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TODAY I CHOOSE TO LIVE
WITH GRATITUDE FOR THE
LOVE THAT FILLS MY HEART,
THE PEACE THAT RESTS
WITHIN MY SPIRIT, AND THE
VOICE OF HOPE THAT SAYS ALL
THINGS ARE POSSIBLE.
-AUTHOR UNKNOWN



Wednesday, December 4, 2019

12:30pm- 3:00pm: MathCounts at Aberdeen Roncalli Middle School

Thursday, December 5, 2019

7:00pm: MS/HS Christmas Concert at GHS Gymnasium

Friday, December 6, 2019

State Oral Interp at Yankton High School

(Rescheduled to 12-13-19) 4:15pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game (Rescheduled from 11-21-19) hosts Britton-Hecla JH

7th Grade @ 4:15 and 8th Grade @ 5:15

Saturday, December 7, 2019

9 a.m. to Noon: Santa Day at Professional Management Services

11:00am: Basketball: Girls Varsity Jamboree vs. Warner @ Warner High School

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State Oral Interp at Yankton High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Tournament at Clark Junior-Senior High School

10:00am: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Jamboree at Groton Area High School

4 p.m. to 7 p.m.: Olive Grove Tour of Homes

9:00pm- 11:30pm: FBLA Winter Semi-Formal at the GHS Gymnasium

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

What You Need To Know

Governor Noem's Budget Invests in Next Generation Industries

Governor Noem is investing in next generation industries by increasing high-speed internet access, bolstering cybersecurity development, and investing in healthcare training programs.

Connecting South Dakota

- This year, Governor Noem invested \$5 million that leveraged more than \$11.4 million in project costs to increase connectivity across South Dakota.

- Eight projects were awarded funding to bring internet access to approximately 4,800 households and more than 100 businesses in underserved parts of South Dakota.

- Governor Noem's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2021 allocates \$5 million to continue expanding internet access – and online opportunity – throughout the state.

Bolstering Cybersecurity

- Governor Noem's budget proposal for Fiscal Year 2021 invests \$396,000 for the Cyber Cync Incubator and Entrepreneurial Center at Dakota State University.

- This investment will further enhance DSU's cybersecurity operation to spur economic development, visibility, and thought-leadership – in turn, providing greater opportunities for South Dakota families and helping keep top talent in South Dakota.

Investing in Healthcare Training Programs

- South Dakota continues to see a greater demand for health professionals, and Governor Noem is allocating dollars to train the workforce to meet it.

- Governor Noem's budget invests \$5 million toward the construction of a new School of Health Sciences Building at the University of South Dakota.

What You Need To Know

Governor Noem's Budget Improves Public Safety

Governor Noem is prioritizing the safety of families and communities by combating the meth epidemic and equipping law enforcement with modernized communication tools.

Combating the Meth Epidemic

- Compared to the national average, twice as many children in South Dakota, ages 12 to 17, have reported meth use in the past year.

- From 2014 to 2018, South Dakota has seen a 200 percent increase in people seeking treatment with a primary diagnosis of meth.

- Addiction to meth requires more intensive therapy than many other addictions, which is why providing the necessary resources is crucial to combating the meth crisis in South Dakota.

- Governor Noem is committing \$3.7 million to support intensive meth treatment and enforcement.

- With this funding, Governor Noem has made a commitment to ensure the criminal justice system has the necessary resources to enforce the law.

Equipping Law Enforcement with Modernized Communications Tools

- In 2003, South Dakota created the state radio system that formed a single, uniform communications system for first responders across the state. The aging infrastructure and software need an update.

- Governor Noem's budget dedicates \$5.1 million to improve the statewide communication systems for local law enforcement and first responders across South Dakota.

- This builds on the \$4.6 million appropriated by Governor Noem and the legislature last year to fulfill the State's commitment to law enforcement and ensure a smooth transition to the new, modernized system.

What You Need To Know

Governor Noem's Budget Strengthens Families

Governor Noem is strengthening families by designating funds for foster parent training, supporting family reunification, and improving services for child maltreatment victims.

Supporting Foster Families

- This year, Governor Noem has worked to highlight the need for more foster families, and South Dakotans have risen to the challenge.
- Governor Noem's budget designates \$129,420 in general funds for additional foster parent training.
- These funds will be used to provide more resources that allow interested individuals to complete the required training classes and home studies.

Supporting Family Reunification

- Nearly one in 10 South Dakota children have had a parent incarcerated at some point in their childhood.
- Governor Noem's budget includes \$118,366 to create a new position in state government that will help prepare female offenders to return to their families and communities after completing their sentence.
- The position will utilize evidence-based case management proven to reduce the likelihood female offenders will recidivate.

Improving Services for Child Maltreatment Victims

- The success of the next generation is stunted when children are raised in unsafe homes.
- Governor Noem's budget allocates \$100,964 for comprehensive child maltreatment victim services.
- Through this allocation, the State will add a position dedicated to ensuring child safety, leading maltreatment investigations, and facilitating comprehensive services for child maltreatment victims across South Dakota.

What You Need To Know

Governor Noem's Budget Supports Education in South Dakota

Governor Noem's budget better equips educators and schools by adjusting funding formulas for general and special education.

Equipping Educators

- During Fiscal Year 2021, general education student counts are projected to increase by approximately one percent.
- Governor Noem's budget includes funding for increased enrollment in South Dakota's public K-12 schools.

Strengthening Special Education

- During Fiscal Year 2021, special education student counts are projected to increase by approximately two percent.
- Governor Noem's budget adjusts the amount of funding schools receive for special education disability levels. These adjustments will increase funding to South Dakota school districts by nearly \$14 million.
- For Fiscal Year 2021, allocations will be adjusted as follows:
 - Level One (Mild Disability) - \$5,665.27 to \$6,148.00
 - Level Two (Cognitive Disability or Emotional Disorder) - \$13,074.98 to \$14,646.00
 - Level Three (Hearing Impairment, Deafness, Visual Impairment, Deaf-Blindness, Orthopedic Impairment, or Traumatic Brain Injury) - \$16,664.57 to \$19,182.00
 - Level Four (Autism) - \$16,160.97 to \$15,395.00
 - Level Five (Multiple Disabilities) - \$28,865.25 to \$32,328.00
 - Level Six (Prolonged Assistance) - \$8,314.11 to \$8,256.00

What You Need To Know

Governor Noem's Budget Supports Long-Term Care Services

Governor Noem is building sustainable models of care to ensure individuals have improved access to quality, long-term care services.

Supporting Long-Term Care Services

- For Fiscal Year 2020, Governor Noem signed a budget that included a 10 percent inflation rate for nursing home providers, equating to nearly \$18.1 million in total ongoing funds for South Dakota nursing homes.
- Governor Noem's budget proposes \$2.6 million in total funds to help change the assisted living care reimbursement model, which will better equip providers to accommodate individuals.
- With this change, assisted living facilities will be reimbursed using actual cost report data, and tiered rates will be implemented with increases based on average care staffing wages.

What You Need To Know

Governor Noem's Budget Provides Disaster Relief

Governor Noem's budget builds partnerships with local governments to provide disaster relief resources and implement programs to mitigate future disasters.

Providing Disaster Relief

- Sixty-three South Dakota counties submitted disaster declarations following the record-breaking storms, tornadoes, and floods that damaged homes, businesses and public infrastructure this year.
- Governor Noem's budget creates a new loan program for cities, counties, townships, and tribes that will make it possible to apply for loans from the Emergency and Disaster Fund and includes disaster funding for long-term recovery.
- Noem's budget allocates \$9,918,359 to fund disaster relief.
- Loans from the Emergency and Disaster Fund will provide cash flow for infrastructure repairs and assist local governments that demonstrate a need for state support.

Mitigating Future Disasters

- Mitigation plans identify an area's most likely hazards and document projects that can better protect people and property against similar circumstances.
- Governor Noem's budget adds state dollars to lower the match requirement for local governments and encourages local participation in mitigation projects.
- The Emergency and Disaster Fund will be used for loans to provide cash flow for mitigation projects.

Highlighting Existing Resources

- Governor Noem is expanding awareness of disaster-related programs available to counties and communities.

Noem's Budget Address (as prepared for delivery):

Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, members of the legislature, and my fellow South Dakotans.

We meet today with an incredible year behind us and great potential before us. After the year that we have had to endure, from blizzards to flooding to tornadoes, South Dakota families once again showed the nation how strong we are and how resilient we can be. Our people are ready to tackle the future, and it is up to us to make sure that we are setting our state up for long-term, successful growth.

In our time together today, I will provide an overview of the state's economy, revenues, and expenses. But, perhaps most importantly, I will outline the conditions needed to enable our families, workers, and businesses to thrive for many years to come.

Like last year, what we are discussing today is only a high-level overview; it doesn't touch on everything I'm recommending. If you want to dive into all the details, please read through my budget book and the deck of appendix slides attached to this presentation on my website.

Now, last year, my husband and First Gentleman, Bryon, thought the Budget Address needed a little something extra. As you may recall, he promised everyone popcorn. Well, Bryon is a man of his word and there's popcorn on your desks.

When I travel across the state and around the country, people often remark on how strong South Dakota's financial position is compared to the rest of the nation. Like you all, I take pride in the fact that we structurally balance our budget and have a AAA credit rating, and I'm committed to maintaining it while ensuring future security and growth for the people of South Dakota.

As you probably already suspect, money is tight this year. But just as South Dakotans always do, we will find a way to be successful with the resources at our disposal. At my direction, state agencies have already tightened their belts. Throughout today's discussion, I will explain why I think we need to scale back certain areas of the budget in order to provide funding for areas that will make our state stronger.

I want to make one thing clear: the men and women who work for our state are incredible people. Each and every day, I am amazed at their efforts to make this state run as efficiently and as effectively as possible. In short, I want to commend our state employees for their commitment and dedication to the hardworking taxpayers of South Dakota.

One final note before I jump into the numbers: when I ran for Governor, I committed to make transparency a cornerstone of my administration. Last year, I unveiled a new website that made it easier to navigate state spending. But today, we are expanding on that initiative and opening up the state's budget even more. South Dakotans will be able to view my recommended budget, the budget the legislature adopts, as well as the actual spending of those dollars in an interactive, easy to use format. I encourage all of you – as well as every South Dakotan – to bookmark, [OPEN.SD.GOV](https://open.sd.gov), and to visit the new open budget link. Building a strong foundation for future economic growth and opportunities for South Dakota families requires buy-in from the public, so I want everyone to keep an eye on our state's fiscal position.

Let's dive in.

In conjunction with outside economic experts, I look to the Council of Economic Advisors and BFM staff to inform the assumptions included in my budget proposal.

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Historically low unemployment rates, rising wages, a strong housing market, and record-level consumer confidence demonstrate the strength of our economy.

Now, nationwide, the economy faces headwinds from slower growth in the rest of the world, uncertainty about the 2020 elections as well as current trade negotiations.

As of today, we expect continued positive economic development, but we must remain vigilant, especially given recent slow revenue growth.

Inflation is another important variable to keep an eye on, because it has a direct impact on the growth of our sales tax. Traditionally speaking, higher inflation creates stronger growth in sales tax revenue, but lower inflation, as we've seen over the past several years, leads to slower growth in sales tax. We expect that inflation will be in the 1.9-2.1 percent range over the next two years, which is lower than the previous two years.

Finally, as you know, agriculture is a major component of our state's economy. From the trade war to flooding, our farmers and ranchers have dealt with a lot this past year. We are already looking ahead to the spring, wondering what the weather has in store for us. The prospect of a trade deal getting done this year or early next year continues to change on a daily basis. With these factors in mind, we are assuming that the agriculture sector will stay pretty flat over the next year.

With that background on economic conditions, let's look at the full revenue picture, including the revisions for the current year, FY20, and estimates for FY21.

This chart shows the year-over-year increase in adopted revenues for the past five years. This averages to approximately \$52.1 million in new, ongoing revenue per year that this legislature has adopted. Please keep that number in mind as we talk about my recommended revenue estimate.

Sales and Use Tax accounts for roughly 63 percent of our state's ongoing revenues. Understanding recent trends around this major revenue source is important to understanding our overall revenue picture.

In FY19, sales and use tax collections grew at 3.6 percent over 2018. This was 1.3 percent short of the revised estimate that was adopted last February. Now, to meet our adopted estimate in FY20, we would need to have growth of 4.9 percent over 2019 actuals. You can see that year to date, we are seeing growth of 4.1 percent.

In light of this, my recommendation is to revise our sales and use tax growth rate to 4.5 percent.

This slide shows the major categories of general fund revenues – you'll see a side by side comparison of what was adopted last year to what I'm recommending today. In total, you can see I recommend a downward adjustment of \$5.9 million dollars.

As shown on that top line, by moderating growth expectations for the sales and use tax, it leads to a reduction in the estimate of \$3.6 million dollars.

Following the chart down, the lottery has been revised by \$1.4 million, this includes instant, online, and video lottery receipts to the general fund. Video lottery is currently running 4.7 percent higher than a year ago.

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The contractor's excise tax has been revised down by \$3.7 million. To date, we are 1.0 percent lower than the adopted estimate. We still anticipate healthy housing and construction activity, but just not at the level that was originally estimated.

The insurance company tax has been adjusted down by \$1.7 million.

The remaining revisions get us to the total \$5.9 million reduction.

Before we dive in to FY21 numbers, I want to talk about some federal tax legislation that impacts our budget.

Senator Thune introduced legislation in 2015 that eliminated a grandfather clause in federal law that allowed South Dakota to continue taxing internet access services. I cosponsored similar legislation in the House of Representatives. This legislation was signed into law in February of 2016 and starting next July 1, it will provide permanent tax relief to South Dakota families and businesses who currently pay the government for simply accessing the internet. This will lead to an estimated \$30 million in tax relief for South Dakotans, with \$20 million of that coming from state revenues and approximately \$10 million from local governments.

This chart is just like the previous one, but it adds the recommended 2021 ongoing receipts.

Based on our modeling, we project an increase in Sales and Use Tax of \$36.6 million. Remember, as we just discussed, of the \$30 million in tax relief provided by the internet tax freedom forever act, \$20 million is in state taxes for a net increase of \$16.6 million.

Lottery is projected to grow by \$3.6 million.

Contractor's Excise tax is estimated to remain strong next year growing by \$4 million.

Insurance company tax is projected to grow by \$4.6 million.

Tobacco taxes continue to decline as fewer people use the products, so the estimate is forecasted to decrease by \$1.8 million.

In total, for FY21, I propose a revenue forecast of \$1 billion, 723.4 million. This is \$28.1 million higher than the revised FY20 forecast.

While we have \$28.1 million in new ongoing revenue, there are a couple of factors that must be taken into consideration to understand what is actually available to fund new, ongoing expenditures.

Last year, the adopted budget left \$500 thousand dollars on the bottom line.

As we discussed, the revisions in the current year are \$5.9 million, which also must be accounted for in the next year.

Looking at the full picture, we are left with \$22.7 million of total revenue available to fund new, ongoing expenditures.

Now, at the beginning of the revenue discussion, I showed a slide with the past five years of adopted ongoing revenue increases. This chart shows how our revised 2020 and 2021 estimates compare. The

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model calls for an additional \$42.7 million in ongoing revenue this year, while slightly below recent trends, it could be considered a fairly average year for ongoing revenue increases.

When we account for the estimated \$20 million dollars in tax relief that is being provided to South Dakotans, the picture changes quite significantly: great news for South Dakota families and also a lean budget year for the state.

Now that we have discussed the revenue picture, I want to talk about some of my budget proposals for the current year, FY20.

