

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 1 of 47

[2- South Dakota Farmers Union Says RFS "Fixes" Lack Vision and Progress](#)

[3- Rounds, Jones Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Make Certain Vital Health Care Jobs are Adequately Staffed when Disasters Strike the U.S.](#)

[4- Weather Pages](#)

[7- Daily Devotional](#)

[8- 2019 Groton Events](#)

[9- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Upcoming COMMUNITY EVENTS

### Friday, October 18, 2019

Faculty Inservice Groton Area Elementary School,  
Groton Area High School

No School Groton Area Elementary School, Groton  
Area High School

7:00pm: Football: Boys Varsity Game @ Mobridge-  
Pollock High School

### Saturday, October 19, 2019

10 a.m. to 3 p.m.: Groton Pumpkin Fest  
Oral Interp at Florence High School  
Robotics at GHS Gymnasium

Volleyball: Girls Varsity Tournament at Milbank  
High School

8 a.m.: Groton Area vs. Clark/Willow Lake at Mil-  
bank High School Armory (west court)

11 a.m.: Groton Area vs. Aberdeen Christian at  
Milbank High School Armory (west court)

Next match at 1:30 p.m. with the third place match  
at 3:30 p.m. and the championship match at 4:30  
p.m.

## OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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



It's Football Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Mobridge-Pollock  
Tigers**

VS



**Groton Area Tigers**

7:00 p.m., Friday, Oct. 18, 2019  
at Mobridge

**Broadcast Sponsored By**

Abeln Seed  
Aberdeen Chrysler Center  
Allied Climate Professionals  
Bahr Spray Foam  
BaseKamp Lodge  
DeHoet Trucking  
Groton Auto Works  
Groton Chiropractic Clinic  
Hanlon Brothers  
John Sieh Agency  
Milbrandt Enterprises  
Mike-N-Jo's  
Olson Development  
Professional Management Services  
Touchdown Sponsor - Patios Plus

## South Dakota Farmers Union Says RFS "Fixes" Lack Vision and Progress

Huron, S.D. - Following yet another disappointing announcement by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on their management of the Renewable Fuel Standard (RFS), South Dakota Farmers Union President Doug Sombke said it's time to recognize the RFS is broken.

"The "big beautiful deal" EPA announced last week raised more questions than it answered, and now a week later we have the answers-- it isn't big and it isn't beautiful. Leaving our future in the hands of EPA is sinking us further into a hole," said Sombke, who is also a fourth-generation South Dakota farmer.

"We simply cannot allow agriculture and ethanol to be defined by the RFS-- we can do so much more. In addition to destroying demand through the waivers from RFS obligations, EPA is attempting to make sure the industry never grows beyond current levels."

Sombke said along with not fully re-allocating volumes waived in this proposal, previously, in the E15 rvp rule, EPA also capped blends at the 15% level, making it illegal to blend at 20 or 30%, which is where the highest value is in terms of octane and emission reductions.

Sombke referenced the fact Iowa Senator Chuck Grassley and former Colorado Senator Tim Wirth made this very point in a recent article calling on the environmental and health communities to take another look at E30. But the cap on E15 and restrictions of the RFS have severely limited the industry's ability to provide those benefits. By making the national debate all about the RFS, Sombke said, it creates constant uncertainty and divisiveness, dragging ethanol and corn through the mud in the process.

In an editorial last week in the Des Moines Register Sombke proposed an easy fix by using the pending Safe Affordable Fuel Economy (SAFE) rule as a pathway to higher octane and to remove the regulatory barriers keeping ethanol from providing the lowest cost, lowest carbon and cleanest octane.

"The Trump Administration has been sitting on the Safe Affordable Fuel Economy (SAFE) Rule for months and with the stroke of a pen could order EPA to lift the caps on volume, and increase octane levels while enforcing toxics controls. That would be a direct pathway to optional higher ethanol blends, more corn grind, increased efficiency with reduced emissions, and an end to some of this constant fighting."

"Of course, we want the RFS to work, said Sombke, but even if fully enforced, it caps corn ethanol. The fixes we propose would make the RFS a true floor instead of the ceiling it has become."

## **Rounds, Jones Introduce Bipartisan Legislation to Make Certain Vital Health Care Jobs are Adequately Staffed when Disasters Strike the U.S.**

WASHINGTON—U.S. Sens. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) and Doug Jones (D-Ala.) today introduced the United States Public Health Service Modernization Act of 2019. Their bipartisan legislation would establish a Ready Reserve Corps within the United States Public Health Service (USPHS) Commissioned Corps to make certain vital health care jobs are adequately staffed when disasters strike the U.S.

“We’re grateful to all USPHS Commissioned Corps Officers who dedicate their careers to improving public health and working in underserved areas,” said Rounds. “However, we must make certain vital healthcare services remain available to our citizens when Commissioned Corps Officers are called away from their duty stations. By creating a Ready Reserve Corps within USPHS, we’ll be better equipped to fill these vital positions, such as doctors and nurses at IHS facilities, when the Regular Corps Officers need to respond to a national emergency.”

“Alabama knows all too well the full spectrum of natural disasters and the devastation they can bring on our communities, especially in our most rural areas that lack immediate access to services and resources,” said Jones. “When our dedicated health care workers deploy to these disasters, we also need to make sure we’re not creating a gap in service at their home duty station. This bipartisan bill will help address that challenge by making sure adequate health care professionals are on standby to fill those positions and provide continuous quality care.”

### Background:

- The USPHS Commissioned Corps is a team of more than 6,500 full-time officers advancing public health and disease prevention programs. The Commissioned Corps fills health service roles within federal agencies and programs, including the Indian Health Service (IHS), Food and Drug Administration (FDA), Bureau of Prisons and U.S. Coast Guard.

- Currently, during times of national emergencies such as a hurricane, USPHS Commissioned Corps Officers are relocated from their stationed roles within these agencies and relocated to help with public health emergencies. This leaves vital health care jobs at agencies vacant, posing a risk to citizens in the area who rely on those services for care.

- Creating a reserve will allow duty stations to fill these vital positions when Regular Corps Officers are called away to respond to public health emergencies.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 4 of 47

Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 63 °F

Tonight



Clearing Late

Low: 40 °F

Saturday



Sunny

High: 59 °F

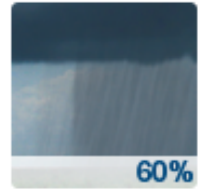
Saturday  
Night



Increasing  
Clouds

Low: 40 °F

Sunday



Showers  
Likely and  
Breezy

High: 55 °F

**Friday  
October 18<sup>th</sup>**

**60-65°**  
40°

**3-Day Outlook**

SAT	SUN	MON
58-63°	50-55°	45-50°

Strong low pressure Sun/Mon brings the chance for t-storms, gusty winds and the occasional rain/snow mix

Updated: 10/18/2019 4:34 AM Central

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Published on: 10/18/2019 at 12:43AM

Breezy southeast then northwest winds and mild temperatures are expected today as a cold front moves through. Can't completely rule out a few light rain showers this afternoon, otherwise dry. While the weekend gets off to a nice start, a storm system will impact the area mainly Sunday afternoon through Monday when 0.25"-1.0" of rain is possible.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 5 of 47

## Today in Weather History

October 18, 2012: An area of low pressure rapidly intensified once it moved east of the northern plains. This strengthening resulted in very strong northwest winds across the region. Some of the higher reported wind gusts include 77 mph at the Fort Pierre and Grand River RAWS sites, 74 mph at the Pierre airport, and 70 mph at Murdo, Presho, and Hayes public observation sites.

1906 - A hurricane struck South Florida drowning 124 persons stranded in the Florida Keys. (David Ludlum)

1910 - Northeasterly winds as high as 70 mph (from a hurricane moving northward up the Florida peninsula) carried water out of Tampa Bay and the Hillsboro River. The water level lowered to nine feet below mean low water. Forty ships were grounded. (The Weather Channel)

1916: A tropical depression organized to a tropical storm on October 11 in the western Caribbean. It moved westward, reaching hurricane strength on the 13th before hitting the Yucatán Peninsula on the 15th as a 110 mph hurricane. It weakened over land, and it emerged over the southern Gulf of Mexico as a tropical storm. It quickly re-strengthened to a Category 3 hurricane, hitting Pensacola on October 18. The maximum wind velocity at Mobile was 115 mph from the east at 8:25 am. Pensacola had winds of 120 mph at 10:13 am when the wind instrument tower was blown down.

1930 - A big early season lake effect snowburst on the lee shores of Lake Erie and Lake Ontario produced 47 inches at Gouverneur NY and 48 inches just south of Buffalo. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Thunderstorms in northeastern Texas produced golf ball size hail at Atlanta, along with wind gusts to 86 mph, and four inches of rain. Damage from the storm was estimated at more than a million dollars. Sunny and mild weather continued across much of the rest of the nation. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Eight cities in the southwestern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Red Bluff CA with a reading of 96 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Unseasonably cold air began to invade the central and eastern U.S. Light snow fell across northern Maine, and snow was also reported in the Great Lakes Region, including the Chicago area. Bismarck ND was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 9 degrees above zero. Five cities in Florida reported record high readings for the date, as temperatures warmed above 80 degrees. Miami FL reported a record high of 90 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2005 - With the formation of Hurricane Wilma, the 2005 Atlantic hurricane season tied the record for the most named storms for any season (21 storms in 1933), and also tied the record for the most hurricanes in a single season (12 in 1969). Wilma peaked at category-5 intensity on the 19th, with a minimum central pressure falling to 882 millibars (26.05 inches of mercury), the lowest pressure ever recorded in the Atlantic Basin. Wilma also became the most rapidly-intensifying storm on record, with a maximum-sustained surface wind speed increase of 105 mph in a 24-hour period.

2007: A destructive fall tornado hit Nappanee, Indiana causing extensive damage along its 20-mile path across northeast Marshall, Northwest Kosciusko and southwest Elkhart Counties. High-end EF3 intensity winds near 165 mph were estimated based on the most severe damage over southeast Nappanee. Over 100 structures sustained significant damage or were destroyed in town alone. Despite the widespread damage and time of day, only minor injuries were reported.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 6 of 47

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp: 65 °F at 4:14 PM**

**Low Temp: 35 °F at 7:56 AM**

**Wind: 21 mph at 10:18 PM**

**Day Rain: 0.00**

**Record High: 90° in 1910**

**Record Low: 12° in 1930**

**Average High: 57°F**

**Average Low: 32°F**

**Average Precip in Oct.: 1.23**

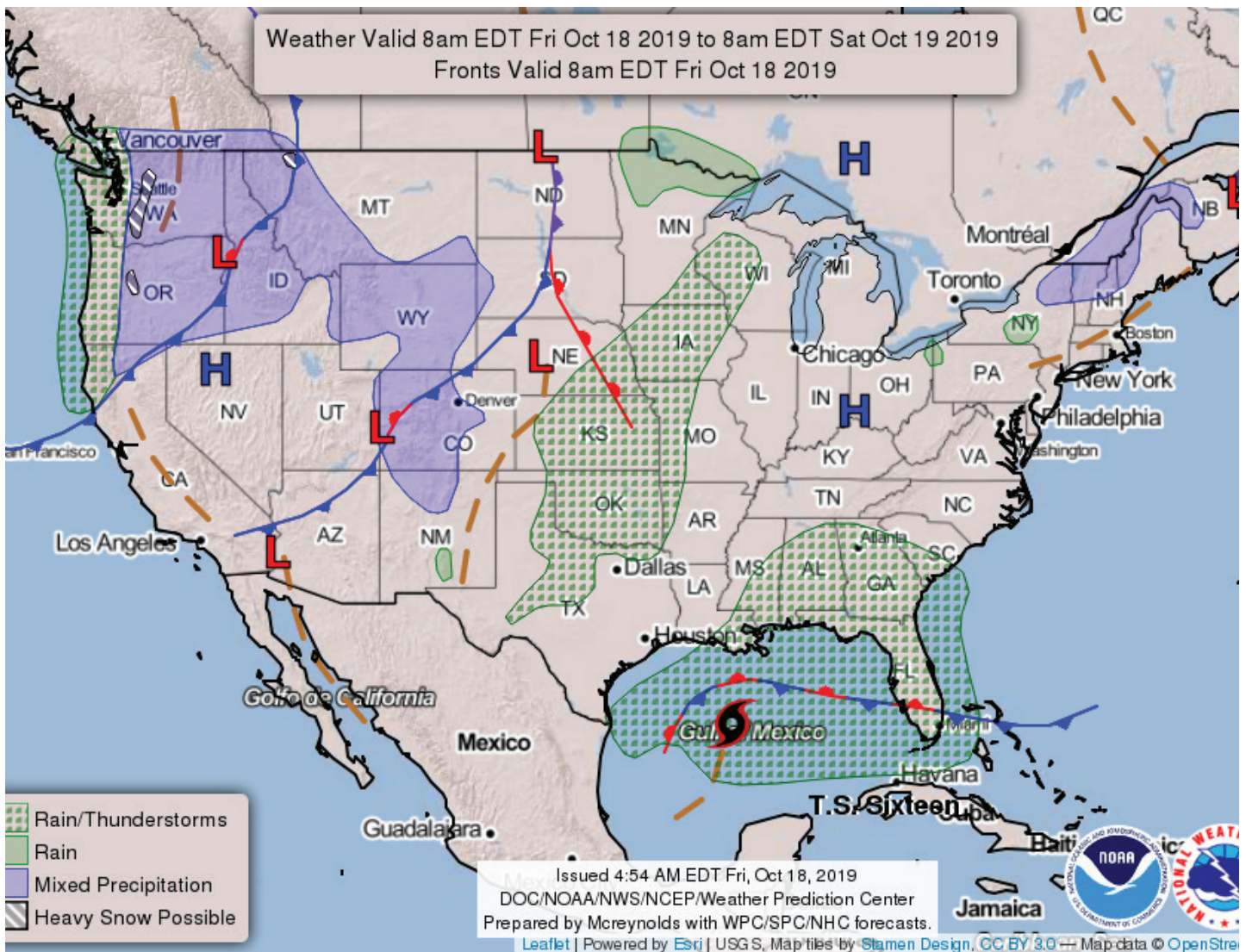
**Precip to date in Oct.: 1.27**

**Average Precip to date: 19.71**

**Precip Year to Date: 26.29**

**Sunset Tonight: 6:43 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:55 a.m.**





## MULTIPLYING LOVE

A mother had only one son. She loved him more than anything in the world. One day she introduced him to a friend and said, "This is my only son, and I love him dearly!"

He greeted him kindly and said, "I have eight sons, and I love all of them dearly, too."

"Eight sons?" she exclaimed in disbelief. "I can't imagine that. I love him so much that I can't imagine dividing my love by eight."

"Ma'am," he replied. "I don't divide my love, I multiply it."

What a wonderful description of how God loves us! He never divides His love, He multiplies it, and has enough for everyone and anyone who has ever lived or ever will live.

The central theme in God's Word is that He loves us. And, not only does He love us, but there is no one who loves us as much as He does. Furthermore, He loves each of us equally. Fortunately, He has no favorites.

God's love is so great that He freely, willingly, and gladly gave His One and only Son for our salvation. It cost Him dearly and is far beyond our ability to understand. Yet, we do not need to understand it to accept it. It is ours for the asking if we accept it through faith in Christ. The offer comes from Him personally and it is our choice to receive it.

Prayer: Lord, we are amazed at such love – a love we cannot understand but desperately need and can only find through Christ, Your Son, our Savior. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: John 3:16 For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 8 of 47

## 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)



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 9 of 47

## News from the Associated Press

### 'Career criminal' dies at South Dakota prison

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Department of Corrections says a man serving life in prison has died following an illness.

Corrections officials say 64-year-old Garreth Gannon, who was convicted of attempted murder and robbery, died on Wednesday in the infirmary at the South Dakota State Penitentiary.

The Rapid City Journal says Gannon pleaded guilty in April 1996 to shooting a Rapid City tobacco shop employee. At his trial he acknowledged that he was a career criminal who had spent the majority of the previous two decades behind bars.

