense public scrutiny likely led to a racially diverse jury in the trial of the white Dallas police officer who fatally shot a black neighbor in his own apartment.

6. WHO'S FEELING THE SQUEEZE IN BEIRUT

The Iran-U.S. conflict is now being felt in Lebanon, where Washington has slapped sanctions on the Iran-backed Hezbollah militant group.

7. WHAT HAS ELECTORATE CONCERNED

Candidates' ages are again on the front-burner of the 2020 presidential campaign after 78-year-old Bernie Sanders underwent a heart procedure.

8. HOW VEGAS VICTIMS' MONEY WILL BE DIVIDED

An expert says a "cold mathematical calculation" will determine how much victims of the Las Vegas shooting or their families will receive from a settlement that could reach \$800 million.

9. JAMES FRANCO HIT WITH LAWSUITS

Two actresses sue "The Disaster Artist" actor and the acting and film school he founded, saying he intimidated his students into gratuitous and exploitative sexual situations.

10. BUEHLER, MUNCY LEAD DODGERS PAST NATIONALS

Walker Buehler's pitching and Max Muncy's hitting propel Los Angeles past mistake-prone Washington 6-0 in Game 1 of their NL Division Series.

Buehler, Muncy lead Dodgers past Nats 6-0 in NLDS opener

By BETH HARRIS AP Sports Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The Dodgers overpowered the Nationals on the mound and at the plate, extending the dominance that led to a franchise-record 106 victories in the regular season right on into the playoffs.

Walker Buehler allowed one hit over six innings, Max Muncy drove in three runs and Los Angeles capitalized on mistakes to beat Washington 6-0 in Game 1 of their NL Division Series on Thursday night.

"Oh, they're good. They're really good," Nationals manager Dave Martinez said. "That's why they have been in the postseason so many years in a row."

Buehler struck out eight, walked three and retired his final seven batters after earning the start over veterans Clayton Kershaw and Hyun-Jin Ryu, whose 2.32 ERA was lowest in the majors this season.

"Walker, time and time again, just knows how to temper, control his emotions and transfer that into the delivery, the execution of pitches," Dodgers manager Dave Roberts said.

Dodgers rookie Gavin Lux and Joc Pederson slugged pinch-hit solo homers in the eighth.

Nationals first baseman Howie Kendrick had two grounders roll under his glove, the second leading to the Dodgers' second run in the fifth.

Washington's Patrick Corbin stumbled through a rocky first inning. He issued four walks, joining Art Reinhart of the St. Louis Cardinals as the only pitchers to walk that many in the first inning they ever pitched in the postseason.

Reinhart walked four — including Babe Ruth and Lou Gehrig — in the fifth inning of Game 4 of the 1926 World Series against the Yankees.

"That first inning was the game," Roberts said. "That really set the tone."

Corbin walked three in a row with two outs in the 31-pitch inning. Yan Gomes was charged with a passed ball, too, and Muncy drew a free pass with the bases loaded to put the Dodgers in front.

"Walked a lot of guys, chased a lot of bad pitches," Martinez said. "When you're walking guys and not hitting, it's tough to win ballgames."

Corbin gave up two runs — one earned — and three hits in six innings. The left-hander struck out nine and finished with five walks.

"It just didn't seem like he had his command," Muncy said. "We did a really good job of not chasing balls out of the zone."

Cody Bellinger walked with two outs and scored on an error by Kendrick in the fifth that made it 2-0. Third baseman Anthony Rendon made a diving stop on Chris Taylor's single down the line, but his throw to first wasn't in time and Bellinger went to third.

Muncy's grounder rolled through Kendrick's legs for an error, scoring Bellinger, and Taylor got thrown out at the plate to end the inning.

"I wouldn't change anything about the way I tried to make that play. Just one of those times you just miss it," Kendrick said. "You never want to let your teammates down or do anything that could give the other team the advantage."

In the fourth, Muncy singled leading off. Corey Seager followed with a hit that got past a diving Kendrick at first and rolled into right, sending Muncy to third. But then Corbin settled down and retired the next three batters to end the inning.

"Mechanically, was rushing a little bit. Was cutting my fastball," Corbin said. "Later on was able to get back to my sinker and everything else felt good after that."

Muncy added a two-run single with two outs in the seventh, extending the lead to 4-0.

The Nationals loaded the bases in the fourth on three walks by Buehler. He escaped when Asdrúbal Cabrera tapped the ball back to the mound and Buehler flipped to first to end the inning.

"From that first throw, he was on point," Roberts said. "That's a really good lineup over there and for him to go six, we needed that."

Juan Soto, who had the key hit in the wild-card win over Milwaukee, singled in the second and Trea Turner doubled in the ninth off Joe Kelly for the Nationals' only hits.

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It was a quiet offensive night for each team's MVP contender. Rendon, who hit .319 in the regular season, went 0 for 2 with two strikeouts and a walk. Bellinger, a .305 hitter, struck out twice and walked twice.

It was the fourth shutout in eight games between the teams this season, third by the Dodgers.

Los Angeles won its eighth in a row dating to the regular season. Washington's nine-game winning streak, including the wild-card victory, ended.

CORBIN'S TRIBUTE

Corbin scrawled the number 45 in the dirt on the back of the mound in the bottom of the first, a tribute to late Los Angeles Angels pitcher Tyler Skaggs. He's been doing that since Skaggs died July 1 of a toxic mix of drugs and alcohol. "Obviously, we all miss him," Corbin said.

BACK IN THE DAY

Buehler and catcher Will Smith formed an all-Kentucky battery. Buehler is from Lexington and Smith is from Louisville, where he attended college. Buehler pitched at Vanderbilt. They played against each other in high school and college. "You could tell back then he was special," Smith said, recalling Buehler threw 95 mph in high school.

IN THE CROWD

Magic Johnson and Billie Jean King, part of the Dodgers' ownership group, shared a box with principal owner Mark Walter, Sandy Koufax and Tom Lasorda. ... Hall of Famer Dave Winfield, former Dodger Matt Kemp, former Dodgers manager Joe Torre and actor Jason Bateman attended.

UP NEXT

Coming off the first relief appearance of his career, Washington RHP Stephen Strasburg will start Game 2 against Dodgers LHP Clayton Kershaw on Friday. Strasburg tossed three shutout innings Tuesday night in a dramatic wild-card victory over Milwaukee. He's under no limitations returning two days later. "My arm's felt great all year," Strasburg said. He would be available to return on normal rest for a potential Game 5 next Wednesday in Los Angeles. By starting Kershaw in Game 2, the Dodgers could possibly use him out of the bullpen if Game 5 is necessary.

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

Wilson throws 4 TD passes, Seahawks hold off Rams 30-29

By TIM BOOTH AP Sports Writer

SEATTLE (AP) — For all the other times when Seattle's Russell Wilson was the best player on the field and made highlight plays, this was different.

It could have been the stage of prime time or facing a division nemesis in the Rams. Or the circumstances of building an early lead, losing it and then rallying once more in the fourth quarter.

Whatever the reason, Seattle received a performance from Wilson that'll be hard to top.

"It was one of the best, I think," Wilson said.

Wilson's 5-yard touchdown pass to Chris Carson on fourth-and-goal with 2:28 gave Seattle the lead, and the Seahawks held on for a 30-29 win over the Rams on Thursday night when Greg Zuerlein's 44-yard field goal with 11 seconds left missed wide right.