Here is our total, one-time revenue available. Revised FY20 ongoing revenue is down \$5.9 million.

We have other, one-time funding available in the amount of \$7.7 million. Most of this is attributable to refinancing gains from low interest rates.

South Dakota is very cautious about using reserves, and we should all be proud of that. When we talk about our reserve funds, we are talking about the combined balance of the budget reserve fund and the general revenue replacement fund. While maintaining 10 percent in reserve funds, we are able to spend \$16.8 million in the current year for one-time investments.

In total, we have \$18.6 million in one-time money available to spend.

It's important that we find ways to invest this money, so we can capture gains for South Dakota families for years to come.

One of my top priorities is keeping South Dakotans safe. One component of that is equipping our law enforcement and first responders with the tools they need to protect our communities. In 2003, we created the state radio system - forming a single, uniform communications system for first responders in every corner of this state. However, with the aging infrastructure and software, our current system needs an update.

I recommend we spend \$5.1 million in one-time funds, which augments the \$4.6 million you appropriated last year, thus fulfilling our commitment to local law enforcement and first responders to upgrade our statewide communication system. This will ensure a smooth transition to the new system so there are no gaps in protecting South Dakota families.

Additionally, by now you all know of my vision for high-speed internet in our state. We absolutely need faster, more reliable connections so everyone in our state can participate in the next generation of South Dakota's economy.

We've made improvements in this area, but there's still more work to be done.

In Mellette, for example, students without access to high-speed internet at their homes have their parents drive them to school late at night so they can use the school's internet to do their homework. Many nights, the school has a line of cars in front of it. Sadly, this isn't unique to Mellette - half of our counties have areas where one in four people have no high-speed internet access.

Last year's investment of \$5 million leveraged more than \$11.4 million in direct project costs to increase connectivity across the state. Eight projects were awarded funding to bring internet access to about 4,800 households and more than 100 businesses in underserved parts of South Dakota.

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In addition to that, because the state had a broadband plan in place, applicants for the federal Reconnect dollars scored extra points. Those awards are just starting to come in, but we're being told those dollars should bring the investment in South Dakota up to nearly \$25 million, possibly more.

But we must do more to bring our communities into the 21st century, so let's continue investing in this project with another \$5 million this year.

We must also invest in our universities and its training programs for the next generation. Eleven of the University of South Dakota's fastest-growing majors are in the School of Health Sciences, representing a significant opportunity for future growth in our state. As we continue to see greater demand for this skillset, we must be prepared to train our workforce to meet it.

Therefore, I'm recommending \$5 million dollars be dedicated to the construction of a new School of Health Sciences Building at USD.

I'm also recommending we dedicate \$396 thousand for the Cyber Cync Incubator at Dakota State University. With the investment of \$60 million to open the MadLabs facility this fall, a new era of research and development began. We can further enhance this by linking the MadLabs operation to this incubator to spur economic development – in turn, providing greater opportunities for South Dakota families and helping keep top talent in our state.

Let's turn to storm recovery.

Over the last year, South Dakota has been devastated by catastrophic weather events. But as we all know, South Dakotans are unique. Our people set an example of resolve and community that the rest of the nation could aspire to. In the words of Tuff Hedeman, my friend and a four-time world champion bull rider: we bear down, try hard, and never quit. Never.

For example, following the Sioux Falls tornadoes, one man spent his weekend driving around town responding to 211 requests and lending a hand wherever it was needed. He fixed flat tires on tractors being used for cleanup. He cleared loads of trees and debris. He even helped an older gentleman clean up in a couple hours what the man thought would take him a month.

This story is just one of many. It makes me so proud – it should make us all so proud – of our people and our state.

But there is still so much that needs to be fixed and rebuilt in our communities.

My budget includes a proposal to partner with local governments to provide not only disaster relief but also resources for mitigating future disasters.

Local governments have highlighted their cash flow concerns with high-dollar repairs. To answer this need, starting with the 2019 disasters, we will now offer loans to cities, counties, townships, and tribes from the Emergency and Disaster Fund. The state will continue to pay for 10% of the cost of the disasters but will now offer loans for the other 90%.

The National Institute of Building Sciences has found that mitigation funding can save \$6 dollars in future disaster recovery costs for every \$1 dollar spent on hazard mitigation. It is our belief that the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program and the Pre-Disaster Mitigation Program will help cover project costs to improve infrastructure resiliency, provide long-term solutions to repetitive loss situations, and help avoid reliance

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on federal dollars for future recovery.

Even though these programs have existed for years, they have not been used to their full advantage because of local funding concerns.

In addition to lowering the match requirement from 25% to 15%, the state will also provide loans from the Emergency and Disaster Fund for the local share of these mitigation programs.

We must rebuild damaged communities, build stronger communities for the future, and ensure long-term resilience so our families can thrive.

Obviously, I've only discussed a few of my one-time spending proposals. To the appropriators adding this up, it would appear that we have spent more money than what is available. However, my FY20 budget proposal also includes various increases and more than \$17 million in reductions to various state agencies, which are laid out in detail in the budget book.

Now that we have discussed one-time expenses, let's turn to the proposed ongoing expenses for FY21.

As a reminder, this slide shows our ongoing revenue available. We are projecting \$22.7 million will be available to fund new expenses.

First, let's look at the overview of ongoing expenses.

Due to the lack of revenue growth, I will not be able to recommend inflationary increases for education or Medicaid providers or for state employee salaries.

But my budget does include the following increases:

For education, I am including funding tied to increased K-12 student enrollments. I am also recommending additional funding for the special education allocation rebase.

My recommendation also includes increases in mandatory provider inflation for things like Medicare crossovers, prescription drugs, and federally qualified health centers. Additionally, I recommend funding for increases in Medicaid utilization and cost, as well as increases for home and community-based services for the developmentally disabled. Long-term care services continue to be a priority in this state. My budget includes a new funding mechanism for assisted living services. I am proposing rate tiers for these providers to offer a broader range of services.

For state employees, I am recommending that we maintain the current health insurance benefits and add enhancements to family leave.

In FY21, general education student counts are projected to increase by approximately 1 percent, and special education student counts are projected to increase by approximately 2 percent.

There are six disability categories funded in special education. The allocation amounts for each of the six categories have been recalculated based on statewide average expenditures for the previous three years and take effect in FY21. These allocation adjustments are projected to result in nearly \$14 million in total funds going to school districts for special education.

We all know – many of us too well – how big a problem meth use is across our state. In South Dakota,

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twice as many 12 to 17-year-olds reported using meth in the last year as compared to the national average. Not only does it devastate our families, but it also costs the state millions of dollars every year.

Recently, I heard a story about a young woman – we'll call her Jenny – who became addicted to drugs in her early 20s. Her addiction spun out of control pretty quickly, and it wasn't long before she found herself in jail, homeless, and unemployed. People tried to help her, but she sunk deeper and deeper into addiction.

Jenny found out she was pregnant when she was three months along. She tried to get clean, but relapsed hard shortly before the birth of her baby boy. She was high on drugs when she gave birth. Because of her addiction and the concerns for the baby, the courts gave Child Protection Services custody of her son when he was released from the hospital.

Jenny was broken. The one thing in the world that was hers had been taken from her. And she hit rock bottom. But it was also her turning point.

Jenny started working with a Family Services Specialist from CPS and the foster family who was caring for her baby. She worked hard, knowing that it wasn't just about her anymore – her actions would determine whether she would ever be able to have her son returned to her. She went through drug court, found housing and a job, and steadily made her way toward recovery.

Jenny's son is three now and they live together. They have maintained a relationship with the foster family that cared for him – in many ways, they've become like extended family. She's been promoted in her job and has been clean now for almost three years.

When I heard this story, I was amazed at the redemption it portrays. And I want to hear stories like that over and over. But I also see that the road to recovery requires help. It takes people raising their hands to be foster parents – to be that middle-mom or middle-dad that these kids need. It takes social workers who commit to doing the journey together. It takes pastors and teachers and counselors and doctors. Judges, neighbors, police officers, and people who know just when to offer a word of encouragement.

The health and well-being of our kids is something each of us here today cares deeply about. We know that addiction to meth requires more intensive therapy than other addictions.

My budget contains ongoing funding to support additional intensive meth treatment. It's time this horrible drug is eradicated from our communities.

Building stronger, healthier, and safer communities begins with families.

About five years ago, Blake and Rachel Schmieg of Big Stone City were considering adoption. They had three boys biologically and had always wanted a girl. After months of thinking and praying, they decided to try foster parenting. One day, they got a call asking them to take in an 18-year-old girl named Sadie who needed a safe place to live until she finished high school. They said yes.

Sadie quickly became an important part of their life. Remembering back onto those first few weeks and months in their home, Sadie said that she felt like she was part of a family for the first time in her life. She remembers when the younger boys made Christmas ornaments for all their family members at school and made one for her. She remembers having a stocking at Christmas time. She remembers reading to the boys and feeling like she belonged.

As Sadie got closer and closer to finishing high school, they started having conversations about what

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was next and how everything would work once she went to college. Where would she go for Christmas break? Where would she leave the things that wouldn't fit in a dorm room?

Little did Sadie know that Blake and Rachel had been talking about the possibility of adoption. When they asked her if she wanted to become a permanent part of their family, Sadie started crying. She said it was the first time she had ever felt wanted.

Over the next few months, the family waded through legal tape and began the process of adoption, only to realize that the adult adoption law in South Dakota didn't fit their situation. They were told there was nothing they could do and that adoption was off the table.

As Blake said, "We hit wall after wall, but we knew this was something God had called us to do, so we looked for doors and windows."

Working with Representative Fred Deutsch, the family drafted a bill to change the law, gave testimony in front of a committee, and followed the bill through the legislative process. In March, they travelled to Pierre when I signed the bill into law. It was an incredible day.

On August 20, Sadie was legally adopted. They got the paperwork that told them what they'd known for a long time – Sadie was theirs and they were hers. Forever.

Blake and Rachel are here today. Would you stand? Thank you for all you are doing for the next generation. You're truly an inspiration to us all.

Some of you have heard me speak about how foster care and adoption have impacted my life. I grew up with a foster brother, and I've been blessed with several nieces and nephews who've brought sunshine and a new kind of love into our family. Adoption is beautiful. It's lifechanging.

Last year I spoke about the need for more foster families, and South Dakotans rose to the challenge. This year, my budget includes ongoing funding to meet the increased interest in individuals wanting to become licensed foster parents and approved adoptive parents. Every child deserves a family. Every child deserves a home.

Here is an overview of FY21 ongoing budget recommendations. We have broken this overview into major budget categories. As you can see, my ongoing recommendation includes almost \$9 million in budget reductions across a number of agencies.

The total recommended general fund increase for FY21 is \$22.7 million.

This chart shows a summary of the bottom lines for the current and upcoming fiscal years.

I began this address by noting how challenging 2019 was for our great state, but what's so exciting – the real bottom line – is that we have tremendous opportunity before us. We have some revenue challenges, yes, but I expect that will drive us to do better with the resources we have.

The growth of our current industries and the attraction of new ones will drive opportunity.

Expanding on some already successful initiatives will drive opportunity.

And laying the foundation to enhance our competitiveness with respect to other states will help ensure

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our top talent stays in South Dakota – creating more opportunity for years to come.

In his 34th and final address from the Oval Office, Ronald Reagan said the number one lesson he learned while President was that all great change in America begins at the dinner table.

The same is true today. Government programs don't drive change, it happens out there. Around the state. One conversation at a time. At dinner tables. In coffee shops. Leaning against a fencepost.

This budget sets us up for continued financial success, and I look forward to working with everyone in this chamber here today and everyone around our great state as we create and implement the policies that will grow our economy and strengthen our communities – all in service of the essential building block of our state: South Dakota's families.

Thank you.



*Olive Grove's
4th Annual*

*Christmas
Tour
of Homes
& Holiday Party*

SATURDAY, DEC. 7, 2019

TOUR OF HOMES - 4-7 P.M.
Steve & Betty Dunker
Brett & Anna Schwan
Ryan & Jennifer Schelle
Olde Bank n' Café

**COFFEE, APPLE CIDER AND
GOODIES AT THE CLUBHOUSE**

HOLIDAY PARTY - 4 P.M. TO CLOSE
A variety of snacks served
Silent Basket Items
Bidding Closes at 8:30 p.m.
Live Auction begins at 8:30 p.m.

**\$15 TICKETS AVAILABLE AT
LORI'S PHARMACY, GROTON
GROTON FORD
HAIR & COMPANY, ABERDEEN**

COME ON OUT FOR A FUN EVENING!
Support your local golf course!

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No One Turned Off the Tap: 2019 Wettest on Record

by Lura Roti, for S.D. Farmers Union

Based on 125 years of South Dakota weather data, 2019 is the wettest on record, says SDSU Extension State Climatologist, Laura Edwards.

"This season tells the story of a long-term climate trend we are seeing of wetter weather. It has created many challenges for our farmers," Edwards says. "Throughout the growing season I heard farmers say they would rather have a drought than a flood because a flood does more damage to the land and equipment. Flooding creates so much more work and managing a farm through an excessively wet year requires much more labor."

Groton farmer, Chad Johnson would agree with the farmers Edwards visited with. He can easily compare the two extremes because in 2018 his area was under a severe drought. And beginning with an April 2019 blizzard, just in time for calving season, excess moisture has challenged every aspect of his farming operation.

"The heavens opened up and it rained, rained and rained. No one ever shut off the tap," explains the fourth-generation farmer.

The 32-plus inches of rain his farm received led to a few deaths at calving and limited the number of acres Johnson was able to plant. This fall, standing water and muddy soil created by frequent rain and snow events make getting combines into corn and soybean fields challenging to say the least. "My friends and I think we tried too hard this spring to plant because now we can't get the crop harvested. I have gotten the grain cart stuck a couple times. I know people who have gotten their combine stuck," explains Johnson, 47.

As of December 2, he has 450-acres of corn left to harvest. Now, the crop is under 15-plus inches of snow. "I typically look forward to harvest. It's when I get to see what that new hybrid I planted did. It's when I receive the fruits of my labor. Not harvest 2019. This fall, farmers in our area began referring to the season as Hellvest."

Johnson's story is not unique. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, due to excess moisture, South Dakota producers were unable to plant 4 million acres. The greatest number of prevent plant acres of any state.

"It's certainly a year for the history books and I'm afraid the impacts will be seen into the future," says S.D. Secretary of Agriculture, Kim Vanneman.

Impacts like soil compaction, explains Anthony Bly, SDSU Extension Soils Field Specialist. Caused by heavy equipment tracking on excessively wet soil, soil compaction decreases the soil's ability to store water and transport nutrients, it also makes it difficult for plant's roots to penetrate the soil because "it takes the pores out of the soil," Bly says.

Like so many farmers this season, Bly, a fourth-generation Garretson farmer, had to make some tough management decisions which led to soil compaction. "Farmers, like me, did what we had to do. We needed to harvest on wet soils because the crop was ready and if we waited, we didn't know what the weather would do."

Compaction isn't the only long-term side effect of 2019 weather. When farmers are unable to plant or harvest their crops, the entire state feels the impact, Vanneman explains. "Agriculture is the backbone of South Dakota and when agriculture is impacted, there are ripple effects across the state. Producers have fewer dollars to spend in town which has negative impacts on Main Street, in small communities like Winner and large ones, like Sioux Falls."



Courtesy photo

"My friends and I think we tried too hard this spring to plant because now we can't get the crop harvested. I have gotten the grain cart stuck a couple times. I know people who have gotten their combine stuck," explains Groton farmer, Chad Johnson, 47.