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

### Thursday's Scores By The Associated Press

#### Volleyball

Aberdeen Christian def. Leola/Frederick, 14-25, 25-13, 25-15, 25-16  
Aberdeen Roncalli def. Clark/Willow Lake, 25-12, 25-14, 25-10  
Arlington def. Waverly-South Shore, 25-16, 21-25, 25-15, 25-18  
Avon def. Centerville, 25-23, 25-16, 25-14  
Baltic def. Sioux Valley, 25-21, 25-14, 25-16  
Bennett County def. Todd County, 25-12, 25-14, 25-18  
Bridgewater-Emery def. Gayville-Volin, 25-21, 25-21, 15-25, 25-16  
Burke def. Gregory, 25-16, 25-20, 25-16  
Canton def. Vermillion, 16-25, 20-25, 25-12, 25-22, 15-13  
Chester def. Canistota, 25-17, 25-15, 25-13  
Colman-Egan def. Elkton-Lake Benton, 15-25, 27-25, 23-25, 25-18, 15-9  
Corsica/Stickney def. Alcester-Hudson, 22-25, 25-20, 25-23, 25-20  
Douglas def. Hot Springs, 25-22, 25-13, 25-19  
Dupree def. Stanley County, 25-10, 25-14, 28-30, 25-22  
Elk Point-Jefferson def. Irene-Wakonda, 21-25, 25-22, 25-14, 25-17  
Ethan def. Hanson, 25-8, 25-18, 24-26, 25-21  
Faith def. Cheyenne-Eagle Butte, 25-16, 25-13, 25-7  
Florence/Henry def. Iroquois/Doland, 25-19, 28-26, 25-16  
Garretson def. Tea Area, 25-14, 23-25, 28-26, 18-25, 15-7  
Great Plains Lutheran def. Wilmot, 25-20, 25-15, 25-18  
Hamlin def. Redfield, 25-21, 25-22, 25-14  
Harding County def. McIntosh, 25-6, 25-8, 25-4  
Highmore-Harrold def. Herreid/Selby Area, 25-23, 20-25, 25-20, 25-15  
Hill City def. Wall, 25-8, 25-3, 25-9  
Ipswich def. Hitchcock-Tulare, 25-16, 25-16, 25-23  
James Valley Christian def. Sunshine Bible Academy, 25-11, 25-7, 25-6  
Kadoka Area def. Jones County, 25-8, 25-13, 25-13  
Kimball/White Lake def. Sanborn Central/Woonsocket, 22-25, 25-17, 18-25, 25-14, 15-12  
Lennox def. Viborg-Hurley, 25-12, 25-22, 25-15  
Marty Indian def. Freeman Academy/Marion, 25-20, 25-15, 21-25, 19-25, 15-7

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 10 of 47

Milbank Area def. Britton-Hecla, 25-15, 25-15, 25-11  
Mobridge-Pollock def. Sully Buttes, 25-20, 26-24, 21-25, 25-22  
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton def. West Central, 25-16, 25-15, 28-26  
Northwestern def. Potter County, 25-12, 25-9, 25-6  
Oelrichs def. Red Cloud, 22-25, 25-17, 25-15, 26-24  
Omaha Nation, Neb. def. Flandreau Indian, 19-25, 25-8, 14-25, 25-17, 15-7  
Parker def. Parkston, 25-20, 25-20, 22-25, 25-17  
Scotland def. Tripp-Delmont/Armour, 25-16, 25-20, 25-15  
Sioux Falls Christian def. Harrisburg, 19-25, 25-14, 25-16, 25-22  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt def. Brandon Valley, 25-22, 25-18, 25-18  
Sioux Falls Washington def. Pierre, 23-25, 25-16, 25-12, 25-16  
St. Thomas More def. Custer, 25-19, 18-25, 25-11, 25-13  
Sturgis Brown def. Lead-Deadwood, 25-22, 25-22, 25-16  
Wagner def. Andes Central/Dakota Christian, 25-11, 25-8, 25-20  
Warner def. Faulkton, 25-17, 25-22, 25-22

## Home health cares in Iowa, South Dakota ordered to pay

CEDAR RAPIDS, Iowa (AP) — A federal judge has ordered five home health care facilities in Iowa and South Dakota accused of filing fraudulent Medicare claims to pay more than \$3.1 million.

A complaint filed earlier this month in Cedar Rapid's federal court accused Sergeant Bluff Healthcare and Elk Point Healthcare of filing Medicare claims for home health services billed by a third-party for services that did not qualify for Medicare coverage or were not justified or necessary. Prosecutors say the fraudulent claims were filed from January 2012 through December 2015.

For most of that time, the facilities were managed by a Minnesota company that has since gone out of business.

In a consent judgment issued Wednesday, a judge ordered Sergeant Bluff Healthcare, Red Oak Healthcare and Logan Healthcare, all in Iowa, and Elk Point Health Care and Flandreau Healthcare, both in South Dakota, to pay various amounts ranging from \$1.2 million to nearly \$116,000.

## South Dakota teen pleads insanity in Wyoming girl's death

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota teenager has pleaded not guilty by reason of insanity to a first-degree murder charge in the shooting death of a girl from Wyoming whose body was found in his basement.

Also Thursday, the 17-year-old entered a not guilty plea to an alternate second-degree murder charge. The Associated Press isn't naming the defendant because his lawyer is trying to get the case moved to juvenile court.

The boy was indicted Wednesday in the killing of 16-year-old Shayna Ritthaler of Upton, Wyoming, whose body was found Oct. 7 in the basement of the defendant's home near Sturgis, where he lived with his mother.

Meade County Sheriff Ron Merwin has said Ritthaler was shot once in the head.

Investigators are trying to determine how the two met.

## South Dakota man charged with manslaughter in loss of fetus

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota man has been charged with second-degree manslaughter after police say he negligently shot his pregnant wife, killing the fetus.

Sheldon Pettibone, 22, of Sioux Falls told police he was cleaning his gun Sunday when it fired, shooting his wife, Melanie, who was about 18 weeks pregnant, the Argus Leader reported.

She was rushed to a hospital and the fetus was delivered by cesarean section but was dead. An autopsy found that the bullet hit Melanie Pettibone in the thigh and traveled to her uterus.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 11 of 47

Police initially arrested Sheldon Pettibone for negligently discharging the gun, but on Wednesday he was charged with manslaughter. Pettibone appeared in court Thursday on the new charges. Bond was set at \$50,000 cash only. Pettibone will be represented by a public defender, and the Minnehaha County public defender's office declined to comment.

Police say Pettibone admitted he was distracted by a football game on TV. He said it was possible the gun fired because of "operator error."

Pettibone told police the gun fired when he released the slide and pulled it back a second time, and said it was "likely" the round was discharged from the gun in between the two movements. He told police his finger was "never within" the trigger guard.

Using a search warrant, police found a loaded magazine in a boot behind the couch where Pettibone said he was going to sit and watch the game and clean his gun. Investigators also found a spent .40-caliber shell casing in the trash and an unloaded .40-caliber handgun with the slide locked back on the upper shelf of a bedroom closet. There were no rounds in the chamber and no magazine.

Melanie Pettibone told police she was sitting on the couch watching the football game, and her husband was sitting on the opposite side of the sofa, sitting with pieces of the handgun in his lap.

She heard a "loud noise" and felt a "sharp pain" in her leg, and she ran out of the apartment. She came back inside and told Pettibone she had been shot. Pettibone helped her to their van and went back inside the apartment. He returned after "a short period of time," and applied a tourniquet to her leg before driving to the hospital.

In January, Sheldon Pettibone was arrested after authorities said he shot at people who he claimed had stole his phone. Police said he was charged with the reckless discharge of a firearm and discharging a weapon within city limits. Those charges were dismissed, and Pettibone pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct and was given a 30-day suspended jail sentence.

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

## Some US farmers get a reprieve at end of challenging year

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — Many farmers in the Midwest and South whose planting this year was interrupted by wet weather are getting a reprieve, though a few Northern states have seen harvest prospects go from bad to worse.

Minnesota and the Dakotas have seen snow and rain in recent weeks that have hampered an already difficult harvest. But much of the Corn Belt has somewhat recovered from heavy rains and flooding in the spring and summer, with experts predicting good yields from what did get planted, though it's still a far from stellar year for most farmers.

In its Oct. 10 crop production report, U.S. Department of Agriculture bumped up corn yields for Indiana, Iowa, Minnesota and North Dakota, and left the forecast for Kansas and Nebraska unchanged. North Dakota's predicted corn yield was increased by 1 bushel per acre, but that estimate was made before the state was hammered by as much as 30 inches (76 centimeters) of snow. Many crops in North Dakota remain under snow and are now being trampled by snowmobilers and hunters.

"Barring any changes, corn farmers are generally saying it's a pretty decent crop, although nowhere near the records in the last couple of years," said Chris Hawthorn of the USDA's National Agriculture Statistics Service. "The acreage is down, but what's planted is looking good."

But some farmers aren't so hopeful.

"Farmers are all in the same boat and I want to get off of it," said Randy Richards, who farms near Hope, in eastern North Dakota. "It looks like the Titanic."

Steve Nicholson, a grains and oilseeds analyst with Rabobank in St. Louis, believes the reality is probably somewhere between the doom-and-gloom predictions of struggling farmers and the USDA's estimates. He said everyone who planted row crops — corn, potatoes, soybeans, wheat, cotton and peanuts, to name a

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 12 of 47

few — has had problems this year and “not one of those commodities has been a stellar performer.” But he also thinks the markets would be a lot more unsettled if a total disaster was looming. Corn futures, for instance, would have been down, he said.

“I think it’s probably a little bit overblown,” Nicholson said. “If this is such a big deal than the markets would have reacted a lot more than they have.”

Either way, the average consumer probably won’t see what’s happening in the fields reflected in prices at the grocery store. “In terms of the cost of your box of cereal and other stuff you find on the grocery store shelves” it’s unlikely to see much change, said Andy Jung, economist for The Mosaic Company in the Twin Cities.

He noted that harvest fortunes depend on “location, location, location” and called the Dakotas and Minnesota “the poster child” for poor progress. The USDA report lists the corn harvest in North Dakota at 1% complete, compared with 12% on average at this time of year.

Overall numbers in the USDA report showed the soybean harvest about 25% finished, when it would normally be half done. The corn harvest is 22% done, with normal being close to 33%. Most of the wheat is out of the field, except for some areas in North Dakota.

Longtime farmer Bob Metz, in South Dakota, has a hard time remembering when conditions have been this challenging.

“When you get 1.2 inches of rain and snow and you feel lucky, that tells you where you’re at,” Metz said.

Richards said that for farmers in North Dakota to get back into the field to harvest their crops, they would need a warmup that melted the snow, followed by a hard freeze that would allow them to use combines without getting stuck. He said he has two neighbors who still have wheat in their fields — unheard of at this time of year.

“I’ve been doing this for 47 years and I’m at a loss for words at what Mother Nature has done to us,” Richards said.

## J&J agrees to \$117M settlement over pelvic mesh devices

By LINDA A. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Johnson & Johnson has agreed to a \$117 million multistate settlement over allegations it deceptively marketed its pelvic mesh products, which support women’s sagging pelvic organs.

Ohio’s attorney general said Thursday an investigation found that J&J, the world’s biggest health products maker, violated state consumer protection laws by not fully disclosing the devices’ risks.

Numerous women who had the once-popular, hammock-like devices implanted claim they caused severe pain, bleeding, infections and other complications.

Johnson & Johnson and its Ethicon surgical products unit reached the settlement with 41 states and the District of Columbia.

“These companies didn’t paint a clear picture of the device’s medical risks, preventing patients from making well-informed decisions,” Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost said in a statement.

The products, also called transvaginal mesh, are a synthetic material surgically implanted through the vagina of women whose pelvic organs have sagged or who suffer from stress urinary incontinence — bladder leakage when they cough, sneeze or lift heavy objects. Such incontinence is estimated to affect 3% to 17% of women and sometimes becomes severe after age 70.

Some of the products are still on the U.S. market, and hundreds of thousands of women have had the devices surgically implanted, according to Yost’s office.

An Ethicon spokeswoman noted the settlement doesn’t include admission of any misconduct, and said the devices “are considered by many to be the gold standard for the treatment of stress urinary incontinence.”

“Ethicon has acted appropriately and responsibly in the research, development and marketing of our transvaginal mesh products,” which were launched around the world in 1998, she added.

About 25,000 U.S. women with complications have sued Johnson & Johnson, the company said. Those lawsuits aren’t affected by the settlement.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 13 of 47

It comes as J&J is swamped with thousands of lawsuits claiming patients were harmed by products including baby powder, opioid painkillers and prescription drugs such as its schizophrenia drug Risperdal. Headlines about the litigation and big jury verdicts against J&J, including an \$8 billion punitive award to a young man who grew breasts while taking Risperdal, have depressed J&J's stock price for nearly a year. Most of the verdicts against J&J have been overturned or are being appealed.

The pelvic mesh deal requires the company to cease its claims that surgical technique can eliminate any risks, as well as to disclose a list of risks, including loss of sexual function, mesh eroding into the vagina and the possible need for corrective surgery.

The settlement covers the District of Columbia and these states: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Virginia and Wisconsin.

Ethicon said it settled separately with Washington state and has cases pending in California, Kentucky, Mississippi and West Virginia.

J&J shares closed Thursday up \$1.00 to \$136.17, still well below their 52-week high of \$148.99 late last fall.

Follow Linda A. Johnson at [https://twitter.com/LindaJ\\_onPharma](https://twitter.com/LindaJ_onPharma)

## Bankers survey shows improved rural economy in October

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — The latest survey of bankers in rural parts of 10 Plains and Western states showed an improved rural economy this month, but the ongoing trade disputes continue weighing on the economy.

The Rural Mainstreet survey's overall index climbed to 51.4 for October from 50.1 in September. Any score above 50 suggests a growing economy, while a score below 50 indicates a shrinking economy.

Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey, says federal crop support payments and higher grain prices helped boost October's index, but noted that nearly three-quarters of bankers "reported continuing negative impacts from the trade war."

The confidence index, which reflects bankers' economic expectations six months out, slumped to a dismal 36.5 from September's already low 42.9.

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

## Judge blocks Trump from easing energy rules in US West

By **MATTHEW BROWN** Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A U.S. judge temporarily blocked the Trump administration from easing rules on mining, drilling and grazing across millions of acres in seven Western states, saying such activities left unchecked were likely to harm a struggling bird species.

The ground-dwelling greater sage grouse is at the center of a bitter conflict between the administration and conservationists involving how much of the West's expansive public lands should be opened to development.

The temporary restraining order issued Wednesday by a judge in Boise, Idaho, means the administration for now must fall back to more stringent rules adopted under former President Barack Obama.

Sage grouse have been in decline for decades due to habitat loss and other factors, and their numbers dropped sharply again this year across much of an 11-state range.

The Trump land-use plans finalized in March had removed the most protective sage grouse habitat designations. Administration officials also dropped requirements to prioritize leasing for oil and gas outside sage grouse habitat and allowed more waivers for drilling.

U.S. District Judge B. Lynn Winmill did not say in his order when he will make a final decision in the case.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 14 of 47

The Trump rule changes affect public land in Idaho, Wyoming, Colorado, Utah, Nevada, California and Oregon. Sage grouse territory in Montana, Washington and the Dakotas was not impacted.

U.S. Interior Department spokesman Nick Goodwin noted that the changes had followed coordination with officials in the affected states, including some with Democratic governors.

"The previous plans from 2015 ignored the individual needs of states," Goodwin said. "The common-sense amendments made by the department are legally sound and struck the appropriate balance in effectively managing these important public lands."

Goodwin declined to say if the administration plans to appeal the ruling Wednesday.

Michael Saul, an attorney for one of the environmental groups involved in the case, said the ruling blocked a "despicable and illegal plan" to open every acre of federally managed grouse habitat to drilling.

"This ruling gives the sage grouse a better shot at avoiding extinction," Saul said in a statement.

The case before Winmill dates to 2016, when environmental groups sued the Obama administration over rules that they described as insufficient to protect grouse from heading toward extinction.

The groups added to their original lawsuit when the rules were further weakened as part of the Trump administration's campaign to increase U.S. energy production.

Kathleen Sgamma with the Western Energy Alliance, an oil industry lobbying group, said Winmill's ruling was not a surprise because the judge is favored by environmental groups for his his pro-conservation rulings.

She predicted the effect on the ground would be limited because under a prior court order the Trump administration already was following Obama-era rules for the issuing of energy leases to companies.

Sgamma said the environmental groups involved in the case "will never be satisfied until all oil and natural gas leasing is stopped."

Follow Matthew Brown at <https://twitter.com/matthewbrownap>

## Longtime NCAI member, volunteer Juanita Daugomah Ahtone dies

WASHINGTON (AP) — Juanita Daugomah Ahtone, a longtime National Congress of American Indians member and volunteer, has died.

She was 91.

Indian Country Today reports that Ahtone, who was Kiowa, died at home Wednesday in Carnegie, Oklahoma.

Ahtone's father was a founding member of the National Congress of American Indians, the country's largest tribal advocacy organization. She was involved with the group for 46 years and held a range of positions, including chair of its elections and resolution committees.

Ahtone also worked for the Kiowa Tribe for many years and was a past secretary of its tribal council. The tribe said on Facebook that Ahtone was a "treasure" who was idealized for her support of students learning to speak the Kiowa language.

Ahtone was recognized for her service last year at the 23rd National Indian Women's Honoring Luncheon in Washington, D.C.

Information from: Indian Country Today, <https://newsmaven.io/indiancountrytoday/>

## Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

### Sioux Falls Argus Leader, Oct. 11

#### Get aggressive to solve substitute teacher shortage

The Sioux Falls School District isn't taking the challenge of its substitute teacher shortage lying down. That's good news, especially given recent taxpayer commitments to add and enhance district facilities. Administrators and education advocates worked hard last year to engage and inform the community about

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 15 of 47

the desperate need for a new high school, middle school and elementary school. Those efforts paid off when voters overwhelmingly approved a proposed \$190 million bond to ensure adequate brick-and-mortar resources for the education of Sioux Falls students.

So we know Sioux Falls is willing to invest in our children's future. The dearth of available substitute teachers presents a different kind of challenge, a chronic workforce infrastructure issue with complex causes. Remediating it will require more hard work, close analysis and creative solutions.

At the beginning of this school year, the district said it needed 250 substitutes. Recruitment strategies shifted to social media advertising and digital billboards in Sioux Falls. So far, those tactics have culminated in offers of employment to 267 applicants. Only 174 have taken the next step to attend orientation.