Seattle earned a needed win against its NFC West foe after losing six of the past eight to the Rams. And while there were contributions from plenty of others, Wilson orchestrated a memorable night.

Whether it was his throws from the pocket or when he was forced to improvise, Wilson was at his best. It was one stunning play after another from Seattle's star, continuing the best start to a season in his career.

Even his opponents were left in awe.

"Russell Wilson is playing out of his mind right now," Rams safety Eric Weddle said.

Wilson was 17 of 23 for 268 and four touchdowns, and rushed for another 32 yards. He had touchdown passes of 13 yards to Tyler Lockett and 40 yards to DK Metcalf in the first half. He threw a 10-yarder to David Moore in the third quarter and he had a final answer after the Rams' had taken a 29-24 lead.

Wilson led Seattle 60 yards in 12 plays, helped during the drive by a roughing-the-passer call on Clay

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Matthews. After stalling inside the 10, Seattle faced fourth down at the 5. Wilson scrambled as he had all night, buying enough time to find Carson open in the corner of the end zone.

The running back scared nearly all of the 69,000 in attendance by juggling the pass before gaining control. Carson said he lost the pass in the stadium lights, which led to the juggle.

"I thought Russell played one of the best games I've ever seen him play," Seattle coach Pete Carroll said.

Seattle appeared to wrap up the victory when Tedric Thompson made a juggling interception of Jared Goff's pass while lying on the turf with 2:08 left. But the Rams forced Seattle to punt and took possession at their own 7 with 1:38 left.

In just seven plays, Goff had the Rams to the Seattle 30 after a 28-yard strike to Gerald Everett. The Rams stalled and a 9-yard pass to Everett on third-down set up Zuerlein's attempt. The snap was good, but the kick stayed just to the right.

Zuerlein had hit three field goals earlier in the game.

"It's one kick. He's made a lot of big kicks for us. He's going to continue to make a lot of big kicks for us," Rams coach Sean McVay said.

Goff finished 29 of 49 for 395 yards and one touchdown just days after throwing for a career-high 517 yards and tying an NFL record with 45 completions in a loss to Tampa Bay. Everett had seven catches for 136 yards, and Cooper Kupp had nine grabs for 118 yards and a TD.

"We had some things that didn't go our way where we didn't finish drives but we were moving the ball really well," Goff said.

Carson finished with 118 yards rushing on 27 carries. The touchdown was his only reception.

"Everyone kept their composure. Everyone was so poised and stayed in the moment," Seattle offensive lineman Duane Brown said. "We were always very optimistic and had all the faith in the world and big time players stepped up for us."

LOCKETT'S CATCH

Lockett's toe-tapping TD catch in the first quarter was as improbable as it gets. According to NFL statistics, the catch had a 6.3% catch probability, the most improbable completion of the past two seasons.

"It doesn't get any more on time or on the money with his footwork there," Wilson said.

GURLEY'S MISTAKE

Todd Gurley was a featured part of the Rams' offense early and finished with 51 yards on 15 carries, but the run game vanished during most of the second half.

"I thought he had some really good, hard-earned yards against a really good defensive front," McVay said.

Gurley also fumbled for the first time since Week 3 of last season. The fumble was ripped out by Jadeveon Clowney, who also recovered the ball. It was Gurley's first fumble in 338 offensive touches. He had gained 1,915 yards from scrimmage and 20 touchdowns between his two fumbles.

KEY CATCH

Brandin Cooks had just one reception but it was a big one. Cooks pulled in a 29-yard catch from Goff on third-and-8 from the Rams 27 early in the fourth quarter as he was being covered tightly by Shaquill Griffin.

Cooks was being evaluated for a concussion after the play and did not return. Carroll challenged there should have been offensive pass interference, but the call on the field stood. The catch led to Zuerlein's field goal that gave the Rams a 29-24 lead.

INJURIES

D.J. Fluker suffered a hamstring injury in the first quarter. He was replaced at right guard by Jamarco Jones, who typically is a backup tackle, but was forced to play guard with normal backup Ethan Pocic out because of a back injury.

UP NEXT:

Rams: Los Angeles stays in the NFC West, hosting San Francisco on Sunday, Oct. 13.

Seahawks: Seattle is at Cleveland on Sunday, Oct. 13.

Not just Ukraine: Trump now calls for China to probe Bidens

By ZEKE MILLER and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is publicly encouraging China to investigate Democratic political rival Joe Biden, snubbing his nose at an impeachment inquiry into whether a similar, private appeal to another foreign government violated his oath of office.

Trump declared Thursday at the White House, "China should start an investigation into the Bidens." He said he hadn't previously asked Chinese President Xi Jinping to investigate the former vice president and his son Hunter, but it's "certainly something we could start thinking about."

By publicly egging on China, Trump was amplifying the message he'd delivered in private to the president of Ukraine. That message, revealed by a government whistleblower, has spawned the impeachment investigation by the House. Trump, who has defended his contact with Ukraine as "perfect," went further in expanding his request to China, a communist world power that has much at stake in its relationship with the United States in an ongoing trade war.

The boldness of Trump's call Thursday also suggests he will continue to act as though requests for other countries to investigate potential opponents in the 2020 election are normal, even in the face of broad condemnation from Democrats and some Republicans. It's a tactic Trump has used successfully before, pushing questionable secret conversations into the open, helping to inoculate him against charges that he is engaged in nefarious action, cover-ups or obstruction of justice.

Trump doubled down on his comments later Thursday, saying in a tweet: "As the President of the United States, I have an absolute right, perhaps even a duty, to investigate, or have investigated, CORRUPTION, and that would include asking, or suggesting, other Countries to help us out!"

Vice President Mike Pence stepped in to defend Trump earlier in the day, saying Americans have a right to know about the wrongdoing the president alleges, despite no evidence to support wrongdoing by Biden, a top contender for the 2020 Democratic nomination.

Biden's campaign chairman said Trump's assertions merely show he's afraid of facing Biden in next year's election. House Intelligence Committee chairman Adam Schiff, who has a leading role in Congress' impeachment inquiry, said Trump's comments suggest "he feels he can do anything with impunity."

Trump's appeal to China evoked his public call in 2016 for Russia to track down his then-rival Hillary Clinton's emails — a move that was seen as an unprecedented appeal for foreign election interference. It is a violation of federal campaign finance law to solicit anything of value from a foreign government to help a campaign.

In the case of both Ukraine and China, Trump has made his allegations against Biden without evidence of any wrongdoing.

The president and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani have for days been raising suspicions about Hunter Biden's business dealings in China, leaning heavily on the writings of conservative author Peter Schweizer. On Monday, Geng Shuang, a spokesman for China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, called the allegation that Chinese government business gave Biden's son \$1.5 billion "totally groundless."

Trump's unprompted reference to China on Thursday came moments after he was asked about trade negotiations with the country.

"I have a lot of options on China, but if they don't do what we want, we have tremendous, tremendous power," Trump said.

He later alleged without evidence that China had a "sweetheart deal" on trade with the U.S. because of the Bidens.

"You know what they call that," Trump said. "They call that a payoff."

Speaking to reporters in Arizona, Pence, whose aides had previously tried to distance from the impeachment drama, echoed Trump's call for investigation of the Bidens.