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But what about the disaster relief programs and crop insurance? "These programs may help us cover our rental or land payments and input expenses, but there is no possibility of income. These payments don't cover living expenses. Most farmers will just be happy if they can break even," says Beresford farmer, Larry Birgen, 58.

Due to standing water and mud, Birgen was only able to plant 30 percent of his corn and soybean acres. Which means he didn't use all the inputs he pre-paid for at his local cooperative. Although he hopes the 2020 crop uses up the pre-paid inputs and then some, Birgen says with so many farmers in a similar situation, it makes it tough for cooperatives and privately-owned seed, agronomy and grain businesses.

"This is really hurting our cooperative," says Birgen who sits on the board of directors for Southeast Farmers Coop. "Drive by their bunkers and they are only a quarter full, and typically by this time of year they would be clear full."

Serving Union, Clay, Lincoln, Turner and Yankton Counties, many of the farmer members Southeast Farmers Coop serves have experienced challenges related to excess moisture going on three years now. The challenges extend beyond input sales, explains Don Truhe, General Manager of Southeast Farmers Coop. "If farmers can't get into their fields, not only does it impact sales of seed and fertilizer, but we don't get paid to apply the fertilizer or spray the fields."

And the 40-plus fulltime employees who count on overtime during planting and harvest also took a financial hit, which impacts the many rural communities they call home. Annually, Southeastern Farmers Coop pays more than \$3 million in salaries. "Because we didn't have the busy season we typically do, it impacts what our employees earn and their ability to spend," Truhe says. "We spent a lot of years strengthening our balance sheet just for this type of season. We will be OK. But other cooperatives or private businesses may not be."

We're in this together

With his combine parked in the shop, Johnson prays for warm weather to melt the recent snowfall. Then, he hopes for freezing temps so he can get back into his corn fields. "What we need is some poor man's concrete. If the snow melts and the ground freezes just enough, we can get this harvest wrapped up. I'm so over 2019. It's been one heck of a year for our family and friends."

Earlier this year, his family experienced a loss when a young farmer committed suicide. "This weather is taking a toll. We talk about the mental health aspect of it all the time. That's why, if there are young farmers out there who are hurting, please ask for help. It's nothing to be ashamed of."

Vanneman echoes his thoughts. "Like everyone in the industry, we've watched with growing concern the impact this year has had on the mental health of producers and others in the ag industry," she says.

Vanneman reminds South Dakotans of the resources available to farmers, ranchers, their family and friends, like the 24/7 Avera Farm and Rural Stress Hotline:1-800-691-4336.

She adds that in addition to Presidential disaster declarations, requested by Governor Noem to provide assistance to communities and counties impacted by weather, there are also programs available through U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency.

In addition to resources, Johnson says when he needs motivation, he looks to his family and friends who are farming. "We are in this together. It's a tough deal. Farmers are going bankrupt. But we are resilient. I think about the fact that my dad and uncle made it through tough times. I think about my son, Porter, who will be the fifth generation to farm, and I keep pecking away."



Courtesy of SDFU

Groton farmer, Chad Johnson talks about the challenges 32-plus inches of moisture brought to growing season 2019.

Strom starts architecture company

Jackson Strom, a GHS graduate, was featured in the Midwest Nest Magazine out of Fargo. We came across this article and got permission to run it locally. The credits are as follows:

Jackson's portrait: Dan Francis Photography
Portfolio of projects: Photography by Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss
Graphic Design: Monica Sanger
Written by: Tracy Nicholson

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profile: JACKSON STROM

s t r o m a r c h i t e c t u r e

Story by Tracy Nicholson

Portrait photography by
Dan Francis Photography

Architectural photography by
Jill Ockhardt Blaufuss

Just last month, Fargo architect and NDSU alum, Jackson Strom, took a big step toward one of his life goals, starting his own firm, Strom Architecture. Don't confuse his youth for inexperience - at 34 years-old, he's already earned a wealth of knowledge, working in the industry for the past 13 years. Strom has extensive experience in both high-end residential, remodel and commercial projects. This month, we sat down with Strom to find out more about seven of his featured projects and the vision for his firm.





LIFE BY DESIGN

By the time Strom earned his Masters in Architecture at NDSU in 2009, he had already been working in the industry since the age of 21 for Helenske Design Group. After school, he worked there for another four years, then eventually made the move to Chris Hawley Architects, where he spent the past six years.

Two years ago, Strom got married, and just four months ago, he and his wife, Lindsey, welcomed their first child, a son they named Sully. Last year, amidst his personal milestones, he also managed to become a licensed architect; it was finally time to take a pivotal step in the direction he'd dreamed of since college.

"Growing up, I always had a sketchbook, and I was always drawing - not necessarily buildings, but people, sports stars, even basketball shoes," laughed Strom. With a little nudge from his high school guidance counselor in Groton, South Dakota, Strom chose his path, pursuing the architecture program at NDSU. "After the first year of architecture school, you have to have a certain GPA to get into the second year, so I made it in and I've loved it ever since."

AESTHETIC ELEMENTS

"I don't necessarily have a signature or favorite style - I like the idea of giving clients what they want, in the style they prefer. Whether it's traditional, contemporary, or modern - then I really dive into the details of what makes a good home in that particular style. It's looking at the playbook, in a sense, and picking up on some of those little subtleties that make that aesthetic really sing," said Strom. "To me, it's more about proportion, scale and massing - a lot of times, if you get that right, it could almost be in any style."

"The plan needs to make sense as far as path of travel, symmetry, axis lines, and everything lining up - when you develop and play off of those rules, it starts to give the plans a direction."

STRUCTURAL SIMPLICITY

When it comes to function and flow, Strom says, "The simpler the better. There's a place for complicated designs, but a simple structure, designed really well, can sometimes achieve more; I feel strongly about designing efficient spaces. Some clients have preconceived ideas on room sizes, but they're not sure why they need it that large. Sometimes it just comes down to asking questions about their needs, educating

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TOUR STROM'S DESIGNS

With his roots in the small town of Groton, South Dakota, Strom had no shortage of personal projects, designing his dad's home, brother's home, a lake home for his dad's farming partner and many others. "It really hasn't been that challenging to work with family. They trust me, and they've trusted the process; they know that I'm going to give them the result they're after," said Strom.

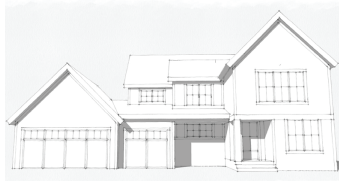
the client and talking them through the process. Interior 3-D models come in handy for this type of discussion; I'm doing that for the majority of clients right now and I think it's a tool they really value."

"My ideal client is someone who is willing to trust the process and trust me," said Strom. "Sometimes architects can end up just being the pencil for a client and that can take away from what we were trained to do." Strom can work with any general contractor and has plenty of industry connections to make educated recommendations.

FROM FLOORPLAN TO FINISHES

According to Strom, it's often overlooked that some architects can also play a pivotal role in the home's interior design. "When architects are designing a home, they're taking a very holistic approach to it; when I'm drawing the floor plan, I have in my head what the kitchen is going to look like, what the fireplace looks like, and other aspects like the ceiling details," said Strom.

"When I do a 3-D model, that's all included in there. A lot of clients think that anything done on the interior, must be done by an interior designer, but if the client has that request, I can take it a step further. I can select and detail the finishes; this includes anything that's attached to the house, like the backsplash, plumbing, hardware, fixtures, countertops and cabinetry."



TAKE A TOUR!



architecture

nest.

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p f i e f f e r c a b i n

*Strom designed this project
while at Chris Hawley Architects.*



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nick &
jenna
strom
remodel



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king remodel

Strom designed this project while at Chris Hawley Architects.



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s t r o m r e s i d e n c e



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j a c k s o n
& l i n d s e y
s t r o m
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j o h n s o n c a b i n



JACKSON STROM,

AIA / PRINCIPAL | STROM ARCHITECTURE

"I'm extremely focused on providing a good service and value, and providing a really good product at the end, that hopefully exceeds their expectations," said Strom. "I don't want to have any situations where the client feels they did not know what they were getting themselves into. I want every client to be just as excited at the end of the project as they were at the beginning."

For more information, contact:

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Jackson Strom, AIA / Principal

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stromarch.com

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A Frosty Morning

Joyce Grenz shared this photo with the Groton Daily Independent from Tuesday of the frosty morning.

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City increases fees

Some of the fees were adjusted for 2020 at the city council meeting held Tuesday. At the pool, private lesson went from \$10 per 30-minute session to \$15 per 30-minute session. That would amount to \$75 for five classes. Swimming lessons will increase from \$25 to \$30 for a two-week session. Season tickets were increased by \$5. Water aerobics increased from \$4 to \$5 per session and from \$30 for the summer to \$35 for the summer. The same applies to lap swim. Combined lap swim and aerobics increased from \$50 for the summer to \$55 for the summer.

The rental for the pool increased from \$150 to \$175 for two hours.

The planning and zoning fees increased by \$10. The building permit fees had a major overhaul with the new permit now being \$25 plus .05 percent of the total project cost. So under the old rate, a \$500,000 home was \$70 (anything \$50,001 and over was a flat \$70 fee). The new fee will be \$2,525.

Three bids were submitted for gravel bids. The low bid from Krueger Brothers was accepted for \$17.25 per cubic yard. The other bids were Hanlon Brothers for \$18.75 per cubic yard. Jensen Rock and Sand bid by the ton instead of cubic yards so that bid was not accepted.

Dwight Zerr reported that the lagoon was just emptied last month and he said he may have to discharge again this month - which would probably be an emergency discharge. The main lift station at Aspen Avenue is still running nearly 24 hours a day.

Terry Herron reported that there are nine ash trees that will need to come down this winter. The council expressed gratitude for the quick snow removal around town.

Dan Sunne said he would like to send Landon Johnson to the JUTS training school in Sioux Falls in January.

The WEB water annual meeting will be held December 6. Mayor Scott Hanlon reported that anyone wanting to go is invited to attend. "It's a very good meeting to go to," he said.

The second reading of the supplemental appropriation ordinance was approved.

The council authorized the annual Christmas lighting contest with \$100 for first place, \$75 for second place and \$50 for third place with funds to be applied to the utility bill.

Mayor Scott Hanlon also reported that the lot lines cannot be located by city employees. People will need to hire a survey company.

The council approved membership to the Northeast Council of Government at the annual fee of \$1,637.66.

Nicole Marzahn was hired as the skating rink manager at minimum wage plus 60 cents an hour plus a monthly salary of \$250. The state minimum wage will increase from \$9.10 per hour to \$9.30 per hour effective Jan. 1, 2020.

The warming house attendants, hired at minimum wage, were Anthony Schinkel, Lee Iverson, Andrew Marzahn, Kelsie Frost, Hollie Frost, Shallyn Foertsch, Anje Hinkelman, Emma Schinkel, Candace Tullis, Corbin Reich, Aspen Johnson, Ava Kramer, Austin Aberle and Sara Menzia.

Gordon Nelson was hired as a building code inspector at \$30 per inspection. This is a new position.

The first reading of the 2020 salary was approved with a rate of 2.6 percent for full time employees.

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Groton Police Report November 11-17, 2019

City miles driven: 564

County miles driven: 49

1 assist other law enforcement agencies, 2 bad driving complaints, 1 business security, 2 citizen assistance, 1 juvenile complaint, 1 lost/found item, 2 locked vehicle assistance, 1 medical/rescue/ambulance, 1 motorist assistance, 2 911 misdial/hangup, 1 fingerprint a person, 1 private property accident, 3 county vehicle accidents, 10 warnings, 1 summons, 4 speeding, 1 exhibition, 1 stop sign violation, 4 equipment issues, 1 driving under suspension 1 lane driving.

November 18-24, 2019

City miles driven: 590

County miles driven 28

1 assist other law enforcement agencies, 1 bad driving complaint, 4 citizen assistance, 2 dog complaints, 1 domestic disturbances, 1 fire assistance, 1 juvenile complaint, 3 medical/rescue/ambulance, 1 motorist assist, 3 serve papers, 3 county vehicle accidents, 16 warnings issued, 1 summons issued, 14 speeding violations, 3 equipment issues.

November 15 - December 1, 2019

City miles driven: 604 miles

County miles driven: 60 miles

1 animal call, 1 assist other law enforcement agencies, 2 welfare check on person, 4 citizen assistance, 1 locked vehicle assistance, 3 motorist assistance, 1 911 misdial/hang-up, 3 county vehicle accidents, 2 warnings issued, 5 summons issued, 1 speeding violation, 1 equipment issue, 1 possession of controlled substance, 1 DWI, 1 open container, 1 no drivers license.

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November weather in review

November 2019 was a tale of two halves in terms of temperatures. The area started out much below average (Sisseton set a record low max temp of 13 F on the 11th and a record low temp of 0 F on the 12th), but then flipped to much above average. The end result was near average temperatures on a whole for the month.

November was predominantly quite dry, and the whole area would have finished below average for the month in terms of precipitation and snow if not for a major storm at the end of the month. As it turns out, much of central South Dakota finished above average in both regards, far northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota finished below average, and those in-between finished near normal. The major storm in reference here is the Nov 29-Dec 1 Post-Thanksgiving winter storm, when significant impacts resulted from heavy snow and strong winds (for more: <https://www.weather.gov/abr/Nov29-Dec1Post-ThanksgivingWinterStorm>). Aberdeen ranks 8th for snowiest November on record with 17.7", Kennebec 8th with 14.5", Timber Lake 7th with 12.6", Pierre 6th with 11.6" and Mobridge 6th with 12.2". Amazingly, after being impacted by both the October 10-12th and Nov 29-Dec1st winter storms, Eureka has already reported 29.6" of snow for the season as of *Dec 3rd*. Their average for the whole season is 43.2".

This winter storm and other precipitation events this month further contribute to an incredibly wet year, and add to concerns about potential spring 2020 flooding. Updated rankings for total year-to-date precipitation through November 30th:

Aberdeen: 29.48" ranks 11th, Wheaton: 30.08" ranks 11th, Watertown: 32.34" ranks 2nd (38.67" in 1977), Timber Lake: 29.61" ranks 2nd (33.45" in 1915), Pierre: 29.94" ranks 2nd (31.80" in 1997), Mobridge: 28.83" ranks 1st (26.76" in 1915), Sisseton: 33.89" ranks 1st (32.21" in 2005), Kennebec: 34.99" ranks 1st (29.65" in 1915)

Updated rankings of total yearly precipitation through November 30th (every additional hundredth of precipitation from now through the remaining 31 days of the calendar year will only add to these rankings/records):

Wheaton: 30.08" ranks 12th, Aberdeen: 29.48" ranks 11th, Timber Lake: 29.61" ranks 2nd (34.10" in 1915), Pierre: 29.94" ranks 2nd (31.85" in 1997), Watertown: 32.34" ranks 2nd (40.04" in 1977), Mobridge: 28.83" ranks 1st (26.86" in 1915), Sisseton: 33.89" ranks 1st (32.30 in 1993), Kennebec: 34.99" ranks 1st (30.25" in 1915)

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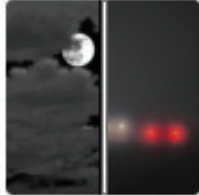
Today



Sunny

High: 33 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy
then Fog

Low: 26 °F

Thursday



Fog then
Mostly Cloudy

High: 30 °F

Thursday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 7 °F

Friday



Partly Sunny

High: 25 °F



NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Dry and
Seasonable

Highs Today:
32-40°

Highs on Thursday:
27-35°



Published on: 12/03/2019 at 11:05PM

Slow snow melt will continue today across most of the area. Dry weather and seasonable temperatures are expected through Saturday.