There's little room for lowering the base qualifications to be a substitute teacher in Sioux Falls. The district looks first for willing applicants with a four-year college degree, not necessarily one in education. It also considers candidates with a two-year associate degree, current post-secondary students who have two years of work experience, and even those whose formal education ended with a high school diploma or GED and who have five years of solid work experience. For all practical purposes, someone qualifies to be considered as a potential substitute teacher candidate if they can pass a criminal background check.

The problem isn't that our standards are too high, then, which is itself a concern. We should be able to expect that our students are receiving a top-notch education no matter who stands at the head of the classroom. South Dakota's miserly contribution to school funding does no favors on that account. It bears noting the struggle school districts statewide face in filling regular credentialed teaching positions before the start of each school year. About 30 of the new full-time teachers hired in the Sioux Falls School District were themselves former subs.

Put simply, there is no answer to filling the substitute teacher gap in Sioux Falls that won't involve increased financial outlay, or at the very least moving budget dollars from one bucket to another. Part of the return on that investment is the potential time and money saved in the scramble to fill the daily average need for between 130 and 300 fill-ins.

What additional or alternative tactics are available to the district, especially in the tight labor market?

Community outreach and recruitment can be more robust. Job fairs geared toward substitute teachers. Relationship-building and one-on-one overtures to individuals who already fit the job description, like retired educators and stay-at-home parents of school-aged children. Partnerships with local universities for college credit and tuition assistance for post-secondary students who sub for the district.

People who have never taught may hesitate to jump into the subbing game with only the minimum of training the district requires. Pairing new substitutes with experienced teachers and providing mentoring opportunities as well as more in-depth training on what to expect could help boost the confidence of potential applicants.

Converting at least a portion of the substitute pool to the status of full-time "utility" teachers — either working where needed day-to-day within specific schools or regular floaters among all district schools — is a concept gaining some traction across the country. Paying \$110 a day for 174 school days runs just under \$20k for the year. A full-time job with consistent work hours for 9 months out of the year at a guaranteed \$20,000 may appeal to a segment of potential applicants, especially those with school-aged children. It could be a cost-neutral (or nearly so) way for the district to maintain its budget while having greater assurance that daily classroom needs are being met.

Outsourcing all or part of the process of recruiting, screening, onboarding, training and scheduling substitute teachers is another way that administrators might streamline these operations.

The most important piece of the puzzle is a community that cares about the education of its children — and the scores of individuals who are willing to put in compensated effort to make that education the best it can be. We believe that the people of Sioux Falls, provided adequate awareness and support from the school district administration, can rise to this challenge.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 16 of 47

## Rapid City Journal, Oct. 6

### Noem corrects STAR Academy lease fiasco

State government last week compounded its sale error at the former STAR Academy near Custer with an unforgivable and probably unnecessary lack of empathy. On Thursday, Gov. Kristi Noem compassionately reversed course.

This was the path: Take an institution that has been an important part of the local community for more than a century. Legislate its latest purpose — the STAR Academy — out of existence in the name of juvenile justice reform. Close the institution and determine to sell the property over locals' objections.

In government, these things are sometimes unfortunate but necessary. You'd think everybody involved would understand the need for careful handling and diplomacy. That's where the state initially fell down.

It didn't bother to fully investigate the principal investors for the lone bidder who stepped forward during two auctions held months apart. That led the state to repossess the property when the buyer failed to make a required payment. Then the state moved to immediately evict everyone who leased property from the failed buyer.

Renters learned last week they must be out by the end of October. Aaron Brownson was one of 11 house renters — there were also several commercial tenants — who received the eviction letters last week from the state Department of Corrections. Brownson had lived on the former STAR Academy campus for 14 years — through the period of closure, through the sale by the state and through the brief period of new ownership. Now that the state owned the property again, he was told he had to go and right now.

The state blamed unnamed liability issues for forcing the evictions but offered little further explanation. "They just said, 'You're out.' It doesn't make sense to me," Brownson said.

It didn't to us, either.

A spokeswoman for Gov. Kristi Noem said earlier in the week that "the impact on tenants is real but each of them were in month-to-month leases and there are liability issues for the state and its taxpayers when the property reverted back to the state in early September."

Which was interesting. If they were in month-to-month leases, the state could use its own lease arrangements going forward. Why couldn't the state reinstate the lease agreement used with Brownson over the many years prior to the sale?

Last time, it took a while for the state to locate a buyer, and it wasn't because it was being picky. It certainly could take longer to find a qualified buyer this time. The state's decision smacked of blatant disregard for citizens caught up in a mess the state helped create.

On Thursday, Noem reversed course and extended the leases beyond Oct. 31 for families living on the grounds.

"After hearing from impacted families, Noem yesterday (Thursday) agreed to extend the residential leases for families at STAR Academy until March 1, 2020. She understands it can be difficult to find housing in the Custer area on short notice and is willing to take on some of the liability risks in order to help those families," said Noem's press secretary, Kristin Wileman.

It was the correct and compassionate decision to make.

---

## Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Oct. 15

### South Dakota and Columbus Day

Many of us have long chided South Dakota for what we perceive as its more perplexing deficiencies. For instance, we criticized the state for being ranked last in the country in terms of teachers' pay — a title we held for decades. More recently, many people are grumbling about the state's foot-dragging on the issue of industrial hemp, believing that our slowness to accept this new crop will put us behind much of the rest of the country in its production ...

You get the idea.

But, with turnabout being fair play, it's a time of the year to give South Dakota its due as being on the cutting edge of a change that is gradually taking root across the country.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 17 of 47

Back in 1990, South Dakota became the first state in the country to change Columbus Day to Native American Day. The state took the holiday (which used to be observed on Oct. 12 but became a Monday holiday in 1971) honoring the Italian explorer and re-envisioned it as a day celebrating the indigenous culture that was here and thriving long before Columbus "sailed the ocean blue in Fourteen Hundred and Ninety-Two." South Dakota embraced this change as part of Gov. George Mickelson's "Year of Reconciliation" between the Native American and white cultures. (By the way, Nebraska and Iowa never officially observed Columbus Day at all after it was made a national holiday in 1934.)

Now, 29 years later, at least 10 states have changed the Columbus Day observance into a celebration of indigenous heritage, usually called Indigenous Peoples' Day or, in Hawaii, Discoverers' Day. Many cities and college campuses have also adopted a form of this change. Several such entities adopted similar changes this year. It was even adopted this week on a temporary basis by the council of the District of Columbia, an area that was literally named after Columbus. (Unfortunately, a few people have carried the sentiment to extremes. On Monday, statues of Columbus in San Francisco and Providence, Rhode Island, were vandalized, according to news reports.)

Many Native Americans and non-Native Americans have long seen Columbus not as the "discoverer" of a New World but as the vanguard of a European invasion that brought death, disease and cultural destruction to this continent.

"The Europeans essentially tried to eradicate us," New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland, who is Native American, told Voice of America. "They brought disease. They banished us to reservations later on when the U.S. government became an active force."

History generally remembers Columbus as an explorer who was trying to find a route to China, but wound up on a small island (not what is now the United States) instead. While he wasn't the first European to explore the New World — for instance, the Vikings (of the non-NFL variety) were here centuries before him — Columbus became the enduring symbol for the tide of European explorers, adventurers and/or plunderers to follow.

Still, not everyone is ready to jump off the Columbus Day ship. Many Italian Americans see the holiday as a celebration of their heritage, and some say they're offended by suggestions that the day should be changed. In Maine, which adopted Indigenous Peoples' Day just this year, the University of Maine College Republicans derided the state's switch as part of a "radical left-wing agenda."

That might be news to the people of South Dakota, who, years before those college kids were born, decided to celebrate a heritage that is right here among us and of this land. And it is still part of us today.

Columbus Day will likely never completely disappear— Columbus Day sales are still quite popular with retailers and shoppers, for instance — but a day celebrating America's indigenous roots continues to gather momentum and may well dwarf the Columbus observance in the not-too-distant future.

But South Dakota's been there for a long while. And the state should be proud of being a leader in that change.

## Parents sue daycare provider over infant death

PARKSTON, S.D. (AP) — Two parents in southeastern South Dakota are suing the woman who was caring for their baby when he died.

The wrongful death lawsuit filed by Eric and Ashley Milbrandt in Hutchinson County accuses Carroline Kniffen of negligence in caring for their infant son, Elliot, who died in July 2018. The lawsuit says Kniffen failed to properly supervise her daycare, resulting in head trauma to their son. Kniffen was not criminally charged. She has not filed a response.

The Argus Leader says the Milbrandts are requesting damages for injuries, suffering, medical and funeral expenses.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 18 of 47

## World's 1st female spacewalking team makes history

By **MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — The world's first female spacewalking team is making history high above Earth.

NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir exited the International Space Station on Friday, the first time in a half-century of spacewalking that a woman floated out without a male crewmate. Their job is to fix a broken part of the station's solar power network.

America's first female spacewalker from 35 years ago, Kathy Sullivan, is delighted. She says it's good to finally have enough women in the astronaut corps and trained for spacewalking for this to happen.

NASA originally wanted to conduct an all-female spacewalk last spring, but did not have enough medium-size suits ready to go.

## New Orleans to explode huge unstable cranes ahead of storm

By **REBECCA SANTANA and KEVIN MCGILL Associated Press**

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — The city of New Orleans is preparing to explode two giant, badly damaged construction cranes that are towering over a partially collapsed hotel project at the edge of the French Quarter, bringing them down Friday just ahead of tropical weather that could possibly cause them to tumble out of control.

They hope to demolish the cranes with a series of controlled explosions that would drop them straight down without damaging gas and electricity lines and historic buildings.

Fire Chief Tim McConnell said they're working quickly to collapse the multi-ton structures as authorities keep watch on the outer bands of what the National Hurricane Center expects to become Tropical Storm Nestor. Forecasters said the storm could kick up stiff winds and rain by Friday night.

Mayor LaToya Cantrell cited the collapsed Hard Rock Hotel and the coming storm in declaring a state of emergency that empowers police to "commandeer or utilize any private property," force people out of dangerous areas and suspend the sale or transport of alcohol and firearms, among other measures.

"There is still a possibility of tropical storm force winds here in New Orleans," Gov. John Bel Edwards said, flanking the mayor at a Thursday evening news conference. "That is not the probability. But there is a probability that we're going to have elevated winds regardless."

The fire chief described a plan involving workers suspended from another crane, moved in Thursday, to weaken the damaged construction towers with blow torches and attach explosives at key points. One of the crane towers is about 270 feet (82 meters) high, the other about 300 feet (91 meters). Both have massive cross arms adding more tonnage. Neither is stable.

"The rear tower moved four inches overnight, the one in the front moved two inches," McConnell said. "They're not designed to do that."

McConnell said an already wide evacuation area around the site would be expanded ahead of the explosion. Gas to a major utility line was being shut down and steps were being taken to protect that line and underground electrical lines that could be affected by falling debris. McConnell said the line would be severely damaged were a crane to land on it.

If the operation is successful, McConnell said, the towers will drop vertically and simultaneously. "Think of it like it's melting," he told reporters.

Experts, including some who brought down damaged buildings at Ground Zero after the 9/11 terrorist attacks, have worked around the clock since Saturday to devise a means of safely bringing down the cranes.

The construction project collapsed Saturday in blinding clouds of dust, killing three workers and injuring more than 20 people. Only one of three bodies has been recovered from the wreckage.

The cause of the collapse remains unknown. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration will investigate. Lawsuits are already being filed on behalf of the injured.

## White House: Ukraine aid held up partly over election probe

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House acknowledged that President Donald Trump's decision to hold up military aid to Ukraine was linked to his demand that Kyiv investigate the Democratic National Committee and the 2016 U.S. presidential campaign, a shifting new explanation about events at the heart of the impeachment inquiry.

The Thursday admission from acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney undercut the president's position that there was no quid pro quo during Trump's phone call with the Ukraine president that sparked the House investigation.

The sudden turn of events had immediate fallout. Trump's lawyer distanced the Republican president from Mulvaney's account. The Justice Department said the explanation was news to them. And Democrats cast Mulvaney's remarks as further evidence of wrongdoing as Trump sought a "favor" from Ukraine.

Trump, traveling in Texas, appeared to stand by his top aide, calling Mulvaney a "good man."

"I have a lot of confidence" in him, Trump said.

But Mulvaney's initial remarks, made during a rare appearance by an administration official in the White House briefing room, spun open a new phase of the impeachment inquiry.

He indicated that a quid pro quo was at play for the military aid — but a different one than Democrats initially highlighted as they probed Trump's efforts to have Ukraine investigate a company linked to the son of his Democratic rival Joe Biden.

Trump, as shown in a rough transcript of the July call with Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskiy, sought help in investigating not only the firm tied to Biden but also a security company hired by the DNC that discovered that Russian agents had broken into the committee's network. The stolen emails were subsequently published by WikiLeaks ahead of the 2016 election.

"The look back to what happened in 2016 certainly was part of the thing that he was worried about in corruption with that nation," Mulvaney told reporters, delivering the White House's most granular explanation yet of the decision to withhold military assistance.

"Did he also mention to me in the past the corruption that related to the DNC server? Absolutely, no question about that," Mulvaney continued. "That's why we held up the money."

Trump's personal lawyer Jay Sekulow issued a pointed statement distancing the president's legal team from Mulvaney's comments.

"The President's legal counsel was not involved in acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney's press briefing," it said.

Within hours, Mulvaney issued a separate statement claiming his remarks were misconstrued.

"Let me be clear, there was absolutely no quid pro quo between Ukrainian military aid and any investigation into the 2016 election," he said. "The president never told me to withhold any money until the Ukrainians did anything related to the server."

But it may be difficult to erase what Mulvaney said as House Democrats dig into their investigation.

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., the chairman of the Intelligence Committee leading the impeachment probe, said, "I think Mr. Mulvaney's acknowledgment means that things have gone from very, very bad to much, much worse."

Mulvaney, who has already received a subpoena for documents in the impeachment probe, will now likely be asked by investigators to appear for a deposition.

"I believe that they're getting closer to basically admitting a crime," said Rep. Joaquin Castro, D-Texas, who said Mulvaney should testify. "Where he talks about politics being attached to foreign policy. I mean, you're going up to the water's edge there."

Mulvaney during the press briefing defended Trump's request to Ukraine by casting it as part of an ongoing Justice Department investigation looking into the origins of the investigation into Russia's interference in the 2016 election.

He said the investigation was one of several reasons Trump held up nearly \$400 million in military aid

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 20 of 47

to Ukraine, including a desire for European nations to increase their own assistance to Kyiv. Funding was eventually released.

A senior official at the Justice Department said if the White House was withholding aid in regard to cooperation with any investigation at the department, it was news to them. The official was not unauthorized to discuss the situation and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Trump's request to Ukraine for an investigation into the 2016 election appears linked to unfounded conspiracy theories about a Ukraine link to the DNC hack that began circulating almost immediately after the breach was discovered. Some were propagated in stories online and by Russian media and included mention of a supposed "hidden DNC server," which acolytes of the Republican political operative Roger Stone picked up and circulated.

The sudden development punctuated another fast-moving day in the impeachment inquiry.

Lawmakers met for hours behind closed doors with the U.S. ambassador to the European Union, Gordon Sondland, who testified that he disagreed with Trump's decision to have envoys work with the president's personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani on Ukraine policy, rather than through traditional government channels.

The ambassador was the latest in a series of witnesses, many of them career State Department and foreign policy officials, providing new and detailed concerns about Trump and Giuliani and their attempts to influence Ukraine.

Sondland's attempt to stand apart from Trump is remarkable since, unlike other career civil servants, he is a hand-picked political appointee of the president who contributed \$1 million to Trump's inaugural committee.

Mulvaney defended Trump's decision to tap Giuliani to help lead Ukraine policy, saying it was the president's prerogative.

"You may not like the fact that Giuliani was involved," he told reporters. "It's not illegal, it's not impeachable."

"The president gets to set foreign policy, and he gets to choose who to do so, as long as it doesn't violate any law," Mulvaney added.

As for complaints about mixing politics with foreign policy, Mulvaney had a blunt rejoinder: "I have news for everybody: Get over it. There is going to be political influence in foreign policy."

Democrats plodding their way through hours of witness testimony during a week of closed-door hearings said Mulvaney's admissions were game-changing in the impeachment inquiry.

Rep. Eric Swalwell, D-Calif., a member of the House Intelligence Committee, said Mulvaney "co-signed the president's confession."

---

Associated Press writers Mike Balsamo, Eric Tucker and Darlene Superville in Washington contributed to this report.

## Trump hails Syria cease-fire after he played role in crisis

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — President Donald Trump framed the U.S.-brokered cease-fire deal with Turkey as "a great day for civilization," but its effect was largely to mitigate a foreign policy crisis widely seen to be of his own making.

After hours of negotiation in Ankara, the two nations on Thursday agreed to a five-day cease-fire in the Turks' deadly attacks on Kurdish fighters in northern Syria, but some fighting continued early Friday in a northeast Syrian border town. The Kurds were U.S. allies in the fight against the Islamic State group but came under assault after Trump ordered U.S. troops to leave the area earlier this month.

The agreement requires the Kurds to vacate a swath of territory in Syria along the Turkish border in an arrangement that largely solidifies Turkey's position and aims in the weeklong conflict.