"The American people have a right to know if the vice president of the United States or his family profited from his position as vice president during the last administration," he said.

Trump's requests for Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to investigate the Bidens, as well as Gi-

uliani's conduct, are at the center of an intelligence community whistleblower's complaint that sparked the House Democratic impeachment inquiry last week.

Biden campaign chairman Cedric Richmond dismissed Trump's assertions as a reflection of the president's concerns about facing Biden in a general election. "This president is scared, and he's acting out," the Louisiana congressman said.

Federal Election Commission Chairwoman Ellen Weintraub responded to Trump's remarks, tweeting a reminder that it is a violation of campaign finance law for anyone to "solicit accept or receive" anything of value from a foreign national in connection with a U.S. election. The agency polices campaign finance laws. But after a recent resignation, its board does not have enough commissioners to legally meet and take enforcement action.

Trump himself has faced multiple allegations that he and his children have enriched themselves through his presidential candidacy and time in office, including spending by the U.S. and foreign governments at his properties. Trump has contended that his political life actually has cost him money, though he is the first major presidential candidate in modern history to refuse to release tax returns that would provide more detail.

Trump has sought to implicate Biden and his son in the kind of corruption that has long plagued Ukraine. Hunter Biden served on the board of a Ukrainian gas company, Burisma, at the same time that his father was leading the Obama administration's diplomatic dealings with Kyiv. Trump encouraged Zelenskyy to work with Giuliani, and also volunteered the assistance of Attorney General William Barr to investigate the Bidens.

On Thursday, House lawmakers heard testimony from the former special U.S. envoy to Ukraine, Kurt Volker, whose conversations with Trump officials and Giuliani have made him a central figure in the Ukraine inquiry.

Ahead of the 2016 election, Trump publicly called on Russia to release Hillary Clinton's emails if they had obtained them by hacking — which U.S. intelligence agencies later determined to be the case.

"Russia, if you're listening, I hope you're able to find the 30,000 emails that are missing," Trump said during a July 2016 press conference. He later claimed in written answers to questions from special counsel Robert Mueller that he made the appeal to Russia "in jest and sarcastically, as was apparent to any objective observer."

Associated Press writers Brian Slodysko, Alan Fram and Bill Barrow contributed to this report.

1 killed in shooting at Washington state apartment building

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

VANCOUVER, Wash. (AP) — A man opened fire Thursday in the lobby of a building for senior residents, killing a man and wounding two women and then barricading himself inside his apartment before surrendering, police said.

The injuries of the wounded people were critical and they were taken to a hospital, fire department officials said.

The shooter was identified by police Thursday evening as 80-year-old Robert E. Breck, a resident of the 15-story Smith Tower building. Vancouver Police spokeswoman Kim Kapp said he surrendered.

Breck was booked into Clark County Jail on suspicion of murder and attempted murder charges. It wasn't known if he has a lawyer.

Some parts of the building had been evacuated during the standoff and other residents were told to stay inside their apartments. All were allowed back into their residences Thursday evening, police said.

Kapp said police did not know what led to the shooting or the identities of the people who were shot.

Kapp said the patrol officers who responded were replaced with SWAT team officers who have more tactical training because of the complexity of the situation. During negotiations with the suspect, SWAT officers could be seen standing on balconies on several floors.

"This is a situation where it's a retirement community, so we have elderly residents as well as an elevator

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situation," Kapp said. "We don't know where the suspect is when you have a multi-story building like that."

Austin Studebaker said he was buying drinks at a convenience store across the street from the building when he saw "the most cop cars I've ever seen in my life swarm in."

Studebaker said officers were carrying rifles and many were wearing body armor. Then Studebaker saw authorities carry a bleeding person out on a stretcher.

"It's just weird, and I want to know what's happening," he said.

Vancouver Mayor Anne McEnery-Ogle said in a statement that "our hearts go out to the victims and their families as they deal with this tragedy."

Vancouver is a city of about 175,000 people just north of Portland, Oregon.

___ Associated Press writer Lisa Baumann contributed to this report from Seattle.

Cone or scoop: Guinea pig ice cream for sale in Ecuador

By GONZALO SOLANO Associated Press

QUITO, Ecuador (AP) — It's a real ice cream flavor: guinea pig.

Anyone who thinks of guinea pigs as pets _ cute, squishy, squeaking bundles of fur _ might find that idea hard to digest.

The rodents are a traditional hot dish in some Latin American countries, including Colombia, Peru and Bolivia. In Ecuador, people typically cook guinea pigs with salt and serve them with potatoes and peanut sauce. But one vendor is taking things to another gastronomic level, serving guinea pigs as a cold dessert.

Some people like ice cream made from "cuy," as the animal is locally known.

"I was suspicious, but it was tasty," said Marlene Franco, a 78-year-old retiree who tried a scoop at a stall next to a highway linking the Ecuadorian capital of Quito to the city of Sangolqui.

The stall owner is María del Carmen Pilapaña, whose offbeat offering inspires disbelief and laughter among first-time customers.

Pilapaña's operation is small. It consists of two tables in an open area lined with dentists' clinics and other businesses. Even so, demand is growing. Every week, the entrepreneur prepares 150 servings (\$1 for a cone) of guinea pig ice cream.

She also makes 40 servings of ice cream flavored with beetles, also traditionally eaten as a salty snack, and a smaller amount of mushroom ice cream.

"My family and my husband thought I was crazy. They didn't think anyone would like these ice creams, but now they're our main product," said Pilapaña, who acknowledges that she had her own doubts about whether her investment would pay off.

It was a close call. Out of work, with three children in tow, Pilapaña began attending free training courses for entrepreneurs. She was challenged to do something innovative and, after six months of testing, she starting selling her range of ice creams at the beginning of September.

Pilapaña manages to concentrate guinea pig flavor after cooking and preparing a pate from the animal's flesh, adds milk or cream and refrigerates the concoction until it has the rough consistency of ice cream. The taste is similar to chicken.

The beetle and mushroom ice creams include fruits such as pineapple and passion fruit. Beetle ice cream has a slight aroma of wet earth.

Ants, cicadas and worms are used to make some desserts, often chocolate-infused ones, in parts of Latin America. But incorporating such ingredients _ guinea pigs included _ into ice cream is unusual.

Carolina Páez, director of the anthropology school of the Catholic University in Quito, isn't surprised.

"The guinea pig is a very important ancient food in Andean indigenous societies, especially for its high protein content," she said. Other cultures eat various types of animals, Páez said, "so there is no reason to be amazed that Ecuadorians eat guinea pigs, even in ice cream."

For Pilapaña, guinea pig ice cream is just the beginning. She has new flavors in mind: crab, chicken and pork.

"Seeing how my business is picking up, I'm sure I'll do well," she said.

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Deadly protests squeeze Haitians in shrinking economy

By DÁNICA COTO Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — Marcel Cineus scanned the crowd for hints of a potential customer as people bustled past his wooden stall filled with hundreds of textbooks in the hills of Port-au-Prince.

School was supposed to start in early September, and Cineus by now would have sold a couple hundred books. But violent protests have shuttered public schools and businesses and left Haiti's economy sputtering and inflation ballooning as the opposition demands the resignation of President Jovenel Moïse.

As a result, Cineus sold less than a dozen books last month.

"Nothing is working with this president," he said. "Some days I don't have a single person buying a book. Zero."