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Today in Weather History

December 4, 1993: Winds gusting to 40 to 60 mph combined with snow cover along with new snow to cause blizzard conditions making travel hazardous across north central and northeast South Dakota. Several vehicles were stranded or slid into ditches. The winds toppled a private building under construction at Selby in Walworth County. New snowfall amounts were generally from one to three inches.

December 4, 1952: The month of December started off with chilly temperatures in London. This cold resulted in Londoners to burn more coal to heat up their homes. Then on December 5, a high pressure settled over the Thames River causing a dense layer of smog to develop. The smog became so thick and dense by December 7 that virtually no sunlight was seen in London. Most conservative estimates place the death toll at 4,000, with some estimating the smog killed as many as 8,000 individuals.

December 4, 2002: A total solar eclipse was experienced by millions of people from Africa to Australia, and from space.

1786 - The first of two great early December storms began. The storm produced 18 inches of snow at Morristown NJ, and twenty inches of snow at New Haven CT. It also resulted in high tides at Nantucket which did great damage. (David Ludlum)

1972 - Winds gusting to 70 mph sent the temperature at Livingston, MT, plunging from 52 degrees to 18 degrees in just twenty minutes. (The Weather Channel)

1982 - The temperature in New York City's Central Park reached 72 degrees to establish a record high for December. The month as a whole was also the warmest of record. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front crossing the Pacific Coast Region brought high winds and heavy rain to California. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 55 mph at Newport Beach CA, and Mount Wilson CA was drenched with 2.17 inches of rain in six hours. Gale force winds prevailed along the Northern Pacific Coast, and winds in the Tehachapis Mountains of southern California gusted to 60 mph. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Gale force winds continued to usher cold arctic air into the northeastern U.S. Winds gusted to 65 mph at Windsor Locks CT. Up to a foot of snow blanketed the higher elevations of Vermont. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Seventeen cities in the eastern U.S., including nine in Florida, reported record low temperatures for the date. Lakeland FL reported a record low of 31 degrees, and Watertown NY was the cold spot in the nation with a low of 20 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2002 - An early season winter storm brought an expansive shield of snow and ice through much of the eastern U.S., from the lower Ohio Valley, southern Appalachians and into the Northeast. Snow accumulations of 4-8 inches were common along the northern edge of the precipitation shield, while a significant accrual of glaze occurred in the Carolinas. The storm caused at least 17 fatalities, mostly from traffic accidents (CNN). In the Carolinas, electric utilities provider Duke Power characterized the ice storm as the worst in the company's history, with 1.2 million customers or nearly half its entire customer base without power on the morning of the 5th. This surpassed electrical outages inflicted by Hurricane Hugo as it swept through the central Carolinas in September 1989.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 38 °F at 2:43 PM

Low Temp: 18 °F at 7:59 AM

Wind: 23 mph at 6:58 PM

Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 56° in 1979

Record Low: -18° in 1927

Average High: 29°F

Average Low: 10°F

Average Precip in Dec.: 0.05

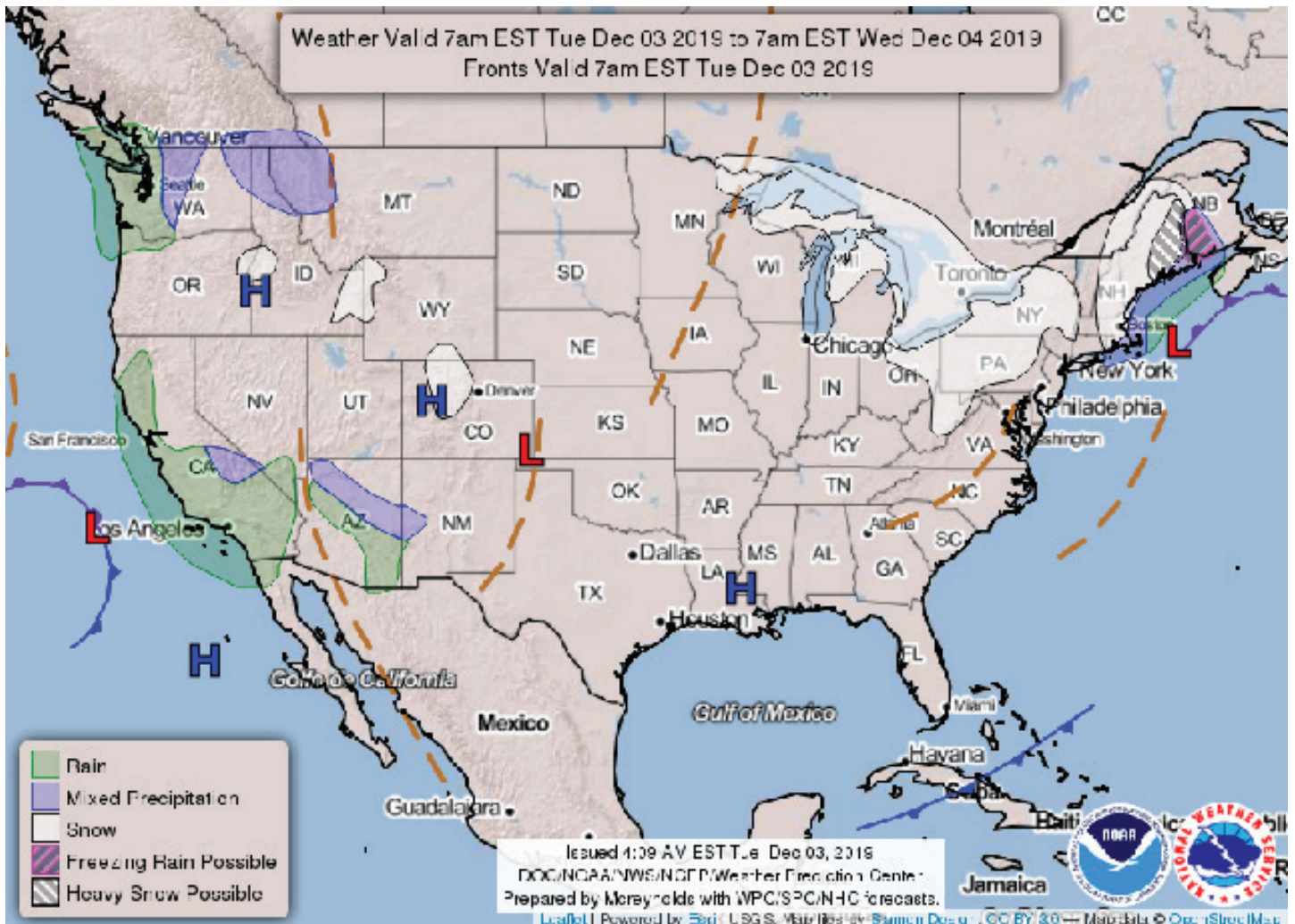
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 21.25

Precip Year to Date: 27.95

Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:57 a.m.





Anger

While completing the last phase of his painting of THE LORD'S SUPPER, Leonardo da Vinci became annoyed with a certain man. Finally his annoyance boiled over and he lost his temper and lashed out at the man with bitter words in an angry rage.

After the man left his presence, he returned to his canvas where he had been painting the face of Christ. Try as he could, he was unable to make any progress.

Finally he put down his brushes, left his studio and hurried to the man and asked his forgiveness. Graciously the man accepted his apology. Leonardo then returned to his studio and was able to finish painting the face of our Lord.

Anger and rage are extremely destructive emotions. They take away our joy and peace and destroy our faith and trust in God. Whenever we lose control of our emotions, it is a sign that we are excluding God from His rightful place on the throne of our lives. We attempt to do His work when we try to do what He has planned for us and wants to do through us. Usually when this happens, we make matters worse and lose touch with God and the ones with whom we are angry.

Whenever we are threatened or treated unfairly we must turn to God immediately and ask for Him to take control.

Prayer: Lord, it is difficult to remain calm and peaceful when I am tested. May I look for Your help in those times. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 12/07/2019 – Santa Day 9am-12pm, Professional Management Services
- 12/07/2019 – Tour of Homes 4pm-7pm, Olive Grove Golf Course (Tickets available at Lori's Pharmacy, Groton Ford, Hair & Co (Aberdeen) and Vicki Walter (605) 380-0480)
- 12/19/2019 – Christmas Open House 10am-4pm, Wells Fargo Bank
- 12/20/2019 – Holiday Bake Sale & Open House 9am-4pm, Groton Community Transit
- Bingo: every Wednesday at the Legion Post #39

2020 Groton SD Community Events

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

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

23-43-60-63-69, Mega Ball: 19, Megaplier: 2

(twenty-three, forty-three, sixty, sixty-three, sixty-nine; Mega Ball: nineteen; Megaplier: two)

Estimated jackpot: \$266 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$120 million

Brigadier general named University of North Dakota president

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

A former brigadier general and retired dean at the Air Force Academy will be the next president at the University of North Dakota, the state Board of Higher Education announced Tuesday.

Andrew Armacost served more than 30 years on active duty and spent 20 years both a professor and executive at the Air Force Academy, including stints as dean of faculty and chief academic officer.

Armacost is the 13th president of the university, all of them men. He replaces Mark Kennedy, a former Minnesota congressman who earlier this year was named president at the University of Colorado.

The other finalists were Laurie Stenberg Nichols, the former president at University of Wyoming and the first woman named to that post, and David Rosowsky, longtime professor of civil engineering and former provost at the University of Vermont. The board had final interviews with all three candidates Tuesday morning.

The University of North Dakota is the state's oldest and largest university and one of two research institutions in the state, along with North Dakota State University. Based in liberal arts, UND houses the medical and law schools as well as a highly regarded aerospace sciences program that has turned much of its attention toward developing unmanned systems. The university's enrollment for the 2019 fall semester was 13,581, about 400 students more than NDSU.

Among the challenges Armacost will face include poor employee morale in the midst of budget cuts and academic changes; trying to improve student retention and graduation rates; attracting more doctoral students to energize and bolster research capabilities; collaborating more with North Dakota State University on research to avoid duplication; advancing long-distance and online education and adapting to new teaching methods; addressing a lack of diversity and inclusion on campus; and dealing with a difficult transition to Division I athletics at a school known for big-time hockey.

As a member of the Air Force Academy's senior leadership council, Armacost was part of the team that guided an annual operating budget of more than \$500 million and a capital improvement portfolio of nearly \$1 billion. The Academy's sponsored research program of more than \$50 million annually makes it the nation's top-funded research program among undergraduate schools.

Higher ed board members say Armacost supports shared governance, academic freedom, inclusion, student growth, and applied learning and research.

One of Armacost's assignments in the Air Force was as the chief analyst at Air Force Space Command and as a program manager for systems supporting the intelligence community and the White House. He is the second executive in the North Dakota University System with an extensive military background. Chancellor Mark Hagerott became a leading cybersecurity expert and professor with the Navy.

Armacost will begin his new job after negotiations are complete, according to a statement by the university system.

South Dakota prep basketball player dies during practice

DUPREE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say a boys basketball player in South Dakota died suddenly during practice.

Ziebach County Sheriff Gary Cudmore said the team was doing wind sprints when the Dupree High School student collapsed Monday evening. Life-saving measures were performed until emergency responders arrived. Cudmore says he drove the ambulance to Indian Health Services in Eagle Butte, while attempts to revive the player continued.

The Argus Leader reports authorities have not released the name of the student or his cause of death.

The Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe Law Enforcement is investigating the case.

Dupree is a town of about 525 people located about 150 miles (241 kilometers) northeast of Rapid City on the Cheyenne River Indian Reservation.

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

Noem: South Dakota needs to brace for slow economic growth

By **STEPHEN GROVES** undefined

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem on Tuesday offered her budget proposals for the next year while acknowledging that money is tight and instructing state agencies to reduce spending.

While delivering her budget address in Pierre, the Republican governor told legislators to brace for slower economic growth amid disaster recovery from storms, uncertainty amid the 2020 election and lower farm spending during a trade war with China.

In just a few weeks, legislators will be in session to take up her proposals and hear from state agencies as they craft a final budget for the fiscal year that starts in July.

Noem said that 2019 has been a “difficult year” with tornadoes, blizzards and floods hitting the state. She called them the “the largest natural disasters in our state’s history.”

State revenue is running nearly \$6 million behind projections this fiscal year. The state will also lose about \$20 million in revenue when an internet tax comes to an end next year.

The governor proposed reductions in spending for state agencies and withholding a pay increase that would match inflation for state employees.

Eric Ollila, the executive director of the South Dakota State Employees Organization, called the proposal “disappointing,” but welcomed some of the governor’s other proposals like fully funding health plans and enhancing the family leave policy for state employees.

Sen. Reynold Nesiba, a Democrat from Sioux Falls who sits on the Appropriations Committee, said he would be working to find money to give state employees the pay increase.

Noem also proposed loans to counties for disaster recovery so they would not have to wait for federal funding to be processed before rebuilding roads and other infrastructure. She said that some rural counties are especially cash-strapped.

While providing popcorn for legislators during her address, the governor said she remains optimistic about South Dakota’s prospects, telling them that the constraints “will drive us to do better with the resources that we have.”

Noem’s budget recommendations prioritize projects that she said are important for the long-term success of the state. The governor proposed three projects that would each cost about \$5 million: funding initiatives for broadband internet across the state, a new School of Health Sciences at University of South Dakota and upgrading the state’s emergency response dispatch system. Noem also asked for \$3.7 million to address increasing rates of meth addiction.

Sen. John Wiik, R-Big Stone City, is a co-chair of the Appropriations Committee, and said he was not surprised by the low revenue reports. He called the proposals “very responsible” considering the lean year the state had but said the legislator would continue to keep an eye on revenue reports before making

cuts and passing a final budget.

"This is the governor's presentation," he said. "It is the legislature's budget."

Groves reported from Sioux Falls, South Dakota.

Governor appoints former news anchor to state senate seat

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem has appointed a former Rapid City TV journalist to fill a vacant state senate seat for the 2020 legislative session.

Noem named Republican Helene Duhamel on Tuesday to the seat left vacant by Sen. Alan Solano, a Rapid City Republican who said he resigned to focus on professional responsibilities.

Duhamel worked at Rapid City station KOTA-TV as a news director and anchor for decades before becoming the spokeswoman for the Pennington County Sheriff's Office.

Noem sought public input before appointing Duhamel. The governor called the new senator a "a pillar of her community."

The appointment is effective immediately.

Minnehaha state's attorney resigns after investigation

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Minnehaha County Commission has accepted the resignation of the county state's attorney in the wake of an investigation for workplace misconduct.

Aaron McGowan, a Democrat who held the office since 2009, offered his resignation this week. He cited his health and reporting from the Argus Leader about his work absences.

The attorney general investigated McGowan in September over his extended work absences, and reported that some employees had told investigators of incidents involving McGowan and alcohol. One employee reported that McGowan's behavior made her feel uncomfortable.

The county will pay McGowan \$35,000 as part of an agreement not to sue. Commission Chairwoman Jean Bender said she would not comment on personnel issues.

McGowan didn't attend Tuesday's meeting and a call to a listing for him rang unanswered. He said in a statement he will focus on "my faith, family, and my health."

'Serious misconduct' by Trump takes center stage at hearing

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Judiciary Committee is moving swiftly to weigh findings by fellow lawmakers that President Donald Trump misused the power of his office for personal political gain and then obstructed Congress' investigation as possible grounds for impeachment.