Vice President Mike Pence, who reached the deal with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, hailed the agreement as the way to end the bloodshed caused by Turkey's invasion.



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 21 of 47

But he remained silent on whether it amounted to a second abandonment of America's former Kurdish allies, many of whom are branded as terrorists by Ankara. The deal includes a conditional halt to American economic sanctions and no apparent long-term consequences for Turkey for its actions.

Turkish troops and Turkish-backed Syrian fighters launched their offensive against Kurdish forces in northern Syria a week ago, two days after Trump suddenly announced he was withdrawing the U.S. military from the area.

Trump was widely criticized for turning on the Kurds, who had taken heavy casualties as partners with the U.S. in fighting IS extremists since 2016.

While U.S. officials have insisted that Trump did not authorize Turkey's invasion and only that he was not persuasive enough in making the case against it to Erdogan, the cease-fire codifies nearly all of Turkey's stated goals in the conflict.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said the United States had accepted the idea of a "safe zone" long pushed by Turkey, and he insisted Turkish armed forces will control the zone. He also made clear that Turkey will not stop at a previously limited zone; he said Turkish control of the Syrian side of the border must extend all the way to the Iraqi border.

Caught in the middle, the commander of Kurdish-led forces in Syria, Mazloun Abdi, told Kurdish TV, "We will do whatever we can for the success of the cease-fire agreement." But one Kurdish official, Razan Hiddo, declared that Kurdish people would refuse to live under Turkish occupation.

Trump seemed to endorse the Turkish aim of ridding the Syrian side of the border of the Kurdish fighters. "They had to have it cleaned out," he said.

During a campaign rally in Texas on Thursday night, Trump said, "Sometimes you have to let them fight, like two kids in a lot, you got to let them fight and then you pull them apart."

In the negotiations, a senior U.S. official said, Pence and national security adviser Robert O'Brien expressed condolences to Erdogan and his military commanders over their dead and injured in the week-long campaign.

Leading U.S. lawmakers were less than pleased than Trump.

Sen. Mitt Romney, the Republicans' presidential nominee in 2012, said he welcomed the cease-fire but wanted to know what America's role in the region would be and why Turkey was facing no consequences for its invasion.

"Further, the cease-fire does not change the fact that America has abandoned an ally," he said on the Senate floor.

A senior U.S. official insisted that the agreement was negotiated in consultation with Kurdish forces, and Pence said the U.S. would "facilitate" the Kurds' pullout, but he did not say if that would include the use of American troops.

The Pentagon had no immediate comment.

As Pence was speaking in Ankara, U.S. troops were continuing to board aircraft leaving northern Syria. Officials said a couple of hundred had already departed, with hundreds more consolidated at a few bases waiting to move out.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Trump confidant who has criticized the Republican president's pullout, said he thinks U.S. troops will be needed as part of an effort to implement and enforce a halt to the fighting.

"There's just no way around it," he said. "We need to maintain control of the skies" and work with the Kurds.

While the cease-fire seemed likely to temporarily slow legislation in Congress aimed at punishing Turkey and condemning Trump's U.S. troop withdrawal, lawmakers gave no sign of completely dropping the measures.

Shortly before the announcement of the pause in hostilities, Graham and Sen. Chris Van Hollen, D-Md., introduced legislation that would bar U.S. military aid to Turkey, seek to curb foreign arms sales to Ankara and impose sanctions on top Turkish officials unless Turkey withdraws its forces. Those sanctions would include a report on Erdogan's family assets.

In contrast with Pence's description of a limited safe zone, the agreement would effectively create a zone of control patrolled by the Turkish military that Ankara wants to stretch for the entire border from the Euphrates River to the Iraqi border, though the agreement did not define the extent of the zone. Turkish forces currently control about a quarter of that length, captured in the past nine days.

The rest is held by the Kurdish-led forces or by the Syrian government military, backed by Russia, which the Kurds invited to move in to shield them from the Turks. None of those parties has much reason to let Turkish forces into the areas.

But the agreement essentially gives the Turks what they had sought to achieve with their military operation in the first place.

After the Kurdish forces are cleared from the safe zone, Turkey has committed to a permanent cease-fire but is under no obligation to withdraw its troops. In addition, the deal gives Turkey relief from sanctions the administration had imposed and threatened to increase, meaning there will be no penalty for the operation.

Brett McGurk, the former civilian head of the administration's U.S.-led counter-IS campaign, wrote on Twitter that the deal was a gift to the Turks.

"The US just ratified Turkey's plan to effectively extend its border 30km into Syria with no ability to meaningfully influence facts on the ground," he wrote.

Danielle Pletka, vice president for foreign and defense policy studies at the American Enterprise Institute, tweeted, "This is a respite while we surrender to Turkish domination of Northeast Syria."

Erdogan had stated on Wednesday that he would be undeterred by U.S. sanctions. He said the fighting would end only if Kurdish fighters abandoned their weapons and retreated from positions near the Turkish border.

Before the talks, the Kurds indicated they would object to any agreement along the lines of what was announced by Pence. But Pence maintained that the U.S. had obtained "repeated assurances from them that they'll be moving out."

Trump's withdrawal of U.S. troops has been widely condemned, including by Republican officials not directly associated with his administration. Republicans and Democrats in the House, bitterly divided over the Trump impeachment inquiry, banded together Wednesday for an overwhelming 354-60 denunciation of the U.S. troop withdrawal.

---

AP writers Robert Burns, Deb Riechmann, Alan Fram, Darlene Superville, Lolita C. Baldor, Jill Colvin, Kevin Freking and Ellen Knickmeyer contributed from Washington.

## Deal between US, Turkey spawns more questions than answers

By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump hailed it as a great day for civilization, but the agreement hammered out in Ankara, Turkey, between U.S. and Turkish leaders spawned more questions than answers.

Thursday's deal called for a five-day pause in fighting between Turkish and Kurdish fighters and put a temporary halt to the battle along the Syrian border. It also gave the Turks the 20-mile-deep (32-kilometer-deep) safe zone in Syria that leaders in Ankara had sought for months. But what it meant for U.S. forces withdrawing from Syria remained unclear, and some fighting continued Friday morning in a northeast Syrian border town.

A look at the key provisions of the deal and remaining uncertainties:

### THE AGREEMENT

A U.S. delegation led by Vice President Mike Pence met with Turkish leaders, including President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, for more than four hours Thursday and agreed to the five-day cease-fire in the Turkish assault on Kurdish fighters in northern Syria. The arrangement said the Syrian Kurdish fighters would withdraw from what has been called a safe zone that is about 20-miles deep into Syria and stretches across about 78 miles (125 kilometers) of the central portion of the border between the two countries.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 23 of 47

But almost immediately there were disagreements over what to call the deal and what it meant. Pence and Trump routinely referred to it as a cease-fire. Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu rejected that term and called it a "pause" in fighting, because, he said, cease-fires are only possible between "two legitimate sides." Cavusoglu also said that the Turks would halt their operation only "after the terrorist elements depart" from northeast Syria.

What also remained unclear is what the Turkish-backed militias of Syrian fighters will do and how much control the Turkish military will have or try to exert over them.

## WHAT THE TURKS GET

In return for the cease-fire, the Turks will get what they have wanted all along: control of the safe zone in Syria and, if the cease-fire holds, a halt to the economic sanctions that Trump announced Monday when he warned that he could obliterate Turkey's economy.

## THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL

There were mixed signals Thursday over what the agreement means for U.S. forces that began a withdrawal from Syria earlier this week as fighting between the Turkish and Kurdish forces escalated and began to threaten the safety of American troops. U.S. officials said the ongoing withdrawal was continuing and would probably take a couple of weeks.

Pence reiterated that, as Trump has said, the U.S. will not have "military personnel on the ground" but other diplomatic and humanitarian aid would go on. He also said that the U.S. will "facilitate" the orderly withdrawal of the Kurdish forces from the safe zone that is already beginning. And Trump said that the U.S. will continue to watch the Islamic State and that the Kurdish fighters will control that monitoring with U.S. supervision. Pentagon officials did not provide an explanation of how that would work.

## ISLAMIC STATE GROUP

As the U.S. withdraws, a fundamental question is what the battle to prevent a reemergence of the Islamic State will look like. U.S. officials have provided little guidance, but they note that the U.S. can, if needed, launch strikes from bases in Iraq near the Syria border. In addition, the U.S. is leaving, at least for now, 200 to 300 troops at the Al Tanf base in southern Syria.

## ISLAMIC STATE PRISONERS

One of the biggest threats in the conflict has been the potential that thousands of imprisoned Islamic State group fighters could escape. Kurdish forces have been guarding the prisons, but some fighters have left to join the battle along the border. And shelling in some areas may have led to the escape of fewer than 100 detainees.

Trump said that the detained will be controlled by "different groups." But he added that the U.S. "will be watching. We will be in charge. And they will be under very, very powerful and strict control." That may be difficult to do if U.S. troops are not in Syria.

## Fighting in Kurdish-held Syrian town despite cease-fire

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

CEYLANPINAR, Turkey (AP) — Fighting continued Friday morning in a northeast Syrian border town at the center of the fight between Turkey and Kurdish forces, despite a U.S.-brokered cease-fire that went into effect overnight.

Shelling and gunfire could be heard in and around Ras al-Ayn as smoke billowed from locations near the border with Turkey and the Turkish town of Ceylanpinar. The fighting died down by mid-morning while smoke continued to rise.

Elsewhere along the border calm seemed to prevail, with no fighting heard along the border from Ras al-Ayn to Tal Abyad, a Syrian border town about 100 kilometers to the west.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 24 of 47

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a war monitor, reported intermittent clashes in Ras al-Ayn but relative calm elsewhere since Thursday night, when Turkey and the U.S. agreed to a five-day cease-fire to halt the Turkish offensive against Kurdish-led forces in the region.

The agreement — reached after hours of negotiations in Turkey's capital of Ankara between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and U.S. Vice President Mike Pence — requires the Kurdish fighters to vacate a swath of territory in Syria along the Turkish border. That arrangement would largely solidify the position Turkey has gained after days of fighting.

The shelling Friday came even after the commander of Kurdish-led forces in Syria, Mazloun Abdi, told Kurdish TV late on Thursday: "We will do whatever we can for the success of the cease-fire agreement." But one Kurdish official, Razan Hiddo, declared that the Kurdish people would refuse to live under Turkish occupation.

Kurdish fighters have already been driven out of much, but not all, of a swath of territory that stretches about 100 kilometers (60 miles) along the middle of the Syrian-Turkish border, between Ras al-Ayn and Tal Abyad.

But Kurdish forces are still entrenched in Ras al-Ayn, where on Thursday they had been fiercely battling Turkish-backed Syrian fighters trying to take the town. Whether the Kurdish fighters pull out of Ras al-Ayn will likely be an early test of the accord.

Turkish troops and their allied Syrian fighters launched the offensive two days after U.S. President Donald Trump suddenly announced he was withdrawing American troops from the border area.

The Kurds were U.S. allies in the fight against the Islamic State but came under assault after Trump ordered U.S. troops to pull out. The Kurdish-led forces have since invited the Syrian government's military, backed by Russia, to deploy there to protect them from Turkey. Syrian troops have already rolled into several key points along the border.

Trump framed the U.S.-brokered cease-fire deal with Turkey as "a great day for civilization" but its effect was largely to mitigate a foreign policy crisis widely seen to be of his own making.

Turkey considers the Kurdish fighters terrorists because of their links to outlawed Kurdish rebels fighting inside Turkey since the 1980s.

Turkey's pro-government dominated media hailed the cease-fire agreement as a clear win for Erdogan. "Great Victory" read Yeni Safak's banner headline. "Turkey got everything it wanted." Sabah newspaper headlined: "We won both on the field and on the (negotiating) table."

---

Suzan Fraser in Ankara and Mehmet Guzel in Ceylanpinar contributed.

## Police get cooling off period before questioned in shootings

By LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

After a police officer fatally shoots someone, it can take days or even weeks before the public or his supervisors hear the officer's version of what happened.

In many states, that so-called cooling off period is carved out in state law or in a police department's contract. That opportunity to take some time before undergoing questioning by investigators angers community activists and others seeking reforms of police departments around the country who believe it gives officers time to reshape their story to justify a shooting and avoid getting fired or charged. Law enforcement officials and experts say officers need to be able to collect their thoughts, so they don't provide details that are tainted by the trauma of the shooting.

Just the latest example arose in Fort Worth, Texas, where a police officer fatally shot a woman inside her home; before he could be compelled to undergo questioning, he resigned, making it even more difficult to find out what he was thinking, why he fired his gun — and some believe, to get justice.

"We laud police in this society as our protectors and purveyors of justice, and we hold them with such high regard, but when it comes to getting a statement when they have killed one of us, they are held to a lower standard than if we killed one of them," said Pamela Young, lead organizer for the Tarrant County



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 25 of 47

Coalition for Community Oversight in Michigan. "It's nonsensical."

More than a dozen states have what are called Law Enforcement Officers' Bill of Rights carved into law. Other states, especially those with unions, have similar protections as part of negotiated contracts. The amount of time afforded officers before they are questioned varies — as short as 24 hours to up to two weeks.

The grace period dates back in most places to the 1970s and has periodically been questioned in police-use-of-force cases, with watchdogs and community activists considering it another example of the thin blue line rallying around one of its own. It's difficult to say if the lag time has allowed officers to avoid arrest or conviction, especially because the courts grant police more leeway in using deadly force than the general public.

In Maryland, the first state to enact an Officers' Bill of Rights, lawmakers in 2016 reduced the time from 10 days to five, and extended the period in which residents can file a complaint against police from 90 days to a year-plus-a-day. The changes came as part of a bill after the death of Freddie Gray, who was injured in a Baltimore Police Department van and later died, sparking riots.

The issue of when officers involved in shootings must be questioned has arisen periodically. But amid all the reforms sought of police departments in recent years, it hasn't been one that has garnered as much attention, until recently. It follows several high-profile police shootings, including one in Dallas, 30 miles (48 kilometers) from Fort Worth. That's where a white police officer was recently convicted for fatally shooting an unarmed black neighbor after she said she mistook his apartment for hers; the department there gives officers 72 hours before they are questioned.

It's unclear when Amber Guyger first talked to investigators about the September 2018 shooting, but she was eventually charged and is serving 10 years in prison after being convicted of murder this month.

In Minnesota, where an officer in July 2017 fatally shot an unarmed woman who had called 911 about a possible assault, the officer refused to talk to investigators and did not publicly discuss what happened until his trial. Mohamed Noor was convicted of third-degree murder and manslaughter and was sentenced to more than 12 years in prison.

Aaron Dean, the Fort Worth officer who shot 28-year-old Atatiana Jefferson inside her home last Saturday, did not talk to investigators before he resigned two days later and was charged with murder. His attorney, Jim Lane, declined to comment on Dean's state of mind or his response to the allegations against him.

Bob Bennett, an attorney in Minnesota who represented the family of Justine Ruszczyk Damond, who was fatally shot by Noor, decried what he called special treatment being given officers. Not only are they given extra time before undergoing questioning, but often they are allowed to consult with a union representative or an attorney beforehand.

"A lot can be learned in five or six days and a lot can be polished and sanded," Bennett said.

Law enforcement officials contend the grace period is critical after such traumatic events — and that officers are being given the same rights as any citizen to refuse to talk with investigators. Many point to research detailing the physiological and psychological toll that traumatic events have on the human body, and suggest the gap is important to ensure the officers are clear-headed and able to process what happened so they can more accurately describe what occurred.

"Of course the critics and the people who don't trust the police say, 'Yeah, they need time to get their story together,'" said Tom Manger, a retired police chief in Virginia and Maryland. "Having some time to calm down and get your thoughts together ... oftentimes, you get clearer answers and better information."

Bennett doesn't buy it, saying if it's good enough for an officer, it should be fair to treat civilians the same way.

"Why are police, who are professionally trained to observe, to record material, to accurately and completely record all the material and facts of an incident, why are they excused from rendering their report and statement in the same timeframe as untrained, unprofessional witnesses are?"

Jim Pasco, executive director of the Fraternal Order of Police, which represents about 330,000 officers nationally, called the gap in time something available to the general public as well as officers.

"There are an awful lot of misconceptions. First of all, anyone who's being interviewed by the police with

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 26 of 47

the potential for being charged has a right to decline to say anything. The difference is that police officers at every level decline to testify at the peril of losing their jobs whether they're guilty or innocent," he said. "Police officers don't give up their civil and constitutional rights at the police station door. ...

"It isn't like 'Law & Order' where they get into a shootout and then go out for a beer. It isn't like that at all. These officers suffer sometimes for the rest of their lives just by virtue of being involved."

Associated Press writer Corey Williams contributed from Detroit.

## Cummings, Trump relations appeared to sour due to oversight

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Rep. Elijah Cummings said somebody once told him he would see one guy when he sat down with President Donald Trump "and then you might see another guy" the next day.

Cummings eventually saw that other side of Trump — the one who called the longtime Baltimore-area congressman a "brutal bully" and his district a "disgusting, rat and rodent infested mess." That was after the burly Cummings, as chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, angrily berated a Homeland Security official at a congressional hearing on the administration's policy of separating migrant families at the southern border.

Cummings, who died Thursday at age 68 of complications from chronic health issues, refused to respond in kind. Instead, he invited Trump to come see the district for himself.