Cineus is now in debt with the wholesale company from which he buys brightly colored math, biography, grammar and geography books for elementary school children. The 42-year-old vendor has had to keep half of what he owes the company so he can buy food for his three children.

It's a domino effect familiar to many of the nearly 11 million people who live in Haiti, where 60% make less than \$2 a day and 25% earn less than \$1 a day. Their daily struggles have become more acute as protests and roadblocks force the closure of businesses, sometimes permanently, as people lose jobs and dwindling incomes fall behind a spike in prices.

Before the newest round of protests began in early September, Haiti's economy was already flailing. The country had seen a reduction in funds from Petrocaribe, a Venezuela-subsidized oil plan, given the drop in oil prices, and international aid for recovery from the devastating 2010 earthquake was dwindling.

The government turned to Haiti's Central Bank for money, which sparked a devaluation of the Haitian gourde and led to a spike in inflation. Before 2015, the exchange rate was 40 gourdes to \$1. Now, it's nearly 100 gourdes for \$1. Inflation over the last five years rose from less than 10% a year to almost 20%, said Haitian economist Kesner Pharel.

Then the protests halted the economy three weeks ago, he said, noting that food is not coming out of Haiti's countryside and manufactured goods from the capital are not reaching rural areas.

"You still have demand but no supply," he said. "Right now we are running out of water, we are running out of gas."

Moïse's administration made a gesture to alleviate the economic crunch Thursday by distributing plates of rice and beans, several-kilogram (several-pound) bags of rice and school backpacks with notebooks and pens inside during an event at the mayor's office compound in the seaside slum of Cite de Soleil.

Thousands of people pushed their way in, with hundreds left outside, fighting and pleading with guards to let them enter. Some ate only a few bites of the rice and beans, then rolled the paper plate like a burrito, saving the rest for family members back home.

Gerda Casimer, a 34-year-old unemployed woman, stood in a line of about 100 people after walking a couple of hours to get food to feed her three children.

"They are crying, 'Mommy, mommy, I need something to eat,'" she said.

Around her, young people helped some of the elderly as they stumbled with the heavy sacks of rice.

Cite de Soleil Mayor Jean Frédéric Hislain told The Associated Press that he had 3,000 sacks of rice and 1,500 backpacks to distribute.

The president, meanwhile, made his first in-person public appearance since the unrest began.

Moïse and his wife made a surprise appearance in Pétionville in front of a business called Nick's Exterminating on Thursday. He wore a white suit and black tie and shook hands briefly with street vendors before getting into his car and leaving with a convoy.

Also Thursday, the National Human Rights Defense Network issued a statement saying that 17 people had been killed in the recent unrest and 189 others injured, including journalists. It said gunfire was responsible for 15 deaths and 117 injuries.

During a brief respite Wednesday in protests, a line of cars almost a mile long snaked its way up to a gas station in Pétionville, one of the few that opened. Among those in line was a shiny black Mercedes,

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an old but colorful public bus known as a tap-tap and a truck carrying a load of small water bags.

The price of gas and other goods has increased even more since the protests, which means transportation has become more expensive. On Wednesday, motorcycle driver Garanet Noel stood on a busy sidewalk waiting for customers under a brutal sun, keys in hand.

"They don't want to pay what we're charging," he said. "The majority of people right now are suffering. The majority of people can't afford to feed themselves right now."

Nearby, vendors balanced wooden boxes stuffed with smoked codfish on their heads, side-stepping mounds of spinach that rested on puddles of gray water. A man pushed a cement-cruised wheelbarrow filled with fresh loaves of bread. No one was buying.

Cineus began to rearrange his books as he waited for a customer.

"Every day we are living on hope," he said.

Those lucky enough to have friends and relatives living abroad waited in line to pick up monthly remittances at a Western Union office that opened during the brief respite.

Among them was Malia Changeux, a 40-year-old mother of two whose husband lives in Pennsylvania. She used to sell beauty products and synthetic hair in downtown Port-au-Prince, but she and her husband agreed that it had become too dangerous to work there since the protests began. She now relies solely on the money he sends, but even then it is not enough sometimes.

"When you have the money, it seems like a lot, but when you have to buy things, since they're so expensive, it seems like you don't have any money at all," she said.

Pharel, the economist, said it is impossible for Haiti to reboot the economy without help from loans or aid from the international community.

It's a situation that Melicia Rampolo, a 46-year-old mother of three, was facing on a smaller scale. She is one of four owners of a small clothing store who worried about missing bank payments because she has not been able to sell any clothes, in part because protests have forced her to close the store most days. She also recently had to pay a doctor for treatment of a wrist she hurt when she fell running away from protesters.

"It's day-by-day," she said as she sat on a folding chair eating a small plate of rice and beans while waiting for customers, her left wrist in a bandage. A line of orange, green, blue and purple ties hung on the metal roof over her head, still in their plastic sheaths.

Like Rampolo, Cineus, the book vendor, was facing another day without a sale. But suddenly he broke into a bright smile when a woman approached with phone in hand to show him the name of the book she wanted for her child.

He looked around and then realized it was a book he didn't have because he couldn't afford to purchase it from the wholesaler. The woman thanked him and left.

US-Europe dispute threatens main artery of world trade

By CARLO PIOVANO and LORNE COOK Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The trade wars threatening to push the global economy into recession are entering a new phase, with the United States and European Union escalating a dispute that endangers the world's biggest trade relationship.

After the Trump administration slapped steep tariffs on \$7.5 billion in EU goods, mainly traditional produce like cheese and wine, the Europeans made clear they would retaliate in kind. Some fear the tariffs could ultimately lead to U.S. import duties on European cars, a big economic blow that Trump has been threatening to deliver for months.

The exchange echoes how the U.S. and China ratcheted up a tariffs fight in recent months that has bruised businesses around the globe and stunted economic growth.

"This step triggers fears of a new round of escalation of tariff wars," said Alex Kuptsikevich, a financial analyst with brokerage FxPro. "The introduction of tariffs and fears of tit-for-tat steps could further suppress business sentiment, which is already at the lowest levels for years."

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The Trump administration's latest tariffs target large aircraft but also many typical European products such as olives, whiskey, wine, cheese and yogurt. They take effect Oct. 18 and amount to a 10% tax on EU aircraft and a steep 25% rate on everything else.

The U.S. got the legal go-ahead Wednesday from the World Trade Organization in a case involving illegal EU subsidies for the plane maker Airbus, which predates the Trump administration.

But the EU is expecting a similar case involving U.S. subsidies for Boeing to go in its favor, with a ruling due in coming months. It has said it hopes the two sides can hold off new tariffs, which amount to taxes on domestic importers. Sometimes importers pass on the higher costs to consumers, making goods more expensive.

"If the U.S. imposes countermeasures it will be pushing the EU into a situation where we will have to do the same," said European Commission spokesman Daniel Rosario, echoing the dark outlook expressed by many EU governments.

"This is a move that will first and foremost hit U.S. consumers and companies and will make efforts towards a negotiated settlement more complicated," he said.

A group of American alcohol importers, wholesalers and distributors released an open letter this week urging an end to the tariffs. They say tariffs on Scotch whiskey, liqueurs and wine would affect nearly \$3.4 billion in imports and cost 13,000 U.S. jobs, including truckers and bartenders.