Responsible for drafting articles of impeachment, the Judiciary Committee prepared Wednesday morning for its first hearing since the release of a 300-page report by Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee that found "serious misconduct" by the president.

The report did not render a judgment on whether Trump's actions stemming from a July 25 phone call with Ukraine's president rose to the constitutional level of "high crimes and misdemeanors" warranting impeachment. That is for the full House to decide. But its findings involving Trump's efforts to seek foreign intervention in the American election process provide the basis for a House vote on impeachment and a Senate trial carrying the penalty of removal from office.

"The evidence that we have found is really quite overwhelming that the president used the power of his office to secure political favors and abuse the trust American people put in him and jeopardize our security," Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., told The Associated Press.

"It was a difficult decision to go down this road, because it's so consequential for the country," Schiff said. But "the president was the author of his own impeachment inquiry by repeatedly seeking foreign help in his election campaigns."

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Schiff added: "Americans need to understand that this president is putting his personal political interests above theirs. And that it's endangering the country."

The session Wednesday with legal scholars will delve into possible impeachable offenses, but the real focus will be on the panel, led by Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., and made up of a sometimes boisterous, sharply partisan division of lawmakers.

In a 53-page opening statement obtained by the AP, Republican witness Jonathan Turley, a law professor at George Washington University, will say that the Democrats are bringing a "slipshod impeachment" case against the president based on secondhand information. Still, Turley doesn't excuse the president's behavior.

"It is not wrong because President Trump is right," according to Turley. He calls Trump's call with Ukraine "anything but 'perfect,'" as the president claims. "A case for impeachment could be made, but it cannot be made on this record," he says.

The remaining three witnesses, all called by Democrats, will argue for impeachment, according to statements obtained by the AP.

Michael Gerhardt of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill argues, "If Congress fails to impeach here, then the impeachment process has lost all meaning."

The political risks are high for all parties as the House presses only the fourth presidential impeachment inquiry in U.S. history.

In a statement, White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said, "Chairman Schiff and the Democrats utterly failed to produce any evidence of wrongdoing by President Trump." She said the report "reads like the ramblings of a basement blogger straining to prove something when there is evidence of nothing."

Trump, attending a NATO meeting in London, called the impeachment effort by Democrats "unpatriotic" and said he wouldn't be watching Wednesday's hearing.

The "Trump-Ukraine Impeachment Inquiry Report" provides a detailed, stunning, account of a shadow diplomacy run by Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani, resulting in layers of allegations that can be distilled into specific acts, like bribery or obstruction, and the more amorphous allegation that Trump abused his power by putting his interests above the nation.

Based on two months of investigation sparked by a still-anonymous government whistleblower's complaint, the report relies heavily on testimony from current and former U.S. officials who defied White House orders not to appear.

The inquiry found that Trump "solicited the interference of a foreign government, Ukraine, to benefit his reelection," Schiff wrote in the report's preface. In doing so, the president "sought to undermine the integrity of the U.S. presidential election process, and endangered U.S. national security," the report said. When Congress began investigating, it added, Trump obstructed the investigation like no other president in history.

Along with revelations from earlier testimony, the report included previously unreleased cell phone records raising fresh questions about Giuliani's interactions with the top Republican on the intelligence panel, Rep. Devin Nunes of California, and the White House. Nunes declined to comment. Schiff said his panel would continue its probe.

Republicans defended the president in a 123-page rebuttal claiming Trump never intended to pressure Ukraine when he asked for a "favor" — investigations of Democrats and Joe Biden. They say the military aid the White House was withholding was not being used as leverage, as Democrats claim — and besides, the \$400 million was ultimately released, although only after a congressional outcry. Democrats, they argue, just want to undo the 2016 election.

For Republicans falling in line behind Trump, the inquiry is simply a "hoax." Trump criticized the House for pushing forward with the proceedings while he was overseas, a breach of political decorum that traditionally leaves partisan differences at the water's edge.

House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy called on Democrats to end the impeachment "nightmare." He said, "They're concerned if they do not impeach this president they can't beat him in an election."

Democrats once hoped to sway Republicans to consider Trump's removal, but they are now facing a

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ever-hardening partisan split over the swift-moving proceedings that are dividing Congress and the country. Possible grounds for impeachment are focused on whether Trump abused his office as he pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to open investigations into Trump's political rivals. At the time, Trump was withholding \$400 million in military aid, jeopardizing key support as Ukraine faces an aggressive Russia at its border.

The report also accuses Trump of obstruction, becoming the "first and only" president in U.S. history to "openly and indiscriminately" defy the House's constitutional authority to conduct the impeachment proceedings by instructing officials not to comply with subpoenas for documents and testimony.

For Democrats marching into what is now a largely partisan process, the political challenge if they proceed is to craft the impeachment articles in a way that will draw the most support from their ranks and not expose Pelosi's majority to messy divisions, especially as Republicans stand lockstep with the president.

While liberal Democrats are pushing the party to go further and incorporate the findings from former special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election and other actions by Trump, more centrist and moderate Democrats prefer to stick with the Ukraine matter as a simpler narrative that Americans understand.

Democrats could begin drafting articles of impeachment against the president in a matter of days, with a Judiciary Committee vote next week. The full House could vote by Christmas. Then the matter moves to the Senate for a trial in 2020.

The White House declined an invitation to participate Wednesday, with counsel Pat Cipollone denouncing the proceedings as a "baseless and highly partisan inquiry." Cipollone, who will brief Senate Republicans on Wednesday, left open the question of whether White House officials would participate in additional House hearings.

House rules provide the president and his attorneys the right to cross-examine witnesses and review evidence before the committee, but little ability to bring forward witnesses of their own.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Colleen Long, Eric Tucker and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Buffalo bishop under fire for handling of misconduct resigns

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis on Wednesday accepted the resignation of Buffalo Bishop Richard Malone following widespread criticism from his staff, priests and the public over how he handled allegations of clergy sexual misconduct.

The Vatican announced the resignation in a brief statement, adding that Francis had named the bishop of Albany, New York, Edward Scharfenberger, to run the Buffalo diocese temporarily until a permanent replacement is found.

The Vatican's embassy to the U.S. said Malone offered to retire two years before the mandatory retirement age of 75 after learning the results of a Vatican-mandated inquiry into the western New York diocese and its handling of abuse cases.

In a statement, Malone said he had come to believe "that the spiritual welfare of the people of the Diocese of Buffalo will be better served by a new bishop who perhaps is better able to bring about the reconciliation, healing and renewal that is so needed."

The diocese has been named in more than 220 recent lawsuits by people who claim they were sexually abused by priests.

Many of the claims date back decades, long before Malone's arrival in Buffalo in 2012. But critics say there have been more recent missteps by Malone, including his decision to return to ministry a priest who had been suspended by a previous bishop for including "love you" in a Facebook message to an eighth-grade boy.

Malone later endorsed the same priest for a job as a cruise ship chaplain, even after he was also accused of making unwanted advances toward young men.

Malone has admitted to making mistakes in cases involving adult victims, but he had firmly refused to

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resign and insisted he wanted to remain on the job to see the diocese through a process of "renewal."

Pressure though on him to leave has been intense.

Over the past year, two key members of Malone's staff have gone public with concerns about his leadership, including his former secretary, the Rev. Ryszard Biernat, who secretly recorded Malone calling a then-active priest "a sick puppy," but taking no immediate action to remove him.

Earlier, his executive assistant, Siobhan O'Connor, leaked internal church documents after becoming concerned that Malone had intentionally omitted dozens of names from a publicly released list of priests with credible allegations of abuse.

In September, a group of lay Catholics that had been working with Malone to restore trust in the church instead joined in calls for his resignation.

A diocesan priest, meanwhile, has been circulating a "no confidence" letter for signatures.

The Vatican hasn't released the results of the inquiry into Buffalo conducted by Brooklyn Bishop Nicholas DiMarzio.

Malone said he had been made aware of the "general conclusions" of the report and that they had been a factor in his decision to seek early retirement.

"It is my honest assessment that I have accomplished as much as I am able to, and that there remain divisions and wounds that I am unable to bind and heal," he said.

Among those who have called for Malone's resignation is the former dean of seminarians at the diocese's Christ the King Seminary. In a letter outlining his decision to withdraw from his studies to become a priest, Stephen Parisi called the diocese's handling of clerical sexual abuse cases "disgusting and revolting" and raised questions about the institution's academic practices and oversight.

Malone in April suspended three priests after several seminarians complained the older men subjected them to disturbing and offensive sexual discussions during a party at a rectory.

Scharfenberger, the new apostolic administrator for Buffalo, said he plans to visit the eight-county diocese weekly while keeping up with his duties in Albany.

"I will be doing a lot of listening and learning," he said in a statement, expressing a desire for openness and transparency.

The Buffalo diocese has paid out more than \$18 million to more than 100 victims under a compensation program established last year. Since August, it has been named in a wave of new lawsuits under a New York state law that suspended the usual statute of limitations and opened a one-year window for victims to pursue claims regardless of when the abuse happened.

Attorneys general in several states, including New York, have begun civil investigations into how the Catholic church reviewed and potentially covered up abuse.

NATO leaders appear to gossip about Trump in unguarded chat

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

WATFORD, England (AP) — While NATO leaders are professing unity as they gather for a summit near London, several seem to have been caught in an unguarded exchange on camera apparently gossiping about U.S. President Donald Trump's behavior.

In footage recorded during a reception in London at Buckingham Palace Tuesday evening, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was seen standing in a huddle with French President Emmanuel Macron, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Dutch Prime Minister Mark Rutte and Britain's Princess Anne, daughter of Queen Elizabeth II.

After Johnson asked Macron, "is that why you were late?" Trudeau could be heard saying "he was late because he takes a 40-minute press conference off the top." That appeared to be a reference to Trump's long and unscheduled question-and-answer session with journalists earlier Tuesday.

Trudeau also said: "You just watched his team's jaws drop to the floor."

Trump wasn't mentioned by name during the exchange.

Footage of the palace reception was recorded by a pool camera. The clip was posted online by Canadian

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broadcaster CBC and has been viewed more than 5 million times.

Canadian officials didn't immediately respond to a request for comment. Trudeau spoke briefly to Trump as NATO leaders gathered for a summit Wednesday in Watford, outside London, and the two men shook hands.

Leaders of the 29 NATO states are marking the 70th anniversary of the military alliance — and trying to patch up differences over defense spending, the alliance's strategic direction and member nation Turkey's military action in northern Syria.

NATO downplays divisions as infighting roils alliance

By **LORNE COOK and JILL LAWLESS** Associated Press

WATFORD, England (AP) — NATO leaders on Wednesday played down their differences and insisted that they remain united over security issues and determined to defend each other despite a series of spats between the presidents of some of the alliance's biggest member countries.

Before a summit near London, French President Emmanuel Macron had lamented the "brain death" of NATO due in part to what he called a lack of U.S. leadership. President Donald Trump branded his remarks as "very disrespectful." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan suggested that Macron himself is "brain dead."

The infighting is mostly due to Turkey's invasion of northern Syria. Macron has complained that Trump pulled U.S. troops out of the region without warning his NATO allies. Turkey saw the move as a greenlight to send its troops in.

"NATO is agile, NATO is active, NATO is adapting," NATO-Secretary Jens Stoltenberg said when asked by reporters whether the world's biggest security alliance is brain dead.

"As long as we are able to deliver substance... then NATO proves once again that we are able to respond to a shifting security landscape, and that's the best way to also provide unity of this alliance," he said before chairing the meeting at a luxury hotel and golf resort.

Summit host Prime Minister Boris Johnson — also busy with a divisive British election campaign — said "clearly it is very important that the alliance stays together, but there is far, far more that unites us than divides us."

Johnson said NATO's success is due to "the very simple concept of safety in numbers. At the heart of it is a pledge that we will come to one another's defense: all for one and one for all."

Erdogan didn't speak to waiting media. Trump arrived via a different entrance, away from media.

Macron, however, refused to apologize for his remarks, saying they had ignited a debate at NATO about important strategic issues.

"It's allowed us to raise fundamental debates," he said, chief among them being "how to build sustainable peace in Europe."

He said NATO "debates should be about other things than budgets and finances."

Stoltenberg noted that European allies and Canada have added \$130 billion to their defense spending since 2016, even as Trump has complained that they are too slow to boost their military budgets.

"This is unprecedented, this is making us stronger," Stoltenberg said of the spending effort.

After Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, NATO countries halted their post-Cold War spending cuts and began increasing spending. They pledged to "move toward" spending 2% of their annual GDP on national defense by 2024.

Trump said Tuesday that much more needs to be done.

"You could make the case that they've been delinquent for 25-30 years," Trump said. The figure of 2%, he added, "is a very low number, it really should be 4."

Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel conceded that "we have experienced easier times. But we're allies after all and we're going to speak about everything."

"The atmosphere last night was much more relaxed than what I expected after hearing what had happened over the last 24 hours. But I think differences can arise. We just have to talk about them," Bettel

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said, referring to receptions late Tuesday at Buckingham Palace and at Downing Street.

After a working session of a few hours on Wednesday, the leaders of the 29-nation trans-Atlantic alliance are due to publish a declaration underlining their commitment to NATO on its 70th birthday, and to show that the alliance is adapting to modern threats and potential new adversaries like China.

Of founders and findings: What to watch on impeachment

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Same pillared House hearing room. Different chairman with his own mission.

When House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler gavels open Wednesday's impeachment hearings against the nation's 45th president, he'll launch the business of actually writing an indictment against Donald Trump.

The question is no longer whether to impeach Trump. It's on what charges — abuse of power or obstruction or both — and the strength of the Democrats' case that Trump's pressure on Ukraine was not just improper but impeachable.

Lots of high-minded talk about the Constitution and the nation's founders is expected. But impeachment is inherently a political act, at no time more than now on the cusp of the 2020 elections.

What to watch when the second phase of the impeachment process opens at 10 a.m. EST.

THE CASE

The House intelligence committee on Tuesday voted to send its landmark report on Trump's conduct to the Judiciary Committee, which will write the articles of impeachment against Trump.

At its heart, the 300-page report produced by Chairman Adam Schiff's panel lays out the case that Trump misused the power of his office for personal political gain and obstructed Congress by stonewalling the proceedings like no other president in history.

The report does not offer a judgment on whether Trump's actions stemming from a July 25 phone call with Ukraine rise to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors" warranting impeachment. The entire House will decide that question as soon as this month.

Debate begins Wednesday in the House Judiciary Committee.

199 CHARACTERS

The U.S. Constitution lays out somewhat vague standards for presidential impeachment.

Look for much discussion about the passage at issue:

"The President, Vice President and all civil Officers of the United States, shall be removed from Office on Impeachment for, and Conviction of, Treason, Bribery, or other high Crimes and Misdemeanors."

How Nadler's committee applies those words and ideas to the intelligence committee report will determine the fate of Trump's presidency.

NADLER

The pressure's on the Democrat from Manhattan whose impeachment hearings earlier in the year did little to impress the party's leaders.

Those events were focused on special counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 elections. Mueller himself was flat. Former Trump campaign manager Corey Lewandowski refused to answer questions about Russia.

When the Ukraine matter broke, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi gave the leadoff investigation to Schiff, in effect sidelining Nadler for a time. On Wednesday, he'll try to keep control of his famously combative panel so that a trio of law professors called by Democrats and one by Republicans can speak about impeachment in lofty constitutional and historic terms.

Look for whether Nadler wields that gavel resolutely enough to bat down Republican complaints and points of order that could delay or upend the proceedings.