Trump on Thursday had nothing but praise for Cummings, tweeting that he was a "highly respected" leader whose voice "will be very hard, if not impossible, to replace." He ordered that U.S. flags fly at half-staff through Friday out of respect for the congressman.

Relations between the veteran Democratic lawmaker and the Republican political newcomer seemed to get off to a positive start just a few weeks after Trump took office.

The two met in the Oval Office in March 2017 to discuss legislation Cummings and other lawmakers planned to offer to help lower prescription drug prices, an interest the two men shared. Cummings told reporters afterward that the issue had come up when he ran into Trump at the president's inaugural lunch in January and they agreed to talk more.

Trump was "enthusiastic" about the proposal, Cummings said, and Trump tweeted about the "Great discussion!" they'd had. A White House statement said Trump had expressed to Cummings his interest in working in a "bipartisan fashion" to help make prescription drugs more affordable.

But the relationship collapsed after the drug proposal stalled, voters put Democrats in control of the House in the 2018 elections and Cummings, in his new role as chairman, ramped up oversight of a White House that had faced scant scrutiny when Republicans ran the chamber.

At the time of his death, Cummings was among the House committee chairmen leading an impeachment inquiry Trump has denounced as "witch hunt."

On its own, Cummings' committee was examining conflict-of-interest issues involving Trump's hotel in Washington and family members serving in the White House. It also was looking into how the White House, and Trump, approved security clearances, including for Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner.

The committee also heard testimony from Michael Cohen, Trump's former personal attorney, a key figure in federal law enforcement probes of potential coordination between Russia and Trump's campaign, and campaign finance violations involving hush money paid to women who said they had had intimate relationships with Trump. Trump has denied those relationships.

Cummings had also reviewed the administration's treatment of migrant children after they were separated from adults who brought them to the border.

Rep. Brenda Lawrence, D-Mich., who served on Cummings' committee, said the chairman believed in his constitutional responsibility to keep watch over the executive branch.

"He was so committed to protecting our democracy," Lawrence told The Associated Press in a telephone interview Thursday. "He did not take his role lightly."

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 27 of 47

In response to the series of July attacks by Trump, Cummings invited the president to tour his district, from the poorest parts of the majority-black city of Baltimore to the more well-off areas in suburban Baltimore and Howard counties.

"Come to Baltimore. Do not just criticize us, but come to Baltimore and I promise you, you will be welcomed," the lawmaker said in August in his first public comments about the president's criticism. Trump had also complained about other cities run by Democrats he did not name. The comments were widely seen as a race-centered attack on big cities with minority populations.

Trump defended his comments, which were widely condemned, before moving on from Cummings. He also said he would visit Baltimore "at the right time."

That turned out to be in September, when he addressed House Republicans holding their annual retreat in the city. But Trump did not meet with any city officials or otherwise tour the city while there.

In a subsequent August appearance at the National Press Club, Cummings recalled being interviewed by a newspaper reporter who said he was Trump's "worst nightmare." Cummings, the son of sharecroppers who rose to become a civil rights champion and leading member of Congress, said he explained that that was not his intention.

"I said, 'You know, I'm doing my job,'" Cummings said. "I said the president is probably a nice guy but I love my democracy. I love my country and I love my countrymen more."

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

## Astros power past Yanks for 3-1 ALCS lead, Verlander up next

By JAKE SEINER AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — They have the pitching, and they don't need the pitches. Certainly, the Houston Astros have confidence for good reason on the brink of another World Series.

"It's Justin Verlander," reliever Ryan Pressly said.

George Springer and Carlos Correa each hit three-run homers and the Astros got another wild ace off the hook to beat the disheveled New York Yankees 8-3 Thursday night and reach the cusp of a second World Series visit in three years.

The Astros lead the AL Championship Series 3-1, putting the 2017 World Series winners a step away from a showdown with the NL champion Washington Nationals.

Houston still has Verlander and Gerrit Cole queued up for this series, and the Yankees will have to beat both to survive. Verlander will start Game 5 on Friday night against James Paxton.

Springer lined an errant splitter from playoff star Masahiro Tanaka in the third inning for his homer, and Correa battered Chad Green's fastball when New York turned to its vaunted bullpen. Those All-Star sluggers have combined for just five hits in the series, but four have been homers.

Earlier in the day, Astros manager AJ Hinch ardently denied that his team has skirted rules to steal signs after an allegation by the Yankees, which was investigated and cleared by Major League Baseball. He also made it clear: If a pitcher is tipping what's coming, Houston will take advantage.

The Astros are tired of that talk detracting from their sluggers.

"I think it's disrespectful that every time we score a lot of runs, people talk about tipping," Correa said. "Nobody was tipping today and we scored, what, eight runs? We're great hitters. We've been doing it for a whole season."

New York worked starter Zack Greinke hard during a 28-pitch first inning, but just like against Cole in Game 3, the clutch hit never came. Pressly dodged a bases-loaded jam in the fifth, and many fans had left Yankee Stadium by the time it ended shortly before 12:30 a.m.

The Yankees are at risk of failing to make the World Series for an entire decade for the first time since the 1910s. They are 0 for 13 with runners in scoring position the past two games. Didn't help when they committed four errors in Game 4, most ever for the club in a home postseason game.

"We played poorly tonight, there's no other way to explain it," manager Aaron Boone said. "And we need

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 28 of 47

to flush this immediately.”

Tanaka allowed four runs — three earned — for New York, his most in eight postseason starts.

CC Sabathia pitched in relief for New York but was pulled with a left shoulder injury during the eighth inning. Planning to retire after the season, an emotional Sabathia covered his face with his glove as he left the field for likely the final time. Fans shouted his name as he walked off, and Cole and Springer were among the Houston players who stood and clapped for the 39-year-old.

“I hate to see that for him,” said Hinch, who played with and against Sabathia. “I hate to see that for the sport.”

Gary Sánchez ended a lengthy postseason slide with a two-run homer, but a reshuffled Yankees lineup — still without injured Giancarlo Stanton — again couldn’t string together its damage.

During warmups, a buzzing Bronx crowd jeered Greinke with chants of “Donald! Donald!” — his given first name — and the veteran right-hander wobbled early. He walked three in the first inning for the first time since April 2007, including a four-pitch, bases-loaded free pass to Brett Gardner, and fell into a quick 1-0 hole.

Greinke struggled especially to locate his fastball before blowing one past Sánchez during a three-pitch K to end the inning. He sharpened up and retired nine straight before the Yankees pushed him out of the game while loading the bases in the fifth.

Pressly struck out Gleyber Torres — on a tight check swing — and Edwin Encarnación to escape.

“So far this series our bullpen has been huge to complement a really good starting rotation,” Hinch said.

Greinke was charged with just one run, working around four walks against the patient-but-punchless Yankees.

“Just missing by a little bit early,” Greinke said.

Springer is batting .132 in these playoffs, slumping just like he did in 2017 before breaking out to win World Series MVP. This homer was his 13th in the postseason, snapping a tie with teammate Jose Altuve for the club record.

Correa made it 6-1 in the sixth. At 25 years, 25 days, he is the youngest player with 10 postseason home runs, surpassing Albert Pujols.

“I grew up a huge fan of Albert Pujols,” Correa said. “I even wear No. 5 all the way growing up.”

Correa ended Game 2 with a home run in the 11th inning and connected again in October after missing a lot of time this year with injuries.

Sánchez snapped a 2-for-23 skid to start this postseason with his two-run homer in the sixth.

Otherwise, the AL East champion Yankees looked like they belonged in a lesser league. Sure-handed first baseman DJ LeMahieu booted two groundballs, Torres also made two errors at second, and reliever Adam Ottavino was pulled before getting an out for the fourth time in seven appearances this postseason.

“Our guys are studs and I think they embrace the challenge,” Boone said. “Obviously we’ve got our backs against the wall now.”

TRAINER’S ROOM

Yankees: Stanton has missed the past three games after straining his right quad in Game 1. Boone said Stanton was available to pinch hit and could be New York’s designated hitter Friday.

UP NEXT

Paxton said he watched tape from his Game 2 start and insists he wasn’t tipping pitches. Houston grinded him out of the game after 2 1/3 innings. Verlander pitched two-run ball into the seventh, the only damage coming on Aaron Judge’s two-run homer.

Follow Jake Seiner: [https://twitter.com/Jake\\_Seiner](https://twitter.com/Jake_Seiner)

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)



## Chiefs' Patrick Mahomes injures right knee against Broncos

By PAT GRAHAM AP Sports Writer

DENVER (AP) — Now the wait begins to see how long it takes Patrick Mahomes to return from a gruesome right knee injury.

Waiting in the wings, just in case: 35-year-old backup Matt Moore.

Mahomes, the MVP quarterback of the Kansas City Chiefs, was hurt on a second-quarter sneak in a 30-6 win over the Denver Broncos on Thursday night.

Kansas City coach Andy Reid doesn't yet know how long Mahomes may be sidelined as the Chiefs (5-2) snapped a two-game skid with Moore stepping in and the Chiefs defense stepping up (nine sacks and a defensive score).

"We need time to evaluate," Reid said. "I'll leave it at that."

Facing fourth-and-short deep in Denver territory, Mahomes picked up a first down by sneaking through the line.

As the pile began to clear, Mahomes didn't jump up.

Struggling to straighten his right knee, he tossed his helmet to the side and covered his face with both hands. His teammates immediately checked on him. Seeing Mahomes' condition, receiver Tyreek Hill put his hands on his helmet in concern — a feeling shared by a legion of Chiefs fans. Mahomes is a big reason why Kansas City was a preseason favorite to reach its second straight AFC championship game.

Broncos cornerback Chris Harris Jr. showed his respect by coming over and shaking Mahomes' hand.

"You looked at it and were like, 'Oh no, there is something wrong with him,'" Chiefs tight end Travis Kelce said. "You just hope a guy isn't injured that bad and can come back."

One of the members of the Kansas City medical team worked on the knee to help straighten it out. A cart was summoned to take him away, but Mahomes refused to use it.

Instead, he put an arm around each trainer and made his way off the field. Mahomes, who entered the game with a sore ankle, then slowly made his way into the locker room.

Seattle Seahawks quarterback Russell Wilson wrote on his Twitter account: "Praying for you bro." It was a similar sentiment shared by Houston QB Deshaun Watson on social media: "Praying my bro @PatrickMahomes is straight!"

The reigning MVP was 10 of 11 for 76 yards and a 125.8 rating before his injury.

Mahomes has thrown 15 touchdown passes and one interception this season. Last weekend in a loss to Houston, Mahomes recorded his 14th career game with at least three TD passes. That's third-most in team history.

Moore's number was called. Before going in, he tapped Mahomes on the chest and wished him well. When Moore entered the huddle, he had a quick conversation with his teammates.

"Just something to let them know we were going to be all right. Kind of got them fired up a little bit," said Moore, who didn't play last season. "I just said, 'Hey, I need you guys. You guys need me. Let's go here. Help me and let's go.'"

It worked. Moore finished 10 of 19 for 117 yards and a 57-yard TD strike to Hill in the third quarter. Moore also had a grasp of the playbook despite being signed around two months ago after an injury Chad Henne.

"He goes, 'Let's go. I know it all. I'm good. Just call it. Let's roll,'" Reid recounted. "He's got ice water in the veins, that whole deal. He doesn't flinch. There's no panic."

After the game, Moore said Mahomes addressed the team in the locker room and praised the defense for a nine-sack performance.

Then, he complimented Moore.

"He said something about me, yes," Moore said. "He said, 'How about my guy, Matt?' ... I'm trying to downplay it.

"We're excited for the win, division opponent, road game — all things that are hard to do," Moore added. "At the same, a guy like Patrick gets hurt it can be deflating. He's obviously a huge part of this team, a huge part of the league. You hate to see that. We all know that injuries are part of this game. He's doing

to do his best to get back out as quick as he can.”

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## **Trump, in Texas, bashes Democrats as ‘crazy,’ unpatriotic** **By JILL COLVIN and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press**

DALLAS (AP) — President Donald Trump tried to turn impeachment rancor into a political rallying cry Thursday, using a Texas rally to bash Democrats as “crazy” and unpatriotic as they push forward with their investigations.

Setting a dire tone, Trump told his supporters, “At stake in this fight is the survival of American democracy itself.”

“Don’t kid yourselves,” he said of the Democrats, “I really don’t believe anymore that they love our country.”

A day after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and other top Democrats walked out of a White House meeting that had devolved into an insult-fest, Trump denounced her as “crazy Nancy.”

“She’s nuts,” he told the crowd at a packed stadium in Dallas.

The comments come as the House continues its quickly unfolding inquiry into Trump’s dealings with Ukraine, deposing witness after witness as they build their case. But Trump and his campaign have tried to turn the inquiry his way, accusing Democrats of using the Constitutional process to try to overturn the results of the 2016 election.

“They’re coming after and fighting you and we never lose,” he said, predicting the 2020 election will be “a landslide” for Republicans, despite polling showing him lagging behind.

Trump also continued his attacks on former Vice President Joe Biden, and his son, Hunter’s work for a Ukraine energy company. Trump’s efforts to pressure Ukraine to investigate the Biden family are at the heart of the Democrats’ inquiry into whether Trump compromised national security and used his office to try to bolster his 2020 chances by pushing foreign governments to investigate one of his Democratic rivals.

Trump’s day included a tour of a new Louis Vuitton leather workshop in north central Texas and a fundraiser in Fort Worth that, combined with a pre-rally reception in Dallas, brought in \$5.5 million, according to the Republican National Committee.

Texas is a crucial state for Republicans, both in terms of money and votes.

Trump carried the GOP stronghold and its 38 Electoral College votes by 9 points in 2016. But Democrats have pointed to demographic changes — as well as the fact that Republican Sen. Ted Cruz won reelection by less than 3 points last year — as evidence that the second-most-populous state could soon be in play. But Trump rejected that thinking, as he urged his supporters to re-elect Cruz and John Cornyn, the state’s other Republican senator.

As he campaigns for a second term, Trump’s team has tried to focus attention on economic gains over the last three years, including the low unemployment rate. Pressing that message, Trump cut the ribbon at a new production facility for the luxury brand Louis Vuitton in Alvarado with his elder daughter, Ivanka.

Trump joked that the company, which is known for its logoed handbags and luggage, has cost him “a lot of money over the years.” His wife, first lady Melania Trump, has repeatedly been spotted traveling with the brand.

“This workshop will soon employ 500 of the most highly skilled workers anywhere in the world,” Trump said. “No one can match the precision and perfection of an American artisan.”

The Texas visit comes at a treacherous time for Trump, whose dealings with the president of Ukraine are under fire. While Republicans have largely rallied around him, they sounded alarms over his decision to pull U.S. troops out of northeast Syria — a move that paved the way for Turkey to invade and assault the Kurds, who’d fought alongside the U.S. in its campaign against Islamic State militants.

At his rally, Trump credited his “unconventional” approach for the announcement of a cease-fire Thursday. And he repeatedly painted the Turkish assault on the Kurds as something that had its benefits.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 31 of 47

"Sometimes you have to let them fight, like two kids in a lot," he said. "You got to let them fight and then you pull them apart."

Trump's campaign and the RNC have been raking in record money, raising \$125 million in the third quarter of 2019 and smashing the just over \$70 million former President Barack Obama and the Democratic National Committee raised in the third quarter of 2011.

Meanwhile, Trump's would-be challengers are deep in an increasingly contentious race for the Democratic nomination.

One of those candidates, former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke, was holding a counter-rally protesting Trump's appearance in nearby Grand Prairie Thursday evening. He did the same when Trump held a rally in El Paso in February and drew a substantial crowd, but his standing in the race has since fallen.

Still, Trump made sure to call him out, pointing to his plan to confiscate assault-style rifles and his support for rescinding the tax-exempt status for churches and charities that are anti-LGBTQ.

"No religion and no guns. I think that's not good," Trump said.

O'Rourke's campaign has said that, if he's elected president, he would not challenge the tax-exempt status of religious organizations that oppose same-sex marriage.

Kevin Freking contributed to this report from Washington.

## Cummings recalled as powerful orator who took on White House

By BRIAN WITTE and REGINA GARCIA CANO Associated Press

BALTIMORE (AP) — Maryland Rep. Elijah E. Cummings, who died Thursday at age 68, was remembered as a moral voice of conscience in a divisive era — a leader who fought for civil rights and took on the White House as a prominent figure in the impeachment inquiry of President Donald Trump.

Born to a family of Southern sharecroppers, Cummings was a formidable orator who advocated for the poor in his black-majority district of Baltimore: "Steely yet compassionate, principled yet open to new perspectives," former President Barack Obama said.

In a testament to Cummings' ability to forge friendships across the aisle during a time of intense political polarization, tributes poured in from across the political spectrum.

President Donald Trump tweeted his "condolences to the family and many friends of Congressman Elijah Cummings. I got to see firsthand the strength, passion and wisdom of this highly respected political leader." He also ordered flags at the White House and other federal buildings to be flown at half-staff through Friday to honor Cummings.

Earlier this year, Cummings defended his city against Trump, who criticized the Democrat's district as a "rodent-infested mess" where "no human being would want to live." Cummings replied that government officials must stop making "hateful, incendiary comments" that distract the nation from its real problems, including mass shootings and white supremacy.

"Those in the highest levels of the government must stop invoking fear, using racist language and encouraging reprehensible behavior," Cummings said.