The tariffs come on top of existing ones that the U.S. and EU exchanged last year and multiply the headaches for European businesses fretting over Brexit, which could see Britain leave the EU on Oct. 31 without a deal — meaning new tariffs overnight on the heavy flow of trade across the Channel.

More broadly, the tariffs add to uncertainty for the global economy, which has been hit particularly hard by the wide-ranging U.S. dispute with China over trade and technology.

The U.S. and European economies are more closely integrated than the U.S. and China, with companies heavily invested across borders, so the potential damage from an escalation could dwarf the dispute with China.

Total U.S. investment in the EU, for example, is three times higher than in all of Asia. And EU investment in the U.S. is eight times that invested in China and India combined. The two sides account for about half of the world economy.

"If it weren't for the wider trade war, everybody would kind of shake this off and say it's just business as usual under WTO rules," said Edward Alden, senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. "In the current context, it's going to be hard to contain. The Europeans feel like their economies are under assault by the Trump administration."

The EU is not allowed to retaliate against U.S. sanctions approved by the WTO. But the 28-country trade bloc has shown a willingness to stretch the rules when it comes to responding to Trump's aggressive trade policies, Alden said.

For example, Trump last year imposed tariffs on steel and aluminum from the EU and other countries, claiming they were a threat to U.S. national security. The WTO gives countries wide leeway to decide their own national security interests, so Trump's move appeared to pass muster with the Geneva-based trade monitor. But the EU lashed back with retaliatory tariffs on U.S. products anyway.

Rising uncertainty over one of the oldest and biggest economic trade paths would further darken the outlook for importers, exporters and manufacturers on both sides of the Atlantic.

Bob Bauer, president of the New Jersey-based Association of Food Industries, which represents around 1,000 food importers and exporters worldwide, said his members are angry that food is being targeted in a dispute over aircraft subsidies.

"We're going to be paying so that Boeing and Airbus can continue to receive these subsidies," Bauer said, adding that many food importers are small, family-owned businesses that can't absorb a 25% tariff because food has low profit margins to begin with.

The head of the Spanish Federation of Food and Beverage Industries, Mauricio García de Quevedo, said the new U.S. tariffs will make it harder for the companies he represents to compete internationally. And that will contribute to job losses, he said.

The United States is the Spanish sector's second-biggest food and beverage client after the EU, according to the federation. The sector exported \$1.9 billion (1.7 billion euros) last year.

Miguel Blanco, the secretary-general of Spain's farming-sector umbrella group COAG, representing more than 15,000 Spanish farmers and livestock breeders, said the tariffs are "completely unfair and overblown."

"Once again, the farming sector is going to pay for an EU trade war which has nothing to do with the Spanish countryside," Blanco said, according to Europa Press.

The Federation of French Wines and Spirits Exporters also deplored the U.S. decision.

"We don't feel at all initially involved in this litigation so we feel we are a bit hostages of these retaliatory measures," said federation president Antoine Leccia.

In Germany, which has Europe's largest economy and focuses heavily on exports, the Federation of German Industries said the U.S. was using the WTO ruling to intensify trade disputes.

U.S. President Donald Trump has threatened to impose tariffs on European cars, a huge sector in Germany, and some fear this week's escalation could lead to that.

"There is a risk that many industries on both sides of the Atlantic will find themselves in a lose-lose situation," federation chief Joachim Lang said.

Piovano reported from London. Associated Press writers Paul Wiseman in Washington, David Rising in Berlin, Sylvie Corbet in Paris, Barry Hatton in Lisbon and Dee-Ann Durbin in Detroit contributed to this report.

Some see rush to forgive as rush to forget racial violence

By ERRIN HAINES AP National Writer

When a white Dallas police officer who killed an innocent black man in his own living room was sent off to prison this week with a hug from the victim's brother and the black judge on the case, some saw it as a moment of amazing grace and redemption.

Many black Americans, though, saw something all too familiar and were offended.

Some saw the rush to forgive as a rush to forget racial violence. They argued that the gesture of forgiveness took the focus off the crime and made it all about the white woman. They complained, too, that it served to soothe white people's conscience.

And they said that white America has practically come to expect black people to forgive when violence is done to them. Too often, they said, the public acts as if black people are not entitled to express anger, even when there is ample reason to be upset.

"Very few communities in our nation have had to suffer as much as black people, who have also been robbed of the opportunity to emote from that experience," said the Rev. Michael Waters, pastor of Joy Tabernacle African Methodist Episcopal Church in Dallas who has pushed for police reform in the city.

"It's about removing from black people the agency of their anger, suggesting that we don't have a right to righteous indignation, that it is somehow unacceptable for Christian black people to tap into their frustration at a death-dealing system that has caused them to bury generations of their sons and daughters," he continued. "I think that's sinful."

For many, the scene during Amber Guyger's sentencing for murder recalled the extraordinary forbearance shown after nine black worshippers were shot to death at a historic black church in Charleston, South Carolina, by a racist young white man, Dylann Roof, in 2015. Within days, several relatives of the victims expressed their forgiveness for Roof and were widely praised across the U.S. for doing so.

The Rev. Sharon Risher, whose mother, Ethel Lee Lance, was killed in the attack, was not among those who immediately forgave the killer.

"It always seems like black people are given that heavy task of being able to forgive," Risher said. The tendency to forgive, she said, is "part of a generational, DNA strand we have as black people," a legacy of slavery: "For us to be able to live some kind of a decent existence and not carry rage and anger, we get to that point of having to forgive."

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Activists have complained, too, that when a black person is killed by police, political leaders almost always plead for calm from the black community.

"I stated a long time ago that if you're more concerned about potential unrest than you are about potential injustice, that's problematic," Waters said.

Many black Americans welcomed the rare guilty verdict in Guyger's trial this week. The officer, who was fired soon after the shooting, said she mistakenly walked into Botham Jean's apartment, thinking it was hers, and opened fire on what she thought was a burglar. The 26-year-old accountant was sitting there eating ice cream.

The trial and the sentencing featured Guyger's tearful testimony, along with the disclosure she sent several offensive text messages about black people, and black character witnesses such as Guyger's former colleague Cathy Odhiambo, who called the ex-officer "the sweetest person."

But it was the sentencing, where Guyger got 10 years in prison Wednesday, that was the most striking. Jean's brother Brandt forgave her in the courtroom and hugged her. Then Judge Tammy Kemp came down from the bench and gave the convicted killer an embrace, too, along with a Bible to take with her to prison.

Some black observers said that was too much and that anger is an appropriate response. Among them was activist Bree Newsome, who climbed a pole to take down a Confederate flag after the Charleston shootings.

"I have a right to feel how I feel as a black person in this country, knowing that I could be the next hashtag that launches a protest," she said.

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

North Korea says underwater-launched missile test succeeded

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Thursday it has carried out its first underwater-launched ballistic missile test in three years, in an apparent bid to dial up pressure on the United States ahead of a weekend resumption of their nuclear diplomacy.

Wednesday's test of the Pukguksong-3 missile, which North Korea describes as a type of missile capable of being launched from a submarine, is seen as the North's most high-profile weapons launch since it began diplomacy with the United States early last year. Some experts say North Korea wants to show to the U.S. what would happen if diplomacy fails again.

The Korean Central News Agency said the missile test in the waters off its east coast was successful and "ushered in a new phase in containing the outside forces' threat to (North Korea) and further bolstering its military muscle for self-defense."