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THE REPUBLICANS

Nothing to see here except a process that's been unfair to Trump. That's the core of the GOP's case, according to the president's allies. The facts at issue aren't being significantly contested.

But on the eve of the hearing, Republicans from Congress to the White House predicted a robust defense of the president. The senior Republican on Nadler's committee signaled the level of bitterness to be expected.

"Tomorrow is simply just a filler because Jerry Nadler didn't know what to do," Rep. Doug Collins, R-Ga., the ranking Republican on Nadler's committee, said Tuesday night.

Watching from the Senate are majority Republicans who would hold a trial if the House approves impeachment articles. None has said they'd vote to convict Trump and remove him from office.

POTUS

Trump, who is in London attending a NATO summit, called the impeachment effort "unpatriotic." He has griped about the fact that the Democrats are proceeding while he is overseas and vowed to pay no attention to the proceedings.

But the impeachment drive appears to be very much on his mind. Late Tuesday, he retweeted White House social media director Dan Scavino's post noting that the president is with other world leaders.

Trump's lawyers said they would not participate in the Judiciary Committee's hearing, issuing a long list of complaints about a process they said is unfair.

THE OVERLAPPERS

There's plenty of expertise on the Judiciary Committee when it comes to the Ukraine report and impeachment in general. That's in part because several members also sit on the intelligence committee, which generated the report.

They are Democrats Val Demings of Florida and Eric Swalwell of California, and Republicans Jim Jordan of Ohio and John Ratcliffe of Texas.

Also, several members of the panel, including Reps. James Sensenbrenner of Wisconsin and Steve Chabot of Ohio, have been through impeachment before. Both were in Congress during the proceedings against Clinton.

THE FRESHMEN

Later in the hearing, look for the new members of Congress on the panel. For some from closely split districts, such as Rep. Lucy McBath of Georgia, making a high-profile splash at an impeachment hearing is a sensitive matter.

For others from safer districts, such as Rep. Veronica Escobar of Texas, it's less fraught. Watch Escobar for hints of where Pelosi and other leaders want this hearing to go. She was recently named as the freshman liaison to the Democratic leadership.

Across the Democratic caucus, there's a healthy split over what the articles should say. Some liberals, for example, want the charges to wrap in the Mueller report and its findings that Russia interfered in the 2016 elections. But moderates, especially new members facing tough reelections, have said they want the articles narrowly focused on Ukraine because Trump's actions are more clearly connected.

THE WITNESSES

At the witness table are three law professors for the Democrats: Noah Feldman of Harvard, Pamela Karlan of Stanford and Michael Gerhardt of the University of North Carolina.

Jonathan Turley of George Washington University is the lone Republican witness.

Follow Kellman on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/APLaurieKellman>

Split-screen moment for Trump at NATO amid impeachment probe

By ZEKE MILLER and AAMER MADHANI Associated Press

WATFORD, England (AP) — President Donald Trump is huddling with NATO leaders as House Democrats prepare to resume their impeachment inquiry probing whether he abused his presidential authority by urging a foreign leader to open an investigation of his political rival.

Trump is set to meet Wednesday with German Chancellor Angela Merkel, Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte and Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen on the sidelines of the NATO leaders' meeting.

More significantly, Trump will face a striking split-screen moment toward the end of the NATO conference, when he addresses the news media soon after Rep. Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., gavels to order the House Judiciary Committee's first hearing in the impeachment inquiry.

The hearing will be on the constitutional grounds for presidential impeachment.

"The impeachment is going nowhere," Trump insisted Tuesday as he sat down with NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg. "It is a waste of time. They're wasting their time. And it's a disgrace. It's a disgrace to our country."

Trump said he remains unconcerned about the unfolding inquiry in Washington with Democrats facing a mountainous climb to remove him from office. While Democrats hold the majority in the House, Republicans control the Senate and not one Republican lawmaker in the upper chamber has signaled support for kicking Trump out of office. An impeachment conviction in the Senate requires 67 votes out of 100.

Democrats argue that Trump acted improperly when he pressed Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to open an investigation of former Vice President Joe Biden and his son's dealings in the eastern European nation. The vice president's son, Hunter Biden, sat on the board of a Ukrainian energy company.

The U.S. president bantered with reporters for more than two hours Tuesday, sitting casually in a salon of Winfield House, the manicured estate of the U.S. ambassador to the United Kingdom, where he also met with fellow NATO leaders.

The lengthy exchanges appeared to be the topic of an unguarded conversation recorded during a reception at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday. Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was heard telling leaders, French President Emmanuel Macron and British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, that "he was late because he takes a 40-minute press conference off the top." Trudeau also said: "You just watched his team's jaws drop to the floor." Trudeau and Trump met earlier Tuesday.

Trump used those unscheduled press exchanges to slam the ongoing Democratic-led impeachment inquiry as a "hoax" and professed to be unconcerned about declines in the stock market spurred by his remark that a trade deal with China might not materialize until after the 2020 election.

Trump later paid a call on Prince Charles and his wife, Camilla, and attended a NATO welcome reception at Buckingham Palace, before proceeding to an event at the prime minister's residence, No. 10 Downing St. Trump punctuated the day of diplomacy with a fundraiser for his reelection effort that his campaign said brought in \$3 million.

The gathering of NATO leaders follows Trump's frequent criticism of alliance members as falling well short in doing their financial part through the first three years of his presidency.

After a NATO summit last year, he called for members devote at least 4% of gross domestic product to military spending and took aim at Merkel, whom he accused of paying Russia "billions of dollars for gas and energy" while failing to meet her nation's commitment to spend at least 2% of GDP on defense.

But at this NATO meeting, Trump — heading toward an election year looking to showcase foreign policy wins — is offering a more optimistic outlook for the alliance's future. To that end, he suggested he deserved much of the credit for progress.

"I don't think frankly before us that NATO was changing at all, and NATO is really changing right now," Trump said as he sat down for a one-on-one talk with Stoltenberg.

White House officials say that before Trump took office just four NATO members had reached the 2% benchmark set in 2014. Now there are nine, and 18 of the 29 are projected to meet the benchmark by 2024.

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Trump is set to have a working lunch Wednesday with what the White House called the "NATO 2%ers." Stoltenberg said that Trump does deserve credit for nudging members.

"The reality is that, not least because it has been so clearly conveyed from President Trump that we need fair burden sharing, allies are stepping up," Stoltenberg said.

In his meeting with Trudeau, Trump gently ribbed the premier — his country is spending about 1.3% of GDP on defense — as "slightly delinquent."

"Some are major delinquent," said Trump. He added that he's looking at the possibility of imposing unspecified trade penalties against NATO allies that perpetually fall below benchmarks.

"Some are way below 1 percent and that's unacceptable, and then if something happens we're supposed to protect them and it's not really fair and it never has been fair," he said.

Trump's talks with Macron were tense at times. Before they met on the sidelines of the summit, Trump laced into the French president for what he called "very, very nasty" comments in *The Economist* about NATO's health with Trump leading its most important member.

Macron didn't back down when they appeared later in the day, and he renewed his own criticism of Trump for withdrawing U.S. forces from Syria.

That decision by Trump, made without consulting France or other NATO allies, gave Turkey, another NATO member, a green light to launch operations against Syrian Kurdish forces who had played a key role in the fight to clear a huge swath of Syria of Islamic State militants.

Trump and Macron have had an up-and-down relationship in the nearly three years Trump's been in office.

Macron, who early in Trump's presidency had looked to cultivate a close relationship, hosted Trump in 2017 for Bastille Day celebrations in Paris. Trump reciprocated by honoring Macron last year with the first state visit of a foreign leader during his time in the White House.

As they answered questions from reporters, the new stress was most apparent as they discussed their concerns over Turkey's plan to purchase an anti-aircraft missile system from Russia.

Macron said there is a disconnect in allowing Turkey to buy the system from Russia and also be a NATO member. Trump said he is weighing issuing sanctions against Ankara if it moves forward with plans to buy the weapons.

Ahead of the meeting, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said he would oppose a NATO plan to defend the Baltic region if the alliance does not back Turkey in its fight against Kurdish groups it considers terrorists.

"I'm sorry to say we don't have the same definition of terrorism around the table," Macron said in a swipe at Turkey.

Trump showed more deference to Erdogan, saying that Turkey was "very helpful" during the October U.S. commando raid that led to the death of IS leader Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi near the Syria-Turkey border.

"We flew over areas that were totally controlled by Turkey and Turkish military," Trump said. "We didn't tell them what we were doing or where we were going. Turkey could not have been nicer, could not have been more supportive."

At another point in their extended comments before the news media, Trump and Macron had a curt exchange about the repatriation of Islamic State fighters who are European citizens and were captured in Syria and Iraq in recent years. Trump has pressed unsuccessfully for European nations to accept fighters captured by U.S. forces.

"Would you like some nice ISIS fighters? I can give them to you," Trump said. "You can take every one you want."

"Let's be serious," Macron responded. "Your No. 1 problem are not the foreign fighters."

Trump retorted, "That's one of the greatest non-answers I've ever heard. And, that's OK."

After such exchanges, however, Trump gave Macron, along with Italy's prime minister, a ride in his armored limo from the reception at Buckingham Palace to the gathering hosted by British Prime Minister Boris Johnson.

Townshend regrets not staying to mourn after Who stampede

By JOHN CARUCCI Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Forty years after a stampede left 11 people dead and 23 injured at a Who concert in Cincinnati, Pete Townshend says he's always regretted not sticking around to deal with the aftermath. Instead, the band left the Riverfront Coliseum on December 3, 1979, and moved on to Buffalo, New York, the next stop on their tour.

"I'm not forgiving us. We should have stayed," Townshend told The Associated Press during a recent interview where he was promoting his debut novel, "The Age of Anxiety."

The tragedy occurred as fans surrounded the arena hoping to claim a seat near the stage. Thousands had waited hours to get inside, ready to charge in for first-come seating.

The band didn't find out about the calamity until the end of the show. Townshend recalls the band's manager, Bill Curbishley, telling him: "I've got something terrible to tell you."

Townshend then described the shock of seeing bodies sprawled on the ground as they left the stadium — "many of whom weren't dead, by the way," he said. "They didn't know who was dead and who was just badly hurt, maybe 40 bodies under blankets."

Townshend remembered the rage he felt toward Curbishley for not telling the band about the tragedy before the show, admitting that he "wanted to kill him."

"You could at least give (us) a choice as to whether or not to go on," Townshend said.

"But the choice none of us made, which was equally dim, was that we left the building. You know, we should have stayed."

Curbishley declined comment when contacted by The Associated Press. However, in an interview with WCPO of Cincinnati, he said he fought with emergency officials and insisted the concert go on so there wouldn't be more disruption, and believes it likely saved lives.

"I said, 'If you stop them, you're going to have more problems on the arena floor. You could have more people hurt for sure, and if they came back through this area, the medical teams are never going to be able to cope with what they're doing,'" he told WCPO. "And if keeping my band on stage saves even one life, to me, that's what it's about."

Lead singer Roger Daltrey visited a memorial site at a high school near Cincinnati in 2018, but the entire band has not been back. That will change: Townshend said they plan to return for the first time: An announcement is planned for later Tuesday.

Townshend says he can't help thinking about those parents who lost their children,

"It isn't all about rock 'n' roll. This is about kids from Cincinnati who died — kids from Cincinnati whose parents went through trauma; kids from Cincinnati who were disabled or hurt or damaged by what happened there," Townshend said.

A similar tragedy occurred in 2000 at the Roskilde Music Festival in Denmark. After Pearl Jam took the stage, there was a stampede that killed nine people and injured 28.

Townshend says he called the band's frontman Eddie Vedder and told him to stay there.

"Don't leave. I don't care whether you've got another festival tomorrow for a million euros. Stay there.' And they stayed there for three days. And I think it really helped," Townshend said.

Townshend feels that enough time has passed for meaningful discussion about the Cincinnati tragedy.

"How are we responsible? ... Now, we can have a conversation about it when we go back. That conversation will pick up. We will meet people and we'll be there. We'll be there. That's what's important. I'm so glad that we've got this opportunity to go back," he said.

"But I do think one of the things that happened at the time was that we ran away."

Home-state skepticism of Kamala Harris foretold trouble

By STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE and ERRIN HAINES Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — When Sen. Kamala Harris entered the presidential race in January, her

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California roots were supposed to give her special access to the cash and delegates required to win the Democratic nomination. Instead, she faced headwinds in her home state that would become a microcosm for the trouble that ultimately forced her sudden departure from the contest.

One by one, politically active celebrities lined up behind Harris' rivals, such as Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana. Many of the state's energized progressive activists lent their passion and small-dollar donations to Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont or Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. And those who weren't yet paying close attention to the 2020 race — and there were many in a state of nearly 40 million people — gravitated to the name they knew best: former Vice President Joe Biden.

A quiet but significant turning point came in late March, when prominent California donor Susie Tompkins Buell, who had backed Harris, began supporting Buttigieg as well.

"When she started lending her name to other candidates, I think that was the first sign of trouble that things were not well," said veteran California Democratic strategist Rose Kapolczynski.

Harris told staff and supporters on Tuesday that she simply didn't have the money to stay in the race. She ended her first White House bid before more than a dozen of her rivals despite being a political superstar in a state with the most convention delegates and with premier access to a donor class that is widely considered the political world's piggy bank.

In the end, it wasn't enough to help her stand out in the Democratic Party's crowded 2020 presidential class.

Having raised close to \$12 million in each of the year's first three quarters, Harris was on pace to raise closer to \$3 million this quarter, according to a campaign operative who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss her struggling fundraising operation. It was barely enough to keep the lights on, never mind fund the television ads she needed to compete in the primary states that matter most.

Although Iowa had become the epicenter of her campaign in recent weeks, Harris hadn't run a television ad there since August.

She had at least six California fundraisers planned through December with lawyers, entertainment executives and others, though those involved in the planning conceded that it was becoming increasingly difficult to sell tickets.

A Santa Monica-based attorney and co-host of one of the events, Shawn Holley, said on the eve of Harris' departure that she was encountering skepticism from donors following a flood of negative news coverage. Holley called it a "vicious cycle" of people not wanting to contribute to a downhill campaign, making it harder for the campaign to rebound.

"They believe she's awesome. They believe that she would be the best person to debate Trump," Holley said. But they were concerned "she's not going to get the chance to do any of these things, and therefore why should they put their money behind something that can't win?"

Yet those who followed her campaign closely suggest the California senator's fundraising challenges were a lagging indicator of a more fundamental problem that plagued her almost from the very day she announced her candidacy on Martin Luther King Jr. Day more than 10 months ago. She never really answered the most important questions facing any candidate running for office: Who are you and what do you stand for?

Her slogan "For the people" referenced her career as a prosecutor, a record that was viewed skeptically by the party's most progressive voters. Through the summer, she shifted her focus to pocketbook issues and a "3 a.m. agenda," a message that fell flat. By the fall, she returned to her courtroom roots: "Justice is on the ballot," she repeated at virtually every campaign appearance, a message that was a cry for economic and social justice. And most recently, she tried to stand out as Trump's chief protagonist, arguing that she could "prosecute the case" against a "criminal" president.

"Harris made a play that she could split the field and appeal to progressives and moderates and run right up the center of the Democratic Party," said Democratic strategist Joel Payne. "Unfortunately, this ultimately led to her demise as a candidate because she alienated large swaths of both groups and exposed herself to criticism that she lacked a political core. This will be a cautionary tale going forward as

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others follow in her path.”

Indeed, even the high point of Harris’ candidacy was marred by her uneven message.