As chairman of the House Oversight and Reform Committee, Cummings led investigations of the president's government dealings, including probes in 2019 relating to Trump's family members serving in the White House.

Obama, whose 2008 presidential bid counted Cummings as an early supporter, said he and his wife, Michelle, were "heartbroken" by the loss of their friend.

"He showed us all not only the importance of checks and balances within our democracy, but also the necessity of good people stewarding it," Obama said.

With Cummings' death, Americans "have lost a great leader at a time of crisis in our democracy," civil rights leader U.S. Rep. John Lewis said.

"When this nation needed him most, he became a moral voice 'crying in the wilderness,' and his words and actions called a reluctant nation to conscience," the Georgia Democrat said in a statement.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 32 of 47

Words of praise also came from Cummings' Republican admirers.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell praised Cummings as "a living legend in his native Baltimore" and said he "counted close friends and admirers from all across the political spectrum." House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., called Cummings "a respected adversary" who was tough but fair.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney, a veteran Democrat from New York, will for now take over leadership of the House oversight committee, according to a senior Democratic leadership aide who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the decision publicly.

The committee, authorized to investigate virtually any part of the federal government, is one of three conducting the House impeachment probe of Trump. Cummings was among the three chairmen to sign a letter seeking documents into whether Trump pressured Ukraine to investigate the family of Democratic presidential rival Joe Biden. The committees have issued subpoenas of witnesses after the Trump administration's refusal to cooperate with the impeachment probe and have jointly been meeting behind closed doors to hear testimony.

Separately, Cummings led an effort to gain access to Trump's financial records. His committee subpoenaed records from Mazars USA, an accounting firm that provided services to Trump. The panel demanded documents from 2011 to 2018 as it probed Trump's reporting of his finances and potential conflicts of interest. Last week, a federal appeals court ruled the records must be turned over.

Cummings died early Thursday at Johns Hopkins Hospital due to complications of longstanding health problems, according to his office. He had hoped to return to Congress within about a week after a medical procedure for which he hadn't offered details. He'd previously been treated for heart and knee issues.

His widow, Maya Rockey Moore Cummings, chairwoman of Maryland's Democratic Party, said in a statement: "He worked until his last breath because he believed our democracy was the highest and best expression of our collective humanity and that our nation's diversity was our promise, not our problem."

Cummings was born Jan. 18, 1951. In grade school, a counselor told him he was too slow to learn and spoke poorly, and would never fulfill his dream of becoming a lawyer.

"I was devastated," Cummings told The Associated Press in 1996, shortly before winning his seat in Congress. "My whole life changed. I became very determined."

It steeled Cummings to prove that counselor wrong. He became not only a lawyer, but one of the most powerful orators in the Maryland statehouse, where he entered office in 1983. He rose to become the first black House speaker pro tem, the member who presides in the speaker's absence. He would begin his comments slowly, developing his theme and raising the emotional heat until it became like a sermon from the pulpit.

Cummings began his long push for civil rights at age 11, when he helped integrate a swimming pool in Baltimore. This year, during a speech to the American Bar Association in April, Cummings recalled how he and other black children organized protests with help from their recreation leader and the NAACP.

Every day for a week, when the children tried to get into the pool, they were spit upon, threatened and called names, Cummings said; he said he was cut by a bottle thrown from an angry crowd.

"The experience transformed my entire life," he said.

Throughout his career, Cummings used his fiery voice to highlight the struggles and needs of inner-city residents. He believed in much-debated approaches to help the poor and addicted, such as needle exchange programs to reduce the spread of AIDS.

Cummings then chaired the Congressional Black Caucus from 2003 to 2004, employing a hard-charging, explore-every-option style to put the group in the national spotlight.

In 2015, when the death of black Baltimore resident Freddie Gray sparked the city's worst riots in decades, Cummings carried a bullhorn in the streets and urged crowds to go home and respect a curfew. He spoke at Gray's funeral, asking lawmakers in the church to stand up to show Gray's mother they would seek justice.

"I want justice, oceans of it. I want fairness, rivers of it. That's what I want. That's all I want," Cummings said, quoting from the Bible.



Witte reported from Annapolis. Associated Press Writer Alan Fram contributed from Washington.

## World finance officials facing host of problems

By **MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The leaders of the 189-nation International Monetary Fund and its sister organization, the World Bank, are laying out their visions for the future, hoping to achieve a world with less extreme poverty and more economic growth.

However, IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva and World Bank President David Malpass will likely find their discussions over the next two days consumed with more immediate problems, such as rising trade tensions that have sapped world growth.

Both officials will deliver speeches at the opening session Friday of the annual meetings of the two organizations. Also Friday, Japanese Finance Minister Taro Aso will meet with reporters at the end of discussions among finance ministers and central bank governors from the Group of 20 major industrial nations.

All the meetings, which are scheduled to conclude Saturday, are expected to be dominated by debate over the best way to cool rising trade tensions, which have seen the world's two biggest economies, the United States and China, impose punitive tariffs on billions of dollars of each other's exports.

The U.S.-China trade war has had ripple effects that have contributed to a significant, synchronized slowdown across 90% of the globe.

Meeting with reporters Thursday, Georgieva said a tentative U.S.-China trade agreement announced last week by President Donald Trump should lessen slightly the damage done by the trade war — but until the two nations resolved their differences, it would not remove enough uncertainty to return the globe to solid growth.

Georgieva said the tariffs still being imposed would result in 0.6% in lost global output by the end of 2020, down a bit from the 0.8% in lost output the IMF had initially estimated.

But she said that result was not good enough and what was needed was for the United States and China to resolve all their trade issues and for all countries to work together to modernize the rules of global trade to lessen friction in the future.

"Our hope is to move from a trade truce to a trade peace," she told reporters.

The IMF released an updated economic outlook Tuesday that projected global growth for this year at 3%. That would be the weakest showing since a negative 0.1% in 2009, in the wake of the worst financial crisis since the 1930s.

Georgieva, a Bulgarian economist who had held the No. 2 job at the World Bank, was tapped last month to take over at the IMF, succeeding Christine Lagarde.

In her news conference Thursday, she said she hoped this week's talks would focus on ways to ease trade tensions and begin the groundwork to update the rules of world trade. The Trump administration has repeatedly attacked the Geneva-based World Trade Organization, saying it is biased against the United States.

"We have been reaching agreements on trade based primarily on the past," she said. She noted that global commerce has been transformed in recent years by advances in technology, and those advances need to be acknowledged in new trade rules.

Malpass, who took over as head of the World Bank earlier this year, said his focus for the meetings will be efforts to ensure that everything possible is done to restart global growth, given that the 700 million people living in extreme poverty — one in 12 people on the planet — will be the most harmed by a prolonged slowdown.

"There is an urgency to what we're doing because of the challenges facing development," Malpass said. "Global growth is slowing, investment is sluggish, manufacturing activity is soft and trade is weakening."

In his announcement last week, Trump said he was suspending a tariff increase on \$250 billion of Chinese products that had been scheduled to take effect this week.

Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin told reporters Wednesday that the U.S. and Chinese negotiators

were working to hammer out details on this "phase one" agreement.

He said he and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer would speak by phone with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He, the head of the Chinese negotiating team, next week and planned to meet with him in Santiago, Chile, before the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation leaders' summit on Nov. 16-17.

It is expected that Trump and Chinese President Xi Jinping will meet at that summit to sign the initial phase of the deal, if it is finalized by that time.

Mnuchin said the administration has made no decision yet on whether it will postpone 15% tariffs on \$160 billion in Chinese goods still due to take effect Dec. 15.

## Share of Americans with no religious affiliation growing

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

The portion of Americans with no religious affiliation is rising significantly, in tandem with a sharp drop in the percentage that identifies as Christians, according to new data from the Pew Research Center.

Based on telephone surveys conducted in 2018 and 2019, Pew said Thursday that 65% of American adults now describe themselves as Christian, down from 77% in 2009. Meanwhile, the portion that describes their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular," now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009.

Both Protestant and Roman Catholic ranks are losing population share, according to Pew. It said 43% of U.S. adults identify as Protestants, down from 51% in 2009, while 20% are Catholic, down from 23% in 2009.

Pew says all categories of the religiously unaffiliated population — often referred to as the "nones" — grew in magnitude. Self-described atheists now account for 4% of U.S. adults, up from 2% in 2009; agnostics account for 5%, up from 3% a decade ago; and 17% of Americans now describe their religion as "nothing in particular," up from 12% in 2009.

The report comes at a challenging time for many major denominations in the U.S. The two largest — the Catholic church and the Southern Baptist Convention — are beset by clergy sex-abuse scandals. The United Methodist Church, the largest mainline Protestant denomination, faces a possible split over differences on the inclusion of LGBTQ people.

The Pew report found a steady decline in the rates of attendance at religious services.

Over the last decade, the share of Americans who say they attend religious services at least once or twice a month dropped by 7 percentage points, while the share who say they attend religious services less often — if at all — rose by the same degree.

In 2009, regular attenders — those who attend religious services at least once a month — outnumbered those who attend services only occasionally or not at all by a 52%-to-47% margin. Now, more Americans say they attend religious services a few times a year or less (54 than say they attend at least monthly (45%).

Pew's data showed a wide age gap in terms of religion affiliation — three-quarters of baby boomers described themselves as Christian, compared to 49% of millennials.

The trends documented by Pew have been reflected in other recent developments.

In May, the Southern Baptist Convention reported its twelfth year of declining membership. The SBC said it had 14.8 million members in 2018, down about 192,000 from the previous year.

In June, the annual Giving USA report — a comprehensive overview of Americans' charitable giving patterns — said giving to religious institutions had been lagging behind other philanthropic sectors for several years. Reasons included declining attendance at worship services and a rising number of Americans not affiliated with any religion.

Empty Tomb, a Christian organization based in Champaign, Illinois, that researches religious giving, says the decline is longstanding. According to its research, Americans gave about 3% of their disposable income to churches in 1968, and less than 2.2% in 2016.

## US envoy says Giuliani was given role on Ukraine policy

By ERIC TUCKER and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. ambassador to the European Union told House impeachment investigators Thursday that President Donald Trump instructed him and other envoys to work with his personal lawyer, Rudy Giuliani, on Ukraine policy and that he was “disappointed” by the directive. Gordon Sondland spoke to lawmakers for around 10 hours.

Lawmakers leaving the closed-door deposition said there were gaps in his testimony, and said Sondland responded “I don’t know” and “I don’t recall” many times. But they said it was enlightening and damning as the political appointee and Trump donor described Giuliani’s takeover of U.S. policy toward Ukraine.

“It is clear you have a shadow shakedown going on by Giuliani,” said California Rep. Eric Swalwell, a Democratic member of the House intelligence panel. “I think it is just important for the American people to understand Rudy Giuliani is Donald Trump and Donald Trump is Rudy Giuliani. If Rudy Giuliani is doing something it is because he’s the lawyer for Donald Trump, and lawyers don’t take actions that are not authorized by their clients.”

Sondland’s closed-door testimony to three House committees was aimed at distancing himself from Trump and Giuliani’s efforts to pressure Ukraine into investigating Democratic rival Joe Biden and his son Hunter. Sondland said he was concerned that the president delegated to Giuliani foreign policy responsibilities that he thought belonged to the State Department, but Sondland followed Trump’s instructions anyway. He insisted that he played no role in encouraging investigations of Biden, telling lawmakers that he thought it improper to invite a foreign government to conduct criminal probes to influence American elections.

The ambassador was the latest in a series of witnesses to be privately interviewed by three House committees conducting the impeachment investigation. He was one of several current and former Trump administration officials who have provided new information — and detailed diplomats’ concerns — about Trump and Giuliani and their attempts to influence Ukraine.

White House acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney defended Giuliani’s involvement in foreign policy, saying, “That’s the president’s call.” Even if some people don’t like it, he added, “it’s not illegal. It’s not impeachable. The president gets to use who he wants to use.”

The investigators will continue apace next week, when they have tentatively scheduled multiple additional interviews with a mix of State Department diplomats and White House aides. Among them is the current top official at the U.S. embassy in Ukraine, William Taylor, who exchanged text messages with Sondland this summer and fall as diplomats attempted to navigate Trump’s demands.

Sondland’s attempts to stand apart from Trump and Giuliani are notable since, unlike other career civil servants who have testified in the impeachment inquiry, he is a hand-picked political appointee of the president who contributed \$1 million to Trump’s inaugural committee. His appearance was especially anticipated since the text messages and other witness testimony place him at the center of a foreign policy dialogue with Ukraine that officials feared circumvented normal channels and that is now at the center of the House impeachment inquiry of Trump.

In prepared remarks obtained by The Associated Press, Sondland aimed to untether himself from any effort by the Republican president or Giuliani to have a political rival investigated, joining other current and former administration officials who have communicated to Congress misgivings about the administration’s backchannel dealings with Ukraine.

But Sondland’s pivotal role in the dialogue, including discussions about a quid-pro-quo in which Ukraine’s president would get a coveted White House visit in exchange for satisfying Trump’s push for corruption-related investigations, made some Democrats skeptical that he wasn’t more closely involved.

“For purposes of the impeachment inquiry, it really doesn’t matter whether Sondland was a knowing participant in this scheme or if he was an unwitting pawn,” said California Rep. Ted Lieu as he left the deposition. “He was still executing the policies of Rudy Giuliani and Rudy was following the orders of the president.”

Sondland said he was disappointed by a May 23 meeting with Trump, who rejected calls by the ambas-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 36 of 47

sador and others to arrange without preconditions a phone call and White House visit for the new Ukraine leader, Volodymyr Zelenskiy.

The president was skeptical that Ukraine was serious about reform and curbing corruption and, instead of arranging the meeting his envoys wanted, directed them to talk to Giuliani, Sondland said.

"We were also disappointed by the President's direction that we involve Mr. Giuliani," Sondland said in the remarks. "Our view was that the men and women of the State Department, not the President's personal lawyer, should take responsibility for all aspects of U.S. foreign policy towards Ukraine."

The envoys, he said, had a choice: They could abandon the goal of a White House meeting with Zelenskiy, something they saw as important in fostering U.S.-Ukraine relations, or they could do as Trump asked and work with Giuliani. He said he did not know until much later that Giuliani intended to push for the Biden probe.

When the phone call finally did occur, on July 25, Trump repeatedly prodded Zelenskiy to investigate the Bidens at the same time as the U.S. was withholding hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid from Ukraine. Sondland said he was not on the call.

"Let me state clearly: Inviting a foreign government to undertake investigations for the purpose of influencing an upcoming U.S. election would be wrong," Sondland said. "Withholding foreign aid in order to pressure a foreign government to take such steps would be wrong. I did not and would not ever participate in such undertakings."

The Democrats asked Sondland, whose name surfaced in a whistleblower complaint in August that helped spur the impeachment inquiry, about text messages that were provided to the committees earlier this month by former Ukrainian envoy Kurt Volker.

The messages show Sondland, Volker and Taylor discussing an arrangement in which Zelenskiy would be offered a White House visit in exchange for a public statement by Ukraine committing to undertake investigations into the 2016 U.S. presidential election and into Burisma, the gas company linked to Hunter Biden.

One text exchange that has attracted attention involves Taylor telling Sondland he thought it was "crazy" to withhold military aid from Ukraine "for help with a political campaign." Sondland replied that Trump had been clear about his intentions and that there was no quid pro quo.

Now, Sondland told lawmakers that Trump told him by phone before he sent the text that there was no quid pro quo and that he was simply parroting those reassurances to Taylor.

"I asked the President: 'What do you want from Ukraine?'" Sondland said. "The President responded, 'Nothing. There is no quid pro quo.' The President repeated: 'no quid pro quo' multiple times. This was a very short call. And I recall the President was in a bad mood."

Sondland testified three days after Fiona Hill, a former White House aide, said that his actions so unnerved then-national security adviser John Bolton that Bolton said he was not part of "whatever drug deal Sondland and Mulvaney are cooking up."

But Sondland said that neither Hill nor Bolton personally raised concerns about the Ukraine work directly with him.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

## Protests spread across Lebanon over proposed new taxes

By FADI TAWIL Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese security forces fired tear gas to disperse hundreds of protesters in Beirut early Friday after they tried to push through security barriers around the government headquarters amid some of the largest demonstrations the country has seen in years. The riots left two people dead and dozens wounded.

The protests erupted over the government's plan to impose new taxes during a severe economic crisis, with people taking their anger out on politicians they accuse of corruption and decades of mismanagement.



# Proton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 37 of 47

The protests started with a few dozen people gathering in central Beirut over the imposition of a 20-cent daily fee on messaging applications, including WhatsApp. They quickly escalated into some of the biggest demonstrations since an uprising over a garbage crisis in 2015, with thousands of people taking part.

People gathered near the government headquarters and parliament building where riot police were deployed, chanting: "Revolution!" and "Thieves!" — the latter a reference to widespread corruption in a country that has one of the highest debt loads in the world.

Some protesters threw stones, shoes and water bottles at security forces and scuffled with police. Security forces said at least 60 of its members were injured in the clashes. Protesters were also injured.

State-run National News Agency said two foreign workers choked to death when fire was set in a building where they were sleeping in downtown Beirut. George Kittaneh, the head of the Lebanese Red Cross, said 22 people fainted and were taken to a hospital while 70 were treated on the spot.