The KCNA report didn't initially elaborate on whether the missile was fired from a submarine, a barge or other underwater launch platform. North Korea-dispatched photos showed the missile rising and spewing bright flames above a cloud of smoke from the sea, but the launch platform was not identifiable.

The Pentagon said the short-to-medium range missile was not launched from a submarine.

Air Force Col. Pat Ryder, spokesman for the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told Pentagon reporters Thursday there was "no indication that it was launched from a submarine, but rather, a sea-based platform." Other defense officials described it as a barge or floating platform.

Michael Elleman, a senior fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, said the North Korean photos show "a missile breaching the sea's surface after being ejected from an underwater launch tube, and then igniting its first-stage motor."

He wrote on the website 38 North that the missile was likely launched from "a submersible barge rather than a submarine, as evidenced by the nearby surface ship that presumably towed the barge to a safe off-shore location."

Kim Dong-yub, an analyst from Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, issued a similar assessment, saying the missile was likely from a barge built for an underwater launch. He said the missile is under

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development and that North Korea must test-fire it from a submarine before deploying it.

South Korea's Defense Ministry said the North Korean missile traveled about 450 kilometers (280 miles) at a maximum altitude of 910 kilometers (565 miles). Ministry officials said it flew higher than any other short-range weapons North Korea test-fired in recent months.

KCNA said the missile was launched in a vertical mode and that its test had no adverse impact on the security of neighboring countries. It said North Korean leader Kim Jong-un sent "warm congratulations" to the national defense scientific research units involved in the test-firing.

If fired at a standard trajectory, Kim, the analyst, said the missile could have travelled 1,500-2,000 kilometers (930-1,240 miles). He said the Pukguksong-3 is a medium-range missile. North Korea hadn't tested a medium- and long-range missiles since its entrance to talks with the United States.

North Korean and U.S. officials are to meet on Saturday in Stockholm to restart diplomacy on how to end the North Korean nuclear crisis. That diplomacy largely remains stalemated after the February breakdown of a second summit between President Donald Trump and Kim Jong Un in Vietnam.

The U.N. Security Council will hold closed consultations Tuesday on North Korea's recent ballistic missile launches, diplomats said Thursday.

Britain, France and Germany called for a council meeting following the recent series of missile launches, which are a violation of U.N. sanctions.

Pentagon spokesman Jonathan Hoffman said U.S. Defense Secretary Mark Esper spoke with his Japanese defense counterpart on Thursday and the two men agreed that the launch was "unnecessarily provocative," and not helpful in the effort to get North Korea back on the diplomatic path toward denuclearization.

The missile landed inside Japan's exclusive economic zone for the first time since November 2017.

North Korea has recently warned its dealings with the United States may end if Washington fails to come up with new proposals to salvage the nuclear diplomacy by December.

Pukguksong, or Polaris, is a solid-fuel missile in the North's weapons arsenal. The country first test-launched a Pukguksong-1 missile from an underwater platform in 2016, and Kim said at the time his military had gained "perfect nuclear-attack capability." A year later, the North test-launched a Pukguksong-2, a land-based variant of the missile.

North Korea having an ability to fire a missile from a submarine is a threat to the United States and its allies because such launches are harder to detect early enough to respond. The use of solid fuel also increases a weapon's mobility.

After Wednesday's launch, the U.S. State Department called on North Korea "to refrain from provocations, abide by their obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions, and remain engaged in substantive and sustained negotiations to do their part to ensure peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula and achieve denuclearization."

James Franco's ex-students sue alleging sexual impropriety

By ANDREW DALTON AP Entertainment Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Two actresses sued James Franco and the acting and film school he founded Thursday, saying he intimidated his students into gratuitous and exploitative sexual situations far beyond those acceptable on Hollywood film sets.

Sarah Tither-Kaplan and Toni Gaal, former students at the actor's now-closed Studio 4, said in the lawsuit filed in Los Angeles Superior Court that Franco pushed his students into performing in increasingly explicit sex scenes on camera in an "orgy type setting."

Franco "sought to create a pipeline of young women who were subjected to his personal and professional sexual exploitation in the name of education," the suit alleges.

The women say students were led to believe roles in Franco's films would be available to those who went along.

The situations described in the suit arose during a master class in sex scenes that Franco taught at the school, which he opened in 2014 and closed in 2017.

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The lawsuit, which also names Franco's production company Rabbit Bandini and his partners as defendants, includes allegations Tither-Kaplan made publicly last year after Franco won a Golden Globe Award for "The Disaster Artist."

Gaal is speaking out for the first time.

In an interview on "The Late Show with Stephen Colbert" last year, Franco called the sexual misconduct stories about him inaccurate, but said, "If I've done something wrong, I will fix it. I have to."

The 41-year-old actor's attorney Michael Plonsker said the claims in the lawsuit are "ill-informed" and have "already been debunked."

"James will not only fully defend himself, but will also seek damages from the plaintiffs and their attorneys for filing this scurrilous publicity seeking lawsuit," Plonsker said in a statement.

The lawsuit alleges that to take Franco's master class, students had to audition by simulating sex acts on film, which he watched to choose candidates.

It says the class began with "encouraging female student actors to appear topless, then perform in sex scenes, then orgies and gratuitous full nudity," without the careful guidelines and closed sets that are the industry standard for shooting sex scenes.

The suit alleges that Gaal was kept out of the master class for questioning its exploitative nature.

Tither-Kaplan took the class and was subsequently cast in Rabbit Bandini films, "which she now recognizes was a direct result of her willingness to accept Franco's exploitative behavior without complaint."

The lawsuit seeks damages to be determined at trial, an apology from Franco and his partners, and the handover or destruction of video of the plaintiffs.

Attorneys for the women are looking for more plaintiffs to join, and for it to become a class action.

Tither-Kaplan previously recounted her experiences with Franco and the school as one of five women who talked to the Los Angeles Times about him early in 2018.

She was also among the women who spoke out against Franco on Twitter when he won his Golden Globe in January 2018 at a time when the #MeToo movement was surging.

Tither-Kaplan later told the LA Times that the Time's Up anti-sexual harassment lapel pin Franco wore to the ceremony felt like "a slap in my face."

The organization behind the pin, Time's Up Now, said in a statement Thursday that "If these allegations are true, we hope the survivors, and all impacted by this behavior, receive some measure of justice."

Since the allegations first emerged, Franco has made few publicity appearances, but work has not seemed to slow down for him on the big or small screen.

The HBO series "The Deuce," which he executive produces and stars in, began its third and final season on Sept. 9.

Franco also appeared last year in the Coen brothers' acclaimed Western anthology "The Ballad of Buster Scruggs," which was nominated for three Oscars.

And this weekend he will have two films that he directed and stars in playing in theaters: "Zeroville," an adaptation of Steve Erickson's 2007 novel that was filmed in 2014 but faced delays in distribution, as well as "Pretenders," with Brian Cox and Dennis Quaid.

"Zeroville," which co-stars Seth Rogen, Megan Fox and Will Ferrell, is already a box office bomb and critical dud. This past weekend it played on 80 screens and made an average of \$111 per screen. And "Pretenders," which opens in limited release Friday, is not faring much better with critics.

This story has been corrected to show that the name of the school Franco founded is Studio 4, not Studio 24.

AP Film Writer Lindsey Bahr contributed to this report.