She lurched into the top tier — albeit briefly — after a June debate performance in which she drew on a deeply personal experience as a young black girl to attack Biden’s record on school busing. When pressed in the days that followed, however, it was revealed that her view of busing was not that different than Biden’s.

“She makes him out to be some sort of crypto-racist in that debate, when, in interviews after the debate, she’s asked what her own stand was on busing, and it turns out it was almost identical to what Joe Biden stood for,” said veteran California Democratic strategist Garry South. “Voters came to the conclusion: ‘I don’t really know who this person is or what she stands for.’”

And with those unanswered questions following her across the nation, voters back home shied away.

Just 8% of likely California primary voters said they supported Harris, according to a November poll conducted by the Public Policy Institute of California. By comparison, 24% supported Biden, 23% Warren and 17% Sanders.

Some believe that her status as the only black woman in the race — an asset on paper for a party that celebrates diversity — was a liability in practice as Democrats searched for the candidate best positioned to defeat Trump next fall. Candidates of color and women historically struggle to attract campaign cash. And despite President Barack Obama’s pioneering election, they often have to work harder to convince voters they’re electable in a way that white candidates don’t.

Ohio Rep. Marcia Fudge, who endorsed Harris and previously chaired the Congressional Black Caucus, said she was hurt and disheartened by Harris’ exit.

“For her to be in a position where she can’t get the kind of support that she needed says an awful lot,” Fudge said.

As is often the case in struggling campaigns, infighting among her campaign began to spill out into the open as Harris’ poll numbers sank. The low point came last week, when a senior aide resigned in a letter obtained by The New York Times that cited poor treatment of staff and lack of a coherent strategy.

Ultimately, California Democrats may have been least surprised by Harris’ abrupt exit.

The state is far larger, more diverse politically and more disinterested in politics than national political observers often believe. At home, Harris was never expected to dominate her rivals in the state.

Harris’ California colleague in the Senate, Dianne Feinstein, endorsed Biden. And recent decades haven’t been kind to those trying to use California as a launching pad to the White House. While Ronald Reagan was successful in 1980, former Democratic Gov. Jerry Brown tried three times and failed.

At just 55 years old, Harris is far from finished in national politics.

Her allies note that her California connections are not insignificant. Through the third quarter, she raised more money from California donors than anyone else. She’s also positioned to lean into Trump’s looming impeachment trial in the Senate in a way she couldn’t before. And, of course, she remains a top vice presidential prospect for the ultimate nominee.

“As painful as this moment is for Sen. Harris and her supporters,” Payne said, “it’s the best thing for her political future.”

Peoples reported from New York, and Haines reported from Philadelphia.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press

1. ‘SERIOUS MISCONDUCT’ TAKES CENTER STAGE AT IMPEACHMENT HEARINGS

The House Judiciary Committee is weighing findings by fellow lawmakers that Trump misused the power of his office for personal political gain and then obstructed Congress’ investigation as possible grounds for impeachment.

2. TRUMP JOINS NATO LEADERS AS IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY RESUMES

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The U.S. president will face a striking split-screen moment toward the end of the NATO conference, when he addresses the news media soon after the House Judiciary Committee is called to order.

3. 'HE WAS LATE'

Several world leaders including Canada's Justin Trudeau, France's Emmanuel Macron and Britain's Boris Johnson seem to have been caught in an unguarded exchange on camera apparently gossiping about the U.S. president's behavior.

4. CHINA-US TIES FURTHER STRAINED

The U.S. Congress overwhelmingly approves a bill targeting China's mass crackdown on ethnic Muslim minorities, a move Beijing swiftly condemned.

5. KIM AGAIN MOUNTS WHITE HORSE IN SYMBOLIC GESTURE

With nuclear negotiations at a standstill, the reclusive North Korean leader rides up sacred, snow-covered Mount Paektu, which he has previously visited before making major decisions.

6. KAMALA HARRIS' HOPES DASHED IN HOME STATE

Politically active celebrities lined up behind the Democrat's rivals while many of California's energized progressive activists lent their passion and small-dollar donations to Elizabeth Warren or Bernie Sanders.

7. WHERE HUNDREDS OF GIRLS AND WOMEN HAVE BEEN TRAFFICKED

A government list shows 629 Pakistani girls from across the country have been sold as brides to China, most between 2018 and early 2019, AP finds.

8. HOW ELON MUSK CHARACTERIZED 'PEDO GUY' TWEET

The Tesla CEO testifies that he was being insulting, not literally calling a Thai cave rescuer from Britain a pedophile when he lashed out on Twitter and ended up in a defamation lawsuit.

9. 'WE SHOULD HAVE STAYED'

Four decades after a stampede left 11 people dead at a Who concert in Cincinnati, Pete Townshend says he's always regretted not sticking around to deal with the aftermath.

10. CLEATS FOR A CAUSE

The cleats being worn by more than 900 NFL players this weekend will aid causes ranging from health and wellness, to cancer awareness and prevention, to youth-focused initiatives.

China and US clash over Xinjiang, Hong Kong bills

By YANAN WANG and DAKE KANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — Already strained relations between China and the United States were further muddied after U.S. Congress overwhelmingly approved a bill targeting Beijing's mass crackdown on ethnic Muslim minorities Wednesday, less than one week after President Donald Trump signed separate human rights legislation on Hong Kong.

China's ruling Communist Party has long regarded Hong Kong and the far west Xinjiang region as crucial areas for asserting territorial sovereignty, and it has responded with fury to what it considers foreign meddling.

"Xinjiang is China's Xinjiang," said a statement from China's National Ethnic Affairs Commission, echoing another government mantra: "Hong Kong is China's Hong Kong."

Tensions over the recently passed U.S. bills have cast doubt over the potential for a trade deal between the two countries, which have been embroiled in a 16-month tariff war. Trump said Tuesday that he has "no deadline" for striking an agreement and that he may wait until after next year's presidential election.

The Uighur Human Rights Policy Act denounces the detention of an estimated 1 million Uighurs, Kazakhs and others in Xinjiang, home to the predominantly Muslim minority groups. It would require the State Department to evaluate whether Chinese officials would meet the criteria for sanctions for their roles in enacting oppressive policies.

The bill "disregards the facts and mixes up black and white," said the Foreign Affairs Commission of China's legislature in one among a slew of strongly worded rebukes from government departments.

"It is regrettable that U.S. Congress has not only turned a blind eye to Xinjiang's efforts to combat ter-

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rorism and protect human rights in accordance with laws and regulations, but also to Xinjiang's current economic development, social stability, national unity and religious harmony," the commission said.

Former detainees and their family members have told The Associated Press that they were arbitrarily held in heavily secured, prison-like camps where they were pressured to renounce their faith and express gratitude to the ruling Communist Party. A recent leak of classified Chinese government documents revealed a blueprint for rewiring the thoughts of ethnic minorities who had not committed any crimes.

Beijing says the measures are necessary to combat terrorism and eradicate religious extremism, calling the facilities "vocational training centers" for those who lack employable skills.

"The U.S. bill smears our efforts in counterterrorism and deradicalization, which only reveals America's double standards on counterterrorism and further exposes to the Chinese people its hypocrisy and malicious intentions," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying.

China has repeatedly criticized the U.S. for interfering in its affairs, most recently accusing Washington of being a "black hand" that has orchestrated riots in Hong Kong.

After Trump signed bills mandating sanctions on Chinese and Hong Kong officials, an annual review of Hong Kong's favorable trade status and a ban on exporting nonlethal munitions to Hong Kong police, China retaliated Monday by suspending U.S. military ship and aircraft visits to Hong Kong.

It also said it would sanction a number of groups, including Human Rights Watch and the National Endowment for Democracy, that have "performed badly" in regard to the unrest in Hong Kong.

A former British colony, Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997 under the framework of "one country, two systems," which promises the city certain democratic rights not afforded to the mainland. The arrests of Hong Kong booksellers and democracy activists in recent years, however, have stoked fears among some residents that the central government is chipping away at their freedoms.

Uighur and Kazakh activists have expressed solidarity with the pro-democracy movement in Hong Kong, praising it for resisting the Chinese government. Meanwhile, some Hong Kong protesters have pointed to suppression in Xinjiang as an example of what they fear will ultimately befall their city.

"China will harvest your home like Xinjiang — BE AWARE OR BE NEXT," read one piece of graffiti at Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the site of a dayslong occupation by protesters. Elsewhere in the city, words scrawled by a public street said: "Free HK, Free the Uighur too!"

"The same enemy of both people, the (Chinese Communist Party), and its threat to humanity, brought us together," Tahir Imin, a Washington-based Uighur activist, said of the Hong Kong protests. "With the support of the free world, the two peoples need to continue their fight and solidarity until the end."

Kang reported from Hong Kong.

Kim again rides horse up sacred peak as nuke deadline nears

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un rode a white horse up a sacred mountain on his second symbolic visit in less than two months, state media reported Wednesday, as his country is threatening provocation if the United States refuses to make concessions in nuclear diplomacy by year's end.

The Korean Central News Agency released many photos showing Kim taking a horse riding to snow-covered Mount Paektu along with his wife and other top lieutenants, all on white horses. Kim also climbed the mountain, the highest peak on the Korean Peninsula, on horseback in mid-October.

Mount Paektu and white horses are symbols associated with the Kim family's dynastic rule. Kim has made previous visits there before making major decisions.

Kim said that "we should always live and work in the offensive spirit of Paektu," according to KCNA. "The imperialists and class enemies make a more frantic attempt to undermine the ideological, revolutionary and class positions of our party."

On Monday, Kim visited Samjiyon county at the foot of Mount Paektu to attend a ceremony marking the completion of work that has transformed the town to "an epitome of modern civilization," KCNA said. It said

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the town has a museum on the Kim family, a ski slope, cultural centers, a school, a hospital and factories.

Samjiyon was one of main construction projects that Kim launched in an effort to improve his people's livelihoods and strengthen his rule at home. The construction spree has also been seen as a demonstration of his power in the face of international sanctions designed to squeeze his economy and get him to give up his nuclear program.

The latest mountain trip comes as a year-end deadline set by Kim for Washington to come up with new proposals to salvage nuclear diplomacy is approaching. The negotiations remain stalled for months, with North Korea trying to win major sanctions relief and outside security assurances in return for partial denuclearization steps.

The North's Foreign Ministry warned Tuesday it's entirely up to the United States to choose what "Christmas gift" it gets from the North. North Korean officials have previously said whether North Korea lifts its moratorium on long-range missile and nuclear tests depends on what actions the U.S. takes.

Last week, North Korea test-fired projectiles from what it called a "super-large" multiple rocket launcher that South Korea's military said landed in the waters off the North's east coast.

KCNA said Wednesday the ruling Workers' Party will hold a central committee meeting in late December to discuss unspecified "crucial issues" in line with "the changed situation at home and abroad." It's unclear what specific agendas are at stake.

Many experts say the United States is unlikely to make new proposals that would satisfy North Korea.

President Donald Trump on Tuesday urged Kim to follow through on what he described as a promise to denuclearize the North. Trump and Kim have met three times since North Korea entered nuclear negotiations last year.

"My relationship with Kim Jong Un is really good, but that doesn't mean he won't abide by the agreements ... he said he will denuclearize," Trump said during a visit to London. "Now, we have the most powerful military we ever had, and we are by far the most powerful country in the world and hopefully we don't have to use it. But if we do, we will use it."

Trump also revived a nickname he had previously given Kim when he traded crude insults and threats of destruction during a provocative run in North Korean nuclear and missile tests in 2017.

Kim "likes sending rockets up, doesn't he?" Trump said. "That's why I call him Rocket Man."

Associated Press writer Kim Tong-hyung contributed to this report.

Half-North Korean, half-Chinese kids struggle in South Korea

By **HYUNG-JIN KIM** Associated Press

UIJEONGBU, South Korea (AP) — Song Hong Ryon looks like any other young woman in South Korea. But three years after her arrival from China, the half-North Korean, half-Chinese 19-year-old has made only two South Korean-born friends and says she's often been hurt by little things, like when people ask if she's from China because of her accent.

"I've agonized about it a lot by myself," she said.

Song's mother fled North Korea in the late 1990s in search of food and work in China, like tens of thousands of other North Korean women did to avoid a famine at home. Many women ended up being sold to poor Chinese farmers as brides, before fleeing again and moving to South Korea, which considers the North part of its territory and therefore embraces North Korean refugees.

Many of the children of these marriages, if they're able to reunite with their mothers in the South, are alienated and frustrated as they struggle to navigate a strange culture, cut off from friends and many of their relatives.

To tell their little-known stories, The Associated Press talked to three of the children, two of their North Korean mothers and an array of school teachers, experts and government officials.

Many of the North Korean mothers lived in China in constant fear of being captured and repatriated to the North, where they could face torture and lengthy detention. When they made the risky trip to South

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Korea, they often left their children behind in China.

The lucky ones, after getting jobs and saving money in South Korea, arranged for their children and husbands to travel to the country. But some children were abandoned, or their fathers refused to leave their hometowns and move to a place where they had no relatives or friends.

Family reunions, if they happen at all, often take years, meaning many half-Chinese, half-North Korean children must fend for themselves during their adolescent years.

Song said she was 10 when her mother left their home in the northeastern Chinese city of Yanji in 2010. A year later, her father also went to South Korea, leaving her with her grandparents.

"When my mom left, I didn't cry. But when my dad left, I cried a lot," Song said. "I think it was because I felt I was truly alone then."

She only reunited with her parents in 2016 in South Korea after a six-year separation. Last December, her mother died of lung cancer.

"I came to blame God," said Song, a devout Christian. "I asked why this had to happen to me."

In South Korea, children like Song often face crises in identity, a language barrier, public indifference and poor government assistance. Many of them feel like outsiders and get left behind academically and socially. Some return to China, parting again with their North Korean mothers.

They're often confused about whether they're Chinese, South Korean or North Korean refugees. Because neither parent is originally from South Korea, they don't have help assimilating into the country's brutally competitive and fast-paced society.

"Combined with South Korea's social bias against them and their own distorted views about (the South Koreans around them), they mostly give up on opportunities to develop themselves, and this eats away at them fulfilling their potential," said Kim Doo Yeon, the principal of the alternative Great Vision School in Uijeongbu, just north of Seoul, where Song was enrolled for two years.

Another half-Chinese, half-North Korean young woman — who wished to be identified only by her family name, Choe, because she worries that media publicity could damage her life in South Korea — came to Seoul from China last year to reunite with her North Korean refugee mother.

The 20-year-old speaks only a little Korean and has no South Korean friends. She has yet to travel alone beyond Seoul and often spends time chatting online with her friends back in China.

Her mother fled their home in Dunhua city in northeastern China in early 2017 after seeing a fellow North Korean woman in their village being arrested and sent back to North Korea.

"I was very saddened," the daughter said through tears about her separation with her mother.

Her mother, who asked to be identified as Choe H.Y. because of similar privacy issues, said brokers lured her to cross the border into China with the promise of a job before selling her to her husband for 5,000 yuan (\$710) in 1998.

Song said her mother was also almost sold to a stranger before she ran away and met her father.

Upon arrival in South Korea, these children are given citizenship because their mothers are now South Korean nationals. But because they don't have a direct link to North Korea, they cannot legally receive some other special favors that North Korea-born refugees enjoy.

Those missed benefits include the right to bypass the highly competitive national university entrance exam, get a college tuition waiver and, for men, choose whether to perform two years of mandatory military service.

Choe said her brother is still in China because of worries that he'll have to serve in the military. Choe wants to improve her Korean and go to a South Korean university, which means she must compete with South Korean students in the university entrance exam.