Police showed restraint as they were pelted with stones for several hours, firing volleys of tear gas only after protesters broke through the first security barrier near the government house. Police chased protesters through the streets of Beirut's commercial district through the night.

The protests could plunge Lebanon into a political crisis with unpredictable repercussions for the economy which has been in steady decline. Some of the protesters said they would stay in the streets until the government resigns.

"The government is trying to help Lebanese citizens avoid a collapse," Interior Minister Raya al-Hassan, who ruled out the possibility of a Cabinet resignation, told the Lebanon-based Al-Mayadeen TV. "If another government is formed it will take the same measures."

Protesters closed major intersections with burning tires and garbage containers, causing traffic jams. As the protests escalated, the minister of education declared that public and private schools and universities would close Friday.

Years of regional turmoil — worsened by an influx of 1.5 million Syrian refugees since 2011 — are catching up with the small Arab country. Lebanon has the third-highest debt level in the world, currently standing at about \$86 billion, or 150% of its gross domestic product.

"We refuse what's happening in Lebanon... The failure of our government to do at least the minimum ... has given us no other choice than to take the streets," said writer and director Lucien Bourjeily.

"They are putting more and more taxes on us even though we can't take any more taxes," he said.

When the motorcade of Education Minister Akram Chehayeb padded through downtown Beirut, protesters punched and kicked the cars. One bodyguard jumped out of an SUV and fired an automatic rifle into the air. Chehayeb rushed out of his car and pushed the guard away and prevented him from shooting again. No one was hurt in the incident.

Protesters also closed roads in other parts of Lebanon, including the northern city of Tripoli, Tyre in the south and Baalbek in the northeast.

The government is discussing the 2020 budget, and new taxes have been proposed, including on tobacco, gasoline and some social media telecommunication software such as WhatsApp.

Telecommunications Minister Mohamed Choucair appeared on TV after the protests began and said Prime Minister Saad Hariri has asked him to drop the proposed tax on WhatsApp.

As protests continued, demonstrators clashed briefly with riot police outside the government headquarters, an Ottoman-era compound known as the Grand Serial.

"We have no jobs, we have money and we have no future," one protester screamed.

International donors have been demanding that Lebanon implement economic changes in order to get loans and grants pledged at the CEDRE economic conference in Paris in April 2018. International donors pledged \$11 billion for Lebanon but they sought to ensure the money is well spent in the corruption-plagued country.

Despite tens of billions of dollars spent since the 15-year civil war ended in 1990, Lebanon still has crumbling infrastructure including daily electricity cuts, trash piles in the streets and often sporadic, limited water supplies from the state-owned water company.

There are concerns over the country's financial stability as well. Earlier this month, the local currency reached 1,650 Lebanese pounds to the dollar at exchange shops after it had been stable at 1,500 since 1997.

## Silver: China asked for Rockets GM Daryl Morey to be fired

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

NBA Commissioner Adam Silver said Chinese officials wanted Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey to be fired for his tweet supporting anti-government protesters in Hong Kong, and the league emphatically dismissed the request.

Silver also said that the league is already feeling "substantial" financial losses because of the Chinese reaction to Morey's deleted tweet.

"Obviously, we made clear that we were being asked to fire him by the Chinese government, by the parties we dealt with, government and business," Silver said Thursday during an appearance at the Time 100 Health Summit in New York. "We said, 'There's no chance that's happening. There's no chance we'll even discipline him.'"

Silver also said he isn't sure what will happen to the NBA's relationship with China, which has been growing steadily over the last three decades.

"I felt we had made enormous progress in terms of building cultural exchanges with the Chinese people," Silver said. "Again, I have regret that much of that was lost. And I'm not even sure where we'll go from here."

The league and LeBron James, one of its biggest stars, have been heavily criticized by some U.S. lawmakers for the perception that they caved to the Chinese regime. Morey has not been rebuked publicly by the league, and Silver has said that the league will support his freedom of expression.

"We wanted to make an absolute clear statement that the values of the NBA, these American values — we are an American business — travel with us wherever we go, and one of those values is free expression," Silver said. "We wanted to make sure everyone understood we were supporting free expression."

The Rockets were of massive interest in China, largely because of Yao Ming — the Chinese star who spent his entire NBA career in Houston. Yao is now the president of the Chinese Basketball Association, which has suspended its ties to the Rockets because of the tweet.

Morey has not commented publicly since a pair of tweets on Oct. 6 attempting to clarify his position.

"I understand there is a point of view from some that we shouldn't be in business at all in China, and I'd say from an intellectual standpoint, that's fair — not getting into whether the tweet or the response to it," Silver said. "But if people believe that we shouldn't be engaged in commerce in China or frankly in other places in the world ... I, at some point, look to the American government."

"We're in the middle of negotiating a trade agreement," Silver continued. "Many multinational corporations do trade extensively with China. And if that's ultimately how our government feels we should be dealing with China, again, we are a U.S. company."

Chinese state broadcaster CCTV did not air the two NBA preseason games between the Los Angeles Lakers and Brooklyn Nets last week. Tencent, which has a \$1.5 billion deal to stream NBA games in China over the next five years, has also stopped showing Rockets games but has not totally dropped all NBA content.

"The losses have already been substantial," Silver said. "Our games are not back on the air in China, as we speak, and we'll see what happens next."

Silver was at the summit to discuss the league's deeper commitment to ensuring players and employees are taking care of their mental health, something that has been a growing topic in the NBA in recent years — particularly with the acknowledgment of top players like San Antonio's DeMar DeRozan and Cleveland's Kevin Love that they struggle with certain issues.

Silver also addressed how social media can make matters more difficult for those who engage.

"Social media, it seems pretty clear, is raising the anxiety level and stress level among our young people,"

Silver said. "There's a lot of hate speech out there. There's stress to be included, there's emotional issues about being left out of groups. And then compound that with NBA players when there's in some cases millions and millions of seemingly anonymous people taking shots at them. And while the advice often is 'just don't read it,' it's awfully hard."

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## School's out: Chicago teachers strike, 1st day deal unlikely

By KATHLEEN FOODY and DON BABWIN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Striking teachers marched in picket lines outside hundreds of Chicago schools on Thursday after their union and city officials failed to reach a contract deal in the nation's third-largest school district, canceling classes for more than 300,000 students for the duration of a walkout that seemed likely to head into a second day.

The strike in the nation's third-largest school district came after the Chicago Teachers Union confirmed Wednesday night that its 25,000 members would not return to their classrooms. It follows months of negotiations between the union and Chicago Public Schools that failed to resolve disputes over pay and benefits, class size and teacher preparation time.

Union vice president Stacy Davis Gates said the strike will continue into Friday as a result of the impasse, and the school district cancelled a second day of classes.

Picketing teachers said Thursday the walkout was about getting more resources and smaller class sizes for students in the cash-strapped district, not about putting more money in their pockets.

Outside Smyth Elementary, a predominantly black and low-income school on the city's near South Side, art teacher John Houlihan said "we're not fighting for paychecks and health care. It's the kids."

"It's ridiculous to say that you can put these kids who are dealing with profound poverty and profound homelessness in classes of 30-40 kids," said Houlihan, who picketed with about 20 other teachers and staff as drivers passed by, honking their horns. "That's not manageable and it is not an environment for learning."

The strike is Chicago's first major walkout by teachers since 2012. And just as that strike inspired unions in Los Angeles and other politically left-leaning cities to walk off the job and protest over issues such as class size and student services, unions nationwide are today watching closely to see how parents respond to a walkout based on a "social justice" agenda.

Chicago Teachers Union President Jesse Sharkey joined teachers picketing outside Helen Peirce International Studies school, where he said every kindergarten class has at least 30 students. He said there's "pent-up frustration" among union members about conditions in the schools, and the union wants some of those longstanding issues addressed in their next contract.

Mayor Lori Lightfoot said she was disappointed by the union's decision to strike.

"We are offering a historic package on the core issues — salary, staffing and class size," she said.

Lightfoot voiced frustration about what she sees as the union's lack of urgency to make a deal. "So, what we need is for the union to come back to the table to bargain in good faith, spend the time actually getting a deal done, face to face with us, and not off to the side in a caucus," she said. "If there is a seriousness of purpose and a willingness on the other side we could get a deal done today."

Sharkey spoke briefly after early talks wrapped up and said it's "highly unlikely" a deal on all outstanding issues would be struck Thursday. Sharkey said the district did provide some written language on class sizes that the union was still reviewing.

"We don't just want a fast deal," Sharkey said before leading teachers on a march through the city's downtown streets. "We are going to hold fast to a just deal."

Bargainers were expected to return Thursday afternoon.

Also striking are 7,000 support staffers, whose union also failed to reach a contract agreement.

But from the picket lines in front of schools citywide to Washington, D.C., home of the American Fed-

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 40 of 47

eration of Teachers, the message was the same: The school district and the mayor are not doing nearly enough to improve the lives of students.

"Educators in Chicago want the same thing educators who have walked off the job all across this country want," said AFT President Randi Weingarten in a statement. "The resources to give their students what they need."

At Thomas Chalmers Elementary School on the city's west side, about 25 teachers cheered and waved in response to cars and trucks honking in support, taking short breaks to replenish mugs full of hot coffee.

Maggie Sermont, a 32-year-old special education teacher, said Chalmers' teachers are concerned that a nurse, social worker and speech pathologist typically visit the school just once a week. Kids may see those specialty staff in group sessions that further limit their one-on-one time, she said.

"It just feels like we're putting a Band-Aid over a bullet hole," she said.

During the 2012 strike, the district kept some schools open for half days during a seven-day walkout. This time, all buildings are staying open during school hours, staffed by principals and employees who usually work in administrative roles.

Breakfast and lunch will be served, but all after-school activities and school buses are suspended.

Janice Jackson, the district's CEO, encouraged parents to send their children to the school that they normally attend, however they will be welcome in any district schools.

"We've put together a really comprehensive plan for the students," Jackson said. "We will make sure they are safe and they have a productive day."

Samantha Williams, 24, said it's "not good" that her first-grade son is missing instruction time. Williams said she understands teachers need more help but also expressed frustration and questioned the motives behind the walkout. "I think it's more about money. I don't think they had to go on strike."

But Jamel Boyd, a 51-year old-chef, shouted her support to teachers as she dropped off her 10-year-old-son and 8-year-old daughter at Smyth Elementary and accepts the teachers' explanation that the strike has less to do with getting the city to spend money on their salaries than it does spending money on improving schools.

"I am so with you all," she yelled. She said the city needs to spend more money on schools so CPS can provide nurses and social workers, rather than investing in other projects, such as the city's lakefront.

"Kids are coming with all kinds of problems, anxiety, homelessness and these teachers need help, classroom support," said Boyd, who told of the day her son was rushed to a hospital by ambulance because there was no nurse at the school that day who she believes would have quickly recognized that the asthma attack staffers thought her son was having was actually a panic attack. "They need to stop beautifying Lake Shore Drive and do something for these people. Lake Shore Drive is beautiful enough."

## Plan to close notorious Rikers jail complex by 2026 approved

By KAREN MATTHEWS Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City lawmakers voted Thursday to close the notorious Rikers Island jail complex, which has become synonymous with violence and neglect, and replace it with four smaller jails intended to be more modern and humane.

The City Council voted 36-13 to replace the complex with four smaller jails located closer to the city's main courthouses in Manhattan, Brooklyn, the Bronx and Queens.

Rikers is scheduled to shutter by 2026, ending a decadeslong run as one of the world's largest jails.

"Rikers island is a symbol of brutality and inhumanity and it is time for us to once and for all close Rikers Island," said City Council Speaker Corey Johnson, a Democrat who shepherded the plan through the Council. "As a city we must do everything we can to move away from the failed policies of mass incarceration."

Mayor Bill de Blasio and other Democrats support the plan, which has a price tag of more than \$8 billion, in part because of a belief that in an age of falling crime rates, huge jails are part of the public safety problem rather than part of the solution.

"This is one of those moments where a cycle gets broken. There's been a cycle of incarceration," de



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 41 of 47

Blasio said at a news conference after the vote. He added, "It ends now. That cycle ends now."

Members of the Council spoke in emotional terms about the significance of closing Rikers. Councilman Daniel Dromm invoked the names of former inmates who have died including Kalief Browder, who took his own life at age 22 after being held in for three years at Rikers, and Layleen Polanco, a transgender woman who was found dead in her cell at Rikers last June.

But some opponents of the plan said they don't want the city to build any new jails. "There is nothing in the plan that guarantees closing Rikers," said Councilman Carlos Menchaca, who voted no. "I do not trust this mayor. Do you?"

The vote on the plan was disrupted by anti-jail activists who chanted "If you build it they will fill it" and threw flyers from the balcony.

City officials say a steep drop in the jail population has made it feasible to close Rikers, a complex of 10 jails on an island between Queens and the Bronx that mainly houses inmates awaiting trial.

With falling crime rates, the number of people incarcerated in the city on a daily basis has declined from a high of nearly 22,000 in 1991 to about 7,000 today. City officials announced this week that they believe they can shrink the jail population even further by 2026, to just 3,300 prisoners.

Backers of the jail overhaul say they expect the city's jail population will keep dropping because of criminal justice reforms.

Several district attorneys in the city have said they are no longer prosecuting small-time marijuana possession cases. The police department, after ages of measuring officers by how many people they put in handcuffs, has slashed arrests for misdemeanors as officers have been encouraged to write tickets for minor offenses, rather than drag people to jail.

A new state law is set to eliminate cash bail for most misdemeanor and nonviolent arrests. Once the law goes into effect in January, far fewer poor people will be held in jail while awaiting trial.

Critics of the plan, however, say fewer cells may mean more violent criminals on city streets.

Seth Barron, project director of the NYC Initiative at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank, questions whether the city can really drive incarceration rates as low as they want without compromising public safety.

"It's not clear how they're going to get these numbers and it's politically driven," Barron said. "It's a big risk because we've already taken all the nonviolent people out of Rikers."

Barron blames the effort to empty the city's jails for the beating deaths of four homeless men in Manhattan's Chinatown this month.

Randy Santos, the man charged with attacking the men as they slept, had been recently freed from jail after several arrests for previous, less serious attacks on other people.

"What is clear is that progressive social policies gave Santos the freedom to feed his addictions and nurture his insanity — until he murdered four innocent people," Barron wrote in the institute's City Journal.

The plan calls for moving inmates to four new or expanded jails in each city borough except Staten Island, making it easier for the inmates to receive visits from lawyers and family members who will no longer have to travel to an island.

The plan met some resistance from residents of neighborhoods surrounding the jail sites. City Council leaders announced Tuesday they would decrease the heights of the planned jails to win support. A prison skyscraper planned for lower Manhattan was cut from 45 to 29 stories and a proposed Brooklyn jail went from 39 to 29 stories. City Council member Margaret Chin, a Democrat who represents lower Manhattan, said the shorter jail tower planned for her district "will no longer be out of scale with the neighborhood."

But others said they didn't want any new jails at all. Marlene Nava Ramos, a member of the advocacy group No New Jails NYC, said "the idea is to begin actually decarcerating New York City instead of building new jails."

Martin Horn, who headed the city Department of Correction from 2003 to 2009 under Mayor Michael Bloomberg, said reducing the jail population to 3,300 would be "a historic accomplishment" but he questioned the 2026 deadline for completing the new jails.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 42 of 47

"My experience is that city construction projects of this magnitude take far longer," said Horn, who now teaches at the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

Rikers Island has housed jail inmates since the 1930s and has long been known for brutality. The jail complex saw hundreds of stabbings each year during the 1980s and early 1990s.

More recently, a 2014 Associated Press investigation detailed dozens of inmate deaths including that of a homeless ex-Marine who essentially baked to death in a hot cell.

"I know what damage Rikers does to people. Rikers is not a fit place for human beings," said JoAnne Page, president of the Fortune Society, a nonprofit organization that provides support to formerly incarcerated people. "We are moving in the right direction after so many years of moving in the wrong way," she said.

## **APNewsBreak: Billionaire governor's family farms get subsidy**

**By ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press**

LEWISBURG, W.Va. (AP) — A farming business owned by the family of West Virginia's billionaire governor has received \$125,000 in soybean and corn subsidies, the maximum allowed from a federal program meant to help American farmers through the U.S. trade war with China.

There is no evidence Gov. Jim Justice did anything illegal. But at least one analyst said the payments to the richest man in West Virginia are unseemly, given his wealth. And the subsidies have thrown the spotlight again on his business empire and the potential conflicts of interest it poses.

Records reviewed by The Associated Press show Justice Farms of North Carolina, owned by the Republican governor's family, hit the program cap of \$125,000 earlier this year and was the biggest recipient of soybean subsidies in West Virginia.

The richest person in the state, Justice owns a complex business empire of coal and agricultural entities that are perennially mired in litigation, often over unpaid bills. The farming company is no different. It is named in a long-running lawsuit that alleges the Justice businesses transferred assets between them in an effort to avoid paying a debt.

The company took in \$121,398 in subsidies for soybeans and \$3,602 for corn for farms on property it owns in West Virginia, according to records provided to AP under the Freedom of Information Act. Both figures far exceed the program's median payments: \$6,438 for soybeans and \$152 for corn.

President Donald Trump's administration set up the Market Facilitation Program to help offset losses caused by tariffs, basing the payouts on bushels produced. The program does not require farms to demonstrate their operations have been damaged by the trade war.