Follow AP Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/andyjamesdalton>.

MGM Resorts commits up to \$800M to victims of Vegas shooting

By KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Two years after a shooter rained gunfire on country music fans from a high-rise Las Vegas Strip hotel, MGM Resorts International has agreed to pay up to \$800 million to families of the 58 people who died and hundreds of others who were injured, attorneys announced Thursday.

The out-of-court agreement will resolve lawsuits in at least 10 states seeking compensation from the hotel owner for physical and psychological injuries received in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history.

Publicly traded MGM Resorts acknowledged no liability or guilt with the agreement that attorneys said was reached Monday and made public just two days after the second anniversary of the Oct. 1, 2017, massacre at a country music concert.

No one wanted to upstage victim memorials with the settlement, said attorney Robert Eglet, who represents about 2,500 of the 4,400 people with claims against publicly traded MGM Resorts.

And no one wanted to go through protracted litigation, he said.

Victims accused the casino giant of failing to protect 22,000 people at the concert venue it owns or stop the shooter from amassing an arsenal of assault-style weapons and ammunition over several days before opening fire from a suite at the company's Mandalay Bay resort.

Dr. Heather Melton, an orthopedic surgeon in Big Sandy, Tennessee, whose husband, Sonny, died shielding her from gunfire, said she had mixed feelings about the agreement.

"There's some good that comes from it: It will help give families closure and alleviates their ongoing medical costs," she said. "But there's no amount of money I would take to not get my husband back."

The settlement creates the third-largest victims compensation fund in U.S. history, said Kenneth Feinberg, a claims administrator who distributed \$7.1 billion in victim compensation after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks and \$6.5 billion following the 2010 BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico.

The final amount of the Las Vegas settlement will depend on the number of claims and decisions by one or more independent administrators who will be appointed by a court to allocate money from the settlement fund, plaintiffs' attorneys and MGM Resorts said.

"Our goal has always been to resolve these matters so our community and the victims and their families can move forward in the healing process," said Jim Murren, company chairman and chief executive.

Company stock closed trading Thursday at \$27.25, up 14 cents.

James Frantz, a San Diego attorney who represents 199 victims, said he expected a compensation formula to be worked out based on the severity of injuries.

Eglet said all sides expect to wrap up work by late next year, a timeline that Feinberg called realistic.

Attorneys will get some of the money, but Eglet said he couldn't say how much because attorney-client agreements vary.

The settlement fund will disburse between \$735 million and \$800 million. MGM Resorts is insured for \$751 million.

A court battle pitting more than 65 legal firms against MGM Resorts could have taken a decade or more, Eglet said, while the agreement will "provide the greatest good" for those still recovering from the massacre. The lawsuits were not declared a class action.

"While nothing will be able to bring back the lives lost or undo the horror so many suffered on that day, this settlement will provide fair compensation for thousands of victims and their families," he said in Las Vegas.

Attorneys said there are at least three other lawsuits that are not affected by the settlement. Some name the gunman's estate, gun manufacturers, event promoters and others.

In Nevada, a U.S. District Court judge last week refused to dismiss a negligence lawsuit by shooting victims against Slide Fire Solutions, maker of bump stock devices the shooter used to modify assault-style weapons to fire more rapidly.

The legal fights stem from a country music festival that became a killing ground when a 64-year-old retired accountant and high-stakes video poker player fired out the windows of his hotel room into the crowd.

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Stephen Paddock killed himself as police closed in. Officers found 23 assault-style weapons in his room. Fourteen were equipped with bump stocks.

Police and the FBI found that Paddock meticulously planned the attack and authorities theorized that he may have sought notoriety. But they said they never determined a clear motive.

As legal claims piled up, MGM Resorts drew outrage by filing lawsuits last year against more than 1,900 victims in a bid to avoid liability.

The company argued it didn't owe anything to survivors or families of slain victims under a federal law enacted after the Sept. 11, 2001, attack that gave stadiums, corporate buildings and other facilities that draw crowds protection from lawsuits for strengthening security against terrorist attacks.

Chelsea Romo, a 30-year-old single mother of two from Temecula, California, lost her left eye in the shooting and still has shrapnel lodged in her brain. Of the settlement, she said, "I don't think anything could ever be enough" because "you can't bring people back."

Romo said in San Diego that she is on "high alert" in public places and hopes the deal will lead to measures that make those places safer.

"The past can't be changed," she said. "I guess as far as going forward, if things can be safer and better, that's all I really could ask for."

Associated Press reporters Elliot Spagat in San Diego, Morgan Smith in Salt Lake City and Michael Balsamo in Washington contributed to this report.

Home sweet volcano: Alaska fur seals thrive at unlikely spot

By DAN JOLING Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — Alaska's northern fur seal population for three decades has been classified as depleted, but the marine mammals are showing up in growing numbers at an unlikely location: a tiny island that forms the tip of an active undersea volcano.

Vents on Bogoslof Island continue to spew mud, steam and sulfurous gases two years after an eruption sent ash clouds into the path of jetliners passing over the Bering Sea. Still, northern fur seal moms find the remote island's rocky beaches perfect for giving birth and mothering pups.

"The population growth of northern fur seals on Bogoslof has been extraordinary," said Tom Gelatt, who leads a NOAA Fisheries group that studies northern fur seals. Federal scientists visited the island in August.

Geographically speaking, the island is not a particularly unusual place for the seals known for their thick coats to hang out. Most of the world's roughly 1.1 million northern fur seals breed in the eastern Bering Sea. The animals live in the ocean from November to June and head for land in summer to breed and nurse pups.

But why the seals chose volatile Bogoslof over the dozens of other uninhabited Aleutian Islands is unclear.

"The surface is covered with these big, ballistic blocks, some as big as 10 meters (33 feet) in length that were exploded out of the vent," said Chris Waythomas, a U.S. Geological Survey research geophysicist at the Alaska Volcano Observatory. "They litter the surface. It's pretty wild."

The eastern Bering Sea population of northern fur seals numbers about 635,000, with their main breeding ground on St. Paul Island, 240 miles (390 kilometers) northwest of Bogoslof.

The animals were first spotted on Bogoslof in 1980, and NOAA researchers have since conducted periodic checks on the population.

In 2015, biologists estimated an annual growth rate of just over 10% to approximately 28,000 pups on the island. The 2019 estimate likely will be more than 36,000 pups, Gelatt said.

A California stock of northern fur seals in the San Miguel, Channel and Farallon Islands is estimated at about 14,000 animals, while an unknown number live in Russian waters.

The seals stay on beaches, but on Bogoslof — which is about a third the size of New York City's Central Park — they are never far from signs of volcanic activity.

The center of the island supports a field of fumaroles, openings through which hot gases emerge. Some

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roar "like jet engines" and spurt mud geysers several meters high, Waythomas said. He has visited the last two summers.

"It was amazing, the sounds that were being produced," he said.

Eruptions in 2016 and 2017 showered the landscape with rocks and killed all vegetation. They also shrank and grew the island. Explosions destroyed acres of Bogoslof only to have fragmented material blown from lava vents create new real estate. The island remains about 0.5 square miles (1.2 square kilometers).

Food in the nearby deep water could be a factor in the seals' behavior. Bogoslof's seals eat squid and northern smoothtongue, a deep-water fish that looks like a smelt. Seals on St. Paul, the largest of the Pribilof Islands, forage on the shallow continental shelf for walleye pollock, a fish targeted by commercial fishermen.