But language is a problem. "If I try to go deeper in our conversation in Korean, she won't understand, so I become impatient and start speaking Chinese to her," said Choe H.Y.

The fact that these children's mothers mostly began slipping into China about 20 years ago suggests their children are now reaching adulthood and that their plight could soon become a bigger social issue in South Korea.

According to the South Korean Education Ministry, about 1,550 such children were enrolled in primary,

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middle and high schools in South Korea as of April this year, compared with about 980 North Korea-born students. The true number is likely higher.

In recent years, the government has tried to help by providing 4 million won (\$3,390) to their families and dispatching more bilingual instructors to schools. In May, an opposition lawmaker proposed providing China-born North Korean children with the same assistance given to North Korea-born refugees.

Shim Yang-sup, principal of the Seoul-based alternative South-North Love School, said the children should be supported because they represent an untapped resource, with the ability to often speak two languages and navigate both Korean and Chinese cultures.

Kim Hyun-seung, 20, from Tianjin, China, arrived in South Korea three years ago to reunite with his mother, who came six years earlier. Kim's 52-year-old mother, Kim So-yeon, described him as "a great, loyal son," who tried not to talk much about his suffering and once cooked special foods for her on her birthday.

Tall and slim, Kim said he wouldn't mind serving in the South Korean military and dreams of being a chef in a French restaurant.

But he doesn't want a serious girlfriend out of fear they'd "become a couple like my father and mother that gives pain to their child, fails to live together and worries about many things."

Song's bilingual ability helped her receive special admission to a university near Seoul. Her first semester starts in March, and she's excited and nervous about meeting her mostly South Korea-born classmates.

"I'm seeing things positively ... because even if I complain about some difficulties that I have, they aren't resolved," she said. "I've sometimes gotten sick after brooding alone. As time goes by, I'm missing my mom more than ever."

AP Exclusive: 629 Pakistani girls sold as brides to China

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

LAHORE, Pakistan (AP) — Page after page, the names stack up: 629 girls and women from across Pakistan who were sold as brides to Chinese men and taken to China. The list, obtained by The Associated Press, was compiled by Pakistani investigators determined to break up trafficking networks exploiting the country's poor and vulnerable.

The list gives the most concrete figure yet for the number of women caught up in the trafficking schemes since 2018.

But since the time it was put together in June, investigators' aggressive drive against the networks has largely ground to a halt. Officials with knowledge of the investigations say that is because of pressure from government officials fearful of hurting Pakistan's lucrative ties to Beijing.

The biggest case against traffickers has fallen apart. In October, a court in Faisalabad acquitted 31 Chinese nationals charged in connection with trafficking. Several of the women who had initially been interviewed by police refused to testify because they were either threatened or bribed into silence, according to a court official and a police investigator familiar with the case. The two spoke on condition of anonymity because they feared retribution for speaking out.

At the same time, the government has sought to curtail investigations, putting "immense pressure" on officials from the Federal Investigation Agency pursuing trafficking networks, said Saleem Iqbal, a Christian activist who has helped parents rescue several young girls from China and prevented others from being sent there.

"Some (FIA officials) were even transferred," Iqbal said in an interview. "When we talk to Pakistani rulers, they don't pay any attention."

Asked about the complaints, Pakistan's interior and foreign ministries refused to comment.

Several senior officials familiar with the events said investigations into trafficking have slowed, the investigators are frustrated, and Pakistani media have been pushed to curb their reporting on trafficking. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they feared reprisals.

"No one is doing anything to help these girls," one of the officials said. "The whole racket is continuing, and it is growing. Why? Because they know they can get away with it. The authorities won't follow through,

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everyone is being pressured to not investigate. Trafficking is increasing now.”

He said he was speaking out “because I have to live with myself. Where is our humanity?”

China’s Foreign Ministry said it was unaware of the list.

“The two governments of China and Pakistan support the formation of happy families between their people on a voluntary basis in keeping with laws and regulations, while at the same time having zero tolerance for and resolutely fighting against any person engaging in illegal cross-border marriage behavior,” the ministry said in a statement faxed Monday to AP’s Beijing bureau.

An AP investigation earlier this year revealed how Pakistan’s Christian minority has become a new target of brokers who pay impoverished parents to marry off their daughters, some of them teenagers, to Chinese husbands who return with them to their homeland. Many of the brides are then isolated and abused or forced into prostitution in China, often contacting home and pleading to be brought back. The AP spoke to police and court officials and more than a dozen brides — some of whom made it back to Pakistan, others who remained trapped in China — as well as remorseful parents, neighbors, relatives and human rights workers.

Christians are targeted because they are one of the poorest communities in Muslim-majority Pakistan. The trafficking rings are made up of Chinese and Pakistani middlemen and include Christian ministers, mostly from small evangelical churches, who get bribes to urge their flock to sell their daughters. Investigators have also turned up at least one Muslim cleric running a marriage bureau from his madrassa, or religious school.

Investigators put together the list of 629 women from Pakistan’s integrated border management system, which digitally records travel documents at the country’s airports. The information includes the brides’ national identity numbers, their Chinese husbands’ names and the dates of their marriages.

All but a handful of the marriages took place in 2018 and up to April 2019. One of the senior officials said it was believed all 629 were sold to grooms by their families.

It is not known how many more women and girls were trafficked since the list was put together. But the official said, “the lucrative trade continues.” He spoke to the AP in an interview conducted hundreds of kilometers from his place of work to protect his identity. “The Chinese and Pakistani brokers make between 4 million and 10 million rupees (\$25,000 and \$65,000) from the groom, but only about 200,000 rupees (\$1,500), is given to the family,” he said.

The official, with years of experience studying human trafficking in Pakistan, said many of the women who spoke to investigators told of forced fertility treatments, physical and sexual abuse and, in some cases, forced prostitution. Although no evidence has emerged, at least one investigation report contains allegations of organs being harvested from some of the women sent to China.

In September, Pakistan’s investigation agency sent a report it labeled “fake Chinese marriages cases” to Prime Minister Imran Khan. The report, a copy of which was attained by the AP, provided details of cases registered against 52 Chinese nationals and 20 of their Pakistani associates in two cities in eastern Punjab province — Faisalabad, Lahore — as well as in the capital Islamabad. The Chinese suspects included the 31 later acquitted in court.

The report said police discovered two illegal marriage bureaus in Lahore, including one operated from an Islamic center and madrassa — the first known report of poor Muslims also being targeted by brokers. The Muslim cleric involved fled police.

After the acquittals, there are other cases before the courts involving arrested Pakistani and at least another 21 Chinese suspects, according to the report sent to the prime minister in September. But the Chinese defendants in the cases were all granted bail and left the country, say activists and a court official.

Activists and human rights workers say Pakistan has sought to keep the trafficking of brides quiet so as not to jeopardize Pakistan’s increasingly close economic relationship with China.

China has been a steadfast ally of Pakistan for decades, particularly in its testy relationship with India. China has provided Islamabad with military assistance, including pre-tested nuclear devices and nuclear-capable missiles.

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Today, Pakistan is receiving massive aid under China's Belt and Road Initiative, a global endeavor aimed at reconstituting the Silk Road and linking China to all corners of Asia. Under the \$75 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project, Beijing has promised Islamabad a sprawling package of infrastructure development, from road construction and power plants to agriculture.

The demand for foreign brides in China is rooted in that country's population, where there are roughly 34 million more men than women — a result of the one-child policy that ended in 2015 after 35 years, along with an overwhelming preference for boys that led to abortions of girl children and female infanticide.

A report released this month by Human Rights Watch, documenting trafficking in brides from Myanmar to China, said the practice is spreading. It said Pakistan, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Myanmar, Nepal, North Korea and Vietnam have "all have become source countries for a brutal business."

"One of the things that is very striking about this issue is how fast the list is growing of countries that are known to be source countries in the bride trafficking business," Heather Barr, the HRW report's author, told AP.

Omar Warriach, Amnesty International's campaigns director for South Asia, said Pakistan "must not let its close relationship with China become a reason to turn a blind eye to human rights abuses against its own citizens" — either in abuses of women sold as brides or separation of Pakistani women from husbands from China's Muslim Uighur population sent to "re-education camps" to turn them away from Islam.

"It is horrifying that women are being treated this way without any concern being shown by the authorities in either country. And it's shocking that it's happening on this scale," he said.

Associated Press writers Munir Ahmed and Shahid Aslam in Islamabad contributed to this report.

Takeaways from House report on Trump impeachment inquiry

By ERIC TUCKER and COLLEEN LONG Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The House Intelligence Committee released a sweeping impeachment report Tuesday that asserts President Donald Trump misused his office to pressure Ukraine into opening investigations that he believed would help his reelection bid.

The report also makes the case that Trump obstructed Congress by stonewalling the committee's requests for testimony and documents.

The House Intelligence Committee's report is the culmination of a two-month investigation into Trump's handling of Ukraine, including a July 25 phone call with the country's new president and the decision to withhold military assistance from the country.

Here's a look at some of the key points from the 300-page report:

SIGNIFICANT MISCONDUCT

The report states that lawmakers uncovered "significant misconduct" by the president toward Ukraine that broadly placed his own personal interests above those of the nation.

It asserts that the president "subverted" national security by withholding critical military aid to Ukraine, removing an anti-corruption "champion" from her post as ambassador, and by using "hand-picked" agents to pressure the new Ukrainian president to investigate Democrats, including Joe Biden and his son.

Trump conditioned White House meetings on the investigations, and asked Ukraine's president to do him a favor during the July 25 conversation.

Rep. Adam Schiff, the chairman of the Intelligence Committee, called the push on Ukraine the "act of a president unbound," with Trump "determined to use his vast official powers to secure his reelection."

Republicans in a rebuttal to the report said Democrats have no evidence of impeachable offenses by Trump, only proof that he "holds a deepseated, genuine, and reasonable skepticism of Ukraine."

NO OTHER PRESIDENT

The Democratic report describes a concerted and unprecedented effort by Trump and his lawyers to obstruct the House investigation, and to encourage others to do so as well.

The White House told witnesses not to testify and executive branch agencies not to provide any records.

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Deadlines were missed, subpoenas ignored and combative tweets about “a COUP” greeted Congress in place of conciliatory niceties.

The orders were followed to varying degrees. Not a single document was produced by the White House or government agencies despite 71 demands or requests for documents, the report says. And many administration officials who refused to testify cited the White House directives, though several “courageous individuals” came forward to “tell the truth,” according to the report.

Pointedly, the report asserts, Trump’s obstruction went far beyond anything attempted by President Richard Nixon, who agreed to let his staff testify voluntarily in the Watergate investigation, or President Bill Clinton, who provided written responses to 81 interrogatories.

DEVIN NUNES

U.S. Rep. Devin Nunes of California, the ranking Republican on the Intelligence Committee, makes a surprise appearance in the report thanks to call records the Democrats obtained from AT&T and Verizon.

Those records show Nunes had a series of calls with Trump’s personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, as well as with Giuliani’s now-indicted associate Lev Parnas. One conversation with Parnas on April 12 lasted eight minutes, according to logs contained in the report.

Giuliani also had multiple connections with a National Security Council official who formerly served on Nunes’ staff. The connection between some of the players in the investigation prompted questions about whether Nunes — a fervent Trump supporter who lambasted the hearings as a circus sideshow — should have recused himself.

Schiff, also of California, said he was going to reserve comment Tuesday. He said their investigation is focused on the president’s conduct. “The allegations are concerning,” he said, but it may be up to others to investigate. A spokesman for Nunes did not respond to a request for comment.

THE INVESTIGATION CONTINUES

As the Intelligence Committee hands over the report to Judiciary, Schiff made clear that his panel’s work is far from finished. He said in a preface to the report that “there remain unanswered questions, and our investigation must continue.”

Democrats have said they are moving quickly because they believe the evidence is overwhelming and they are concerned about further misconduct by Trump. But they have been under some pressure from the left and from some liberal lawmakers to keep digging before a final impeachment vote.

Schiff said Tuesday that his panel is still looking into some related matters, including whether an effort to influence Ukraine started earlier than first understood. He has said the committee may still call witnesses and could send addendums to the report.

THE THREE AMIGOS (AND RUDY)

The report dedicates a section to a trio of government officials who called themselves the “three amigos:” Energy Secretary Rick Perry, U.S. Ambassador to the European Union Gordon Sondland and former special envoy Kurt Volker. The men, along with Giuliani, were put in charge of Ukraine policy by Trump.

But that didn’t mean the president listened to their assessment of the country. In May, the three told Trump that the new president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, was “committed to doing the right things,” including fighting corruption. Trump reacted negatively, according to the report.

He said the country was “a terrible place, all corrupt, terrible people.” His words echoed Giuliani’s, and the amigos “saw the writing on the wall,” according to Sondland’s testimony, realizing they needed to work with Giuliani on Ukraine or nothing would happen.

Volker and Sondland both testified publicly and said they were dismayed they had to work with Trump’s personal attorney on diplomacy. But that was the way it was, they argued, so they followed orders.

Associated Press Writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report

Report links Giuliani with top Republican on intel panel

By **MATTHEW DALY** Associated Press

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WASHINGTON (AP) — A new report from Democrats compiling evidence on impeachment revealed contact between President Donald Trump's personal attorney Rudy Giuliani and California Rep. Devin Nunes, the top Republican on the intelligence committee.

The report released Tuesday includes phone records obtained from AT&T and Verizon that show Giuliani also was in frequent contact with the White House and with Lev Parnas, a Giuliani associate who is under indictment on charges of using foreign money to make illegal campaign contributions. Prosecutors said the donations by Parnas and Igor Fruman, another Giuliani associate with Ukraine ties, were made while the men were lobbying U.S. politicians to oust the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine.

Giuliani, who has said he knew nothing about illegal campaign donations, was trying to get Ukrainian officials to investigate the son of Trump's potential Democratic challenger, Joe Biden. Parnas and Fruman had key roles in Giuliani's quest.

The records show that Parnas and Nunes were in frequent contact last April, when Giuliani was publicly calling for an investigation of Biden.

House Intelligence Chairman Adam Schiff, who sparred with Nunes during public impeachment hearings, said he was going to "reserve comment" on the Republican's appearance in the report. But he added that, while Trump was "digging up dirt" on Biden, "there may be evidence that there were members of Congress who were complicit in that activity."

Schiff said it may be the role of others to investigate further, but did not elaborate.

Nunes declined to comment.

Democrats also faulted Nunes for failing to disclose his contacts with Giuliani and Parnas, noting that he and other Republicans have criticized Schiff for failing to disclose his staff's early contact with the whistleblower whose complaint triggered the impeachment inquiry.

Joseph Bondy, a lawyer representing Parnas, said on Twitter that Nunes should have recused himself from the impeachment hearings. Parnas has been providing documents to the Intelligence committee in compliance with a subpoena, according to the report.

The call records show Giuliani, Nunes and Parnas were in frequent contact with John Solomon, then a columnist for the Washington news outlet The Hill. Solomon published a series of opinion pieces criticizing then-U.S. Ambassador Marie Yovanovitch, including a false allegation that Yovanovitch had made "disparaging remarks" about Trump. Yovanovitch, who testified during impeachment hearings, called the claim "fictitious" and the State Department issued a statement calling it a "fabrication."

"Solomon was not working alone," the report said, citing "a coordinated effort by associates of President Trump to push these false narratives publicly, as evidenced by public statements, phone records, and contractual agreements."

After Solomon published an article critical of Yovanovitch on April 7, phone records show numerous calls between Giuliani, Parnas