Loopholes have allowed many large, moneyed farming operations to blow past the \$125,000 cap, according to an AP analysis of the payments. Critics, including U.S. Sen. Charles Grassley, an Iowa Republican, have called for tighter oversight on where the taxpayer funds are funneled.

"We really think you should be subsidizing people who need the help. It doesn't make a whole lot of sense for taxpayers to be providing billions of dollars to wealthy farmers who do not need the subsidies," said Anne Weir Schechinger, a senior economic analyst at the Environmental Working Group, which tracks federal farm subsidy programs.

More subsidies for the Justice family company could be on the way. The administration has rolled out another \$16 billion in aid for farmers hurt by the president's trade policies but made some changes after criticism that large farming organizations were finding ways around the caps. Officials have increased the cap to \$250,000 for the second round and payment calculations are based on acres planted and location instead of production.

Justice on Thursday told reporters he wasn't aware of the payments and said many other farms also received money from the aid package. His comments came after a fundraiser for his reelection that was headlined by Donald Trump, Jr. and held at a lavish resort Justice owns called The Greenbrier.

"They got the exact goodness that I got, in this situation," Justice said of the other farms, according to an audio recording posted online by a reporter for Ogden Newspapers.

Information on how the trade war has affected the Justice farms wasn't available. Officials in Greenbrier

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 43 of 47

County, home to the subsidized farms, declined to release the company's agriculture data to the AP, as did the United States Department of Agriculture's regional National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Justice's government spokesman referred questions and an interview request to a representative for Justice's companies, who issued a statement saying tens of thousands of farms and ranches with products "directly impacted" by Chinese tariffs received money under the subsidies.

"Justice Farms of North Carolina was one of more than 3,000 farms in that state alone, and nearly 40,000 farms and businesses nationwide, that received support from this program. It's absurd for anyone to use this important program as the basis for cynical political attacks," said Brian Walsh, a spokesman for the Justice companies.

Walsh did not detail losses suffered by Justice Farms of North Carolina in the U.S. trade war.

West Virginia property records show the company has three farming properties and one residential building not far from the governor's resort. The properties have a combined value of \$1.87 million and span nearly 700 acres (280 hectares), with one including a full-size tennis court, according to state records.

The sprawling farms are nestled into a relatively flat stretch of land between sections of the Appalachian Mountains. On a recent visit, the farms were covered with rows upon rows of tall, dry stalks of corn.

Belinda Biafore, the chairwoman of the West Virginia Democratic Party, issued a statement Thursday criticizing Justice for obtaining the subsidy.

"Real, hardworking farmers are being hurt by President Trump's trade war. So much so that he is having to provide government subsidies," she said. "Many of those farmers desperately need subsidy money to feed their families, but Governor Jim Justice does not."

County deed records in North Carolina, where the business is registered, show a dizzying series of property transfers between a Justice-owned entity, the James C. Justice Companies, and Justice Farms of North Carolina without any meaningful payment. The transactions, some involving just \$10, are the subject of a federal lawsuit brought by a set of businesses that accuse the Justice companies of violating the RICO Act and masking their worth so they can skirt a debt. The suit seeks to force the companies to pay nearly \$17 million.

The business structure of Justice's many companies has perplexed litigants as well as federal prosecutors. In June, the U.S. attorney for the southern district of West Virginia asked a judge to hold the Justice family accountable for a more than \$1 million court-ordered sanction against one of their companies after deeming it a shell corporation. One of Justice's other businesses quickly moved to pay the bill.

With a net worth estimated at \$1.5 billion, Justice lists more than 100 business interests on his most recent financial disclosure form. When Justice became governor, he said he wanted to put all his businesses in a blind trust but has not done so, causing criticism when his private and public roles intersect.

A prominent Republican state senator called for Justice to resign this summer after the U.S. government sued nearly two dozen of his coal businesses for failing to pay safety fines. Federal prosecutors in a public corruption unit have sent three subpoenas to his administration requesting information about his businesses and resort.

Justice has tried to put some distance between himself and his companies, saying his children control them. He has said the process of putting his businesses in a blind trust "has been slowed down by the multitude of financial institutions that work with my family's companies."

In the case of Justice Farms of North Carolina, the governor was listed as a manager in North Carolina business registry filings up until 2018, when his daughter's name replaced his. The company has not been included in his financial disclosures filed with the ethics commission in West Virginia.

Justice's general counsel, Brian Abraham, explained the absence by saying the governor's children own the business but could not say exactly why it wasn't included on financial disclosures when Justice was listed as a manager. He noted that a third-party company handles the Justice family business registry filings.

---

Riin Aljas contributed to this story from Washington.

## Asian shares fall back after China reports economy weakened

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Share prices retreated in Asia after China reported Friday that its economy grew at an annual rate of 6.0% in the latest quarter.

The Shanghai Composite index gave up early gains, losing 0.6% to 2,960.55 while Hong Kong's Hang Seng shed 0.2% to 26,800.24. Australia's S&P ASX 200 declined 0.6% to 6,643.00 and the Kospi in South Korea slipped 0.1% to 2,075.33.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index advanced 0.2% to 22,492.34 and shares also rose in Jakarta but fell in the rest of Southeast Asia and in Taiwan.

The 6.0% growth pace for July-September was worse than forecast and the slowest since China began reporting quarterly 26 years ago.

It adds to pressures on global growth and ups pressure on Chinese leaders to avert politically dangerous job losses as they fight a tariff war with President Donald Trump over Beijing's trade surplus and technology ambitions.

While some of the data for September were stronger, "pressure on economic activity should intensify in the coming months," Julian Evans-Pritchard of Capital Economics said in a commentary.

"Cooling global demand will continue to weigh on exports, fiscal constraints mean that infrastructure spending will wane in the near-term and the recent boom in property construction looks set to unwind."

Overnight, stocks closed broadly higher on Wall Street Thursday as investors welcomed another batch of encouraging quarterly results from big companies.

A breakthrough in negotiations over Britain's exit from the European Union also helped put traders in a buying mood.

The gains erased the market's modest losses from the day before. Despite a choppy week of trading, the benchmark S&P 500 index is on track for its second straight weekly gain.

Several companies have turned in surprisingly good third-quarter results and outlooks. That's helped to ease some investors' concerns over the economy, though red flags remain over the trade war.

"About 76% of those that have reported have beat on earnings," said Adam Taback, deputy chief investment officer at Wells Fargo Private Bank.

The forecasts from companies haven't been as negative as many expected, Taback said, but many have raised concerns about "slowing global growth and risk of trade wars."

The S&P 500 index gained 0.3% to 2,997.95. The index is within 0.1% of its all-time high set in July.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average briefly slipped into the red, but managed to add 0.1% to 27,025.88. The Nasdaq rose 0.4% to 8,156.85.

Traders favored smaller-company stocks. The Russell 2000 index climbed 1.1%, to 1,541.84.

Bond prices fell. The yield on the 10-year Treasury note rose to 1.75% from 1.74% late Wednesday.

The market climbed in the early going as investors reviewed earnings reports from several companies, including Netflix, CSX and Morgan Stanley.

U.S. stocks also got a boost from news that Britain had reached a tentative deal to separate from the European Union. The deal still faces a potentially tough fight for approval in Britain's divisive Parliament.

In other trading, benchmark crude oil lost 12 cents to \$53.81 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It rose 57 cents to settle at \$53.93 a barrel on Thursday.

Brent crude oil, the international standard, lost 33 cents to \$59.58 a barrel.

The dollar fell to 108.56 Japanese yen from 108.66 yen on Thursday. The euro strengthened to \$1.1127 from \$1.1126.

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



# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 45 of 47

## 'Spirited Away,' other Studio Ghibli films head to HBO Max

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The vast catalog of storied Japanese animation house Studio Ghibli is heading to the new HBO Max streaming service.

Films such as "Princess Mononoke," "My Neighbor Totoro" and Oscar-winner "Spirited Away" will be among the titles available to stream when HBO Max launches in spring 2020.

The deal — the first time the studio's library will be available on a streaming platform — was announced Thursday for unspecified terms.

Studio Ghibli has a passionate fan base of its richly animated epic films from directors like Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata.

HBO Max is owned by WarnerMedia, which is assembling streaming content from its networks that include TNT, TBS, Cartoon Network and Warner Bros. studio.

"Spirited Away," about an abandoned village that's a getaway for spirits and demons, won the best animated Oscar in 2002.

## Pelosi moves on drug prices despite falling-out with Trump

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is plowing ahead with her bill to allow Medicare to negotiate prescription drug prices despite a breakdown in relations with her chief bargaining partner on the issue — President Donald Trump.

The nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office has estimated the legislation would save Medicare \$345 billion over seven years, partly because some seniors would no longer have to skimp on costly medicines, and they'd stay healthier.

A separate estimate from nonpartisan analysts at the Department of Health and Human Services found that households would save \$158 billion over 10 years.

But the budget office also cautioned that squeezing drugmakers could mean that some new medications — 3% to 5% — won't make it to market.

Such trade-offs were front and center Thursday as House committees considered the legislation. The Energy and Commerce committee as well as the Education and Labor panel voted largely along party lines to advance the bill. Ways and Means held a hearing. Democrats and Republicans say Pelosi is moving quickly to get the bill ready for a floor vote.

"These are jaw-dropping savings," said Rep. Anna Eshoo, D-Calif., who chairs the health subcommittee of Energy and Commerce. "This is legislation that is going to make a true, tangible difference in the lives of the American people."

Eshoo said the money could be used to provide dental, vision and hearing benefits for Medicare recipients or could be reinvested in drug research at the National Institutes of Health.

But at another hearing before Ways and Means, Rep. Kevin Brady, R-Texas, caustically dubbed the Pelosi bill the "Fewer Cures for Patients Act." Brady said the budget office finding that one consequence could be fewer drug approvals should be a stop sign for lawmakers.

Although supporters of the legislation note that the CBO said only a small share of new drugs would be affected, Brady said, "One cure lost is one cure too many."

The legislation from Pelosi, D-Calif., would authorize Medicare to negotiate prices for the costliest drugs — including insulin — using lower prices paid in other economically advanced countries as the reference point. The budget office says that could result in price cuts of 40% to 55% for pharmacy drugs subject to negotiations. The bill would allow private insurance plans to also get Medicare's price.

As a hammer to force companies to negotiate, Pelosi would impose steep sales taxes on the medications at issue. Overall, budget analysts estimated the legislation would cut industry revenues by \$500 billion to \$1 trillion over 10 years. The CBO says those numbers are preliminary.

Congressional Republicans are broadly opposed to allowing Medicare to negotiate drug prices, so the legislation has no chance in the Senate unless Trump gets behind it.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 46 of 47

As a candidate, Trump called for Medicare negotiations, and as president, he's repeatedly complained that countries with cheaper medicines are taking advantage of U.S. consumers. Pelosi's office has been in communication with top White House officials for months. Congressional Republicans say negotiations are best left to insurers that administer Medicare's prescription drug benefit.

If Trump's anger over the Pelosi-initiated impeachment probe sinks the effort, lawmakers of both parties would face voters next year with nothing to show on a top consumer issue. The White House had no comment on the budget estimates.

A poll this week found broad public support for Medicare drug negotiations, as well as for Pelosi's idea of taxing companies that won't come to the table. But the survey from the nonpartisan Kaiser Family Foundation also showed that support can shift to opposition if people are told there could be limits on research or access to new medications.

A leading policy expert on drug costs said Pelosi has framed a crucial question: What's the right balance between fostering innovation and keeping drugs affordable?

"The savings are so large that you can't pretend for a second we don't have to look at this," said Peter Bach, director of the Center for Health Policy and Outcomes at New York's Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center.

CBO hasn't said what kinds of new drugs could be kept off the market — whether they would be copycat medications or if life-changing medications would be affected, too.

"We reduce average prices by 55%, and we will lose some new drugs — between 2.5% and 5% — that's the estimate," said Bach. "Some people will say we want everything."

Economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin, head of the center-right American Action Forum public policy group, said he's not so sure that only drugs of marginal value will be sacrificed.

He said he's not worried about major drug companies but rather about smaller research-oriented outfits that have to raise considerable sums from private investors to keep going. Will their money dry up?

"The guys sitting out there in the venture capital world are going to say, 'We're not going to do drugs anymore,'" said Holtz-Eakin. "And you can't get that money back."

## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Friday, Oct. 18, the 291st day of 2019. There are 74 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Oct. 18, 1977, West German commandos stormed a hijacked Lufthansa jetliner on the ground in Mogadishu, Somalia, freeing all 86 hostages and killing three of the four hijackers.

On this date:

In 1648, Boston shoemakers were authorized to form a guild to protect their interests; it's the first American labor organization on record.

In 1892, the first long-distance telephone line between New York and Chicago was officially opened (it could only handle one call at a time).

In 1898, the American flag was raised in Puerto Rico shortly before Spain formally relinquished control of the island to the U.S.

In 1912, black boxer Jack Johnson was arrested in Chicago, accused of violating the Mann Act because of his relationship with his white girlfriend, Lucille Cameron. (The case collapsed when Cameron refused to cooperate, but Johnson was later re-arrested and convicted on the testimony of a former mistress, Belle Schreiber.)

In 1931, inventor Thomas Alva Edison died in West Orange, New Jersey, at age 84.

In 1944, Soviet troops invaded Czechoslovakia during World War II.

In 1961, the movie musical "West Side Story," starring Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer, premiered in New York, the film's setting.

# Groton Daily Independent

Friday, Oct. 18, 2019 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 109 ~ 47 of 47

In 1962, James D. Watson, Francis Crick and Maurice Wilkins were honored with the Nobel Prize for Medicine and Physiology for determining the double-helix molecular structure of DNA.

In 1969, the federal government banned artificial sweeteners known as cyclamates (SY'-kluh-maytz) because of evidence they caused cancer in laboratory rats.

In 1972, Congress passed the Clean Water Act, overriding President Richard Nixon's veto.

In 1984, actor Jon-Erik Hexum, 26, was taken off life support six days after shooting himself in the head with a pistol loaded with a blank cartridge on the set of his TV show "Cover Up."

In 2001, CBS News announced that an employee in anchorman Dan Rather's office had tested positive for skin anthrax. Four disciples of Osama bin Laden were sentenced in New York to life without parole for their roles in the deadly 1998 bombings of two U.S. embassies in Africa.

Ten years ago: A suicide bomber struck a meeting between Revolutionary Guard commanders and Shiite and Sunni tribal leaders in the Iranian border town of Pishin, killing 42 people, including 15 Guard members. Jessica Watson, a 16-year-old Australian, steered her bright pink yacht out of Sydney Harbor to start her bid to become the youngest person to sail solo and unassisted around the world. (She succeeded, returning to Sydney Harbor in May 2010.)

Five years ago: The Supreme Court said Texas could use its controversial new voter identification law for the November election, rejecting an emergency request from the Justice Department and civil rights groups to prohibit the state from requiring voters to produce certain forms of photo ID. (Three justices dissented.) The remains of missing University of Virginia student Hannah Graham, 18, were found near Charlottesville; a suspect, Jesse Leroy Matthew Jr., is charged with first-degree murder and abduction with intent to defile. Paul Craft, 76, a songwriter and member of the country Hall of Fame, died in Nashville.

One year ago: President Donald Trump threatened to close the U.S. border with Mexico if authorities could not stop a caravan of migrants making their way from Central America. Trump threatened "very severe" consequences if the Saudis were found to have murdered Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi (jah-MAHL' khahr-SHOHK'-jee). LeBron James finished with 26 points and 12 rebounds, but the Los Angeles Lakers lost to the Portland Trail Blazers, 128-119, in James' regular-season debut with the Lakers. The Boston Red Sox advanced to the World Series, beating the Houston Astros 4-1 to win the American League Championship Series in five games.

Today's Birthdays: Actress Dawn Wells is 81. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Mike Ditka is 80. Singer-musician Russ Giguere is 76. Actor Joe Morton is 72. Actress Pam Dawber is 69. Author Terry McMillan is 68. Writer-producer Chuck Lorre is 67. Gospel singer Vickie Winans is 66. Director-screenwriter David Twohy (TOO'-ee) is 64. International Tennis Hall of Famer Martina Navratilova is 63. Actor Jon Lindstrom is 62. International Hall of Fame boxer Thomas Hearns is 61. Actor Jean-Claude Van Damme is 59. Jazz musician Wynton Marsalis is 58. Actor Vincent Spano is 57. Rock musician Tim Cross is 53. Former tennis player Michael Stich (sh-teek) is 51. Singer Nonchalant is 46. Actress Joy Bryant is 45. Rock musician Peter Svenson (The Cardigans) is 45. Actor Wesley Jonathan is 41. Rhythm-and-blues singer-actor Ne-Yo is 40. Country singer Josh Gracin is 39. Country musician Jesse Littleton (Marshall Dyllon) is 38. Olympic gold medal skier Lindsey Vonn is 35. Jazz singer-musician Esperanza Spalding is 35. Actress-model Freida Pinto is 35. Actor Zac Efron is 32. Actress Joy Lauren is 30. TV personality Bristol Palin is 29. Actor Tyler Posey is 28. Actor Toby Regbo is 28.

Thought for Today: "Only those ideas that are least truly ours can be adequately expressed in words."  
— Henri Bergson, French philosopher (1859-1941).

Copyright 2019, The Associated Press. All rights reserved.