Females with pups on Bogoslof return from foraging faster than Pribilof mothers, possibly allowing their pups to receive more meals and wean at a larger size, Gelatt said. Bogoslof also is closer to winter feeding grounds south of the Aleutians, possibly allowing pups to reach the grounds with less risk from Bering Sea storms.

Northern fur seals are distinct from harbor, ringed, bearded, ribbon and spotted seals in Alaska, which have no ear flaps. Northern fur seals, like sea lions, are eared seals. They were named for their concentrated fur: Fur seals have 350,000 hairs per square inch (60,000 hairs per square centimeter).

The animals have a prominent role in the history of colonized Alaska. After hunting sea otters to near-extinction, Russian traders turned to northern fur seals and relocated Aleuts to the Pribilofs to kill and process seals. When Emperor Alexander II needed cash and decided to sell Alaska to the United States in 1867, fur was one of the future state's known assets.

But by 1988, four years after the commercial harvest ended on St. Paul, the northern fur seal population had declined by more than half from its 1950s estimated population of 2.1 million animals.

NOAA biologists don't know why northern fur seals have not made a comeback.

"That's the million-dollar question," Gelatt said. Competition for prey from the commercial fishing fleet, predation by killer whales, disease and ecosystem changes affecting seal or prey behavior are possibilities.

Volcanic activity on Bogoslof has been relatively stable, but Gelatt's crew chose not to camp there during their weeklong August expedition, fearing a recurrence of explosions that could shoot boulders like bottle rockets. They instead made day trips from an anchored boat.

The crew tallied seals and assessed whether aerial images taken from unmanned aircraft could be used in future counts. As fewer seals breed on St. Paul Island, the growth on Bogoslof is significant.

"Barring other future catastrophic eruptions that could dramatically change the geography of the island, there is plenty of room for a lot more seals on Bogoslof," Gelatt said.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Oct. 4, the 277th day of 2019. There are 88 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Oct. 4, 2002, "American Taliban" John Walker Lindh received a 20-year sentence after a sobbing plea for forgiveness before a federal judge in Alexandria, Virginia. In a federal court in Boston, a laughing Richard Reid pleaded guilty to trying to blow up a trans-Atlantic flight with explosives in his shoes (the British citizen was later sentenced to life in prison).

On this date:

In 1777, Gen. George Washington's troops launched an assault on the British at Germantown, Pennsylvania, resulting in heavy American casualties.

In 1861, during the Civil War, the United States Navy authorized construction of the first ironclad ship, the USS Monitor.

In 1940, Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini conferred at Brenner Pass in the Alps.

Groton Daily Independent

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In 1951, the MGM movie musical "An American in Paris," starring Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron, had its U.S. premiere in New York.

In 1957, the Space Age began as the Soviet Union launched Sputnik 1, the first artificial satellite, into orbit.

In 1970, rock singer Janis Joplin, 27, was found dead in her Hollywood hotel room.

In 1989, Triple Crown-winning racehorse Secretariat, suffering a hoof ailment, was humanely destroyed at age 19.

In 1990, for the first time in nearly six decades, German lawmakers met in the Reichstag for the first meeting of reunified Germany's parliament.

In 1991, 26 nations, including the United States, signed the Madrid Protocol, which imposed a 50-year ban on oil exploration and mining in Antarctica.

In 2003, a Palestinian woman blew herself up inside a restaurant in Haifa, Israel, killing 21 bystanders.

In 2004, the SpaceShipOne rocket plane broke through Earth's atmosphere to the edge of space for the second time in five days, capturing the \$10 million Ansari X prize aimed at opening the final frontier to tourists. Pioneering astronaut Gordon Cooper died in Ventura, California, at age 77.

In 2017, President Donald Trump visited hospital bedsides and a police base in Las Vegas in the aftermath of the shooting rampage three nights earlier that left 58 people dead.

Ten years ago: Greek Socialists trounced the governing conservatives in a landslide election. Argentine folk singer Mercedes Sosa, 74, died in Buenos Aires.

Five years ago: North Korea's presumptive No. 2 leader, Hwang Pyong So, and other members of Pyongyang's inner circle met with South Korean officials in the rivals' highest level face-to-face talks in five years. Former Haitian "president for life" Jean-Claude Duvalier, 63, died in Port-au-Prince. Paul Revere, 76, the organist and leader of the Raiders rock band, died in Garden Valley, Idaho.

One year ago: The Senate Judiciary Committee said it had received an FBI report on sexual misconduct allegations against Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh; leading GOP lawmakers said there was nothing new in the report, while Democrats complained that the investigation omitted interviews with some potential witnesses and accused the White House of limiting the scope of the probe. President Donald Trump told a Minnesota rally that Republican voters would be motivated by what he called the "rage-fueled resistance" by Democrats to the Kavanaugh nomination. Former rap mogul Marion "Suge" Knight was sentenced in Los Angeles to 28 years in prison for running down and killing a Compton businessman with a pickup truck.

Today's Birthdays: Country singer Leroy Van Dyke is 90. Actress Felicia Farr is 87. Pro and College Football Hall of Famer Sam Huff is 85. Author Roy Blount Jr. is 78. Author Anne Rice is 78. Actress Lori Saunders (TV: "Petticoat Junction") is 78. Baseball Hall of Famer Tony La Russa is 75. Actor Clifton Davis is 74. The former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, is 73. Former Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel is 73. Actress Susan Sarandon is 73. Blues musician Duke Robillard is 71. Playwright Lee Blessing is 70. Actor Armand Assante is 70. Actor Alan Rosenberg is 69. Actor Christoph Waltz is 63. Actor Bill Fagerbakke is 62. Music producer Russell Simmons is 62. Actress Kyra Schon (Film: "Night of the Living Dead") is 62. Actress-singer Wendy Makkena is 61. Musician Chris Lowe (The Pet Shop Boys) is 60. Country musician Gregg "Hobie" Hubbard (Sawyer Brown) is 59. Actor David W. Harper is 58. Singer Jon Secada is 58. TV personality John Melendez is 54. Actor-comedian Jerry Minor is 52. Actor Liev Schreiber is 52. Actor Abraham Benrubi is 50. Country singer-musician Heidi Newfield is 49. Singer-guitarist M. Ward (She & Him) is 46. Actress Alicia Silverstone is 43. Actress Dana Davis is 41. Rock musician Robbie Bennett (The War on Drugs) is 41. Actor Phillip Glasser is 41. Rock singer-musician Marc Roberge (O.A.R.) is 41. Actor Brandon Barash is 40. Actress Rachael Leigh Cook is 40. Actor Tim Peper is 39. Actor Jimmy Workman is 39. Bassist Cubbie Fink is 37. Rhythm-and-blues singer Jessica Benson (3lw) is 32. Actor Michael Charles Roman is 32. Actress Melissa Benoist is 31. NBA All-Star Derrick Rose is 31. Actress Dakota Johnson is 30. Figure skater Kimmie Meisner is 30. Actress Leigh-Anne Pinnoch (Little Mix) is 28. Actor Ryan Scott Lee is 23.

Thought for Today: "Trying to determine what is going on in the world by reading newspapers is like trying to tell the time by watching the second hand of a clock." _ Ben Hecht, American screenwriter (1894-1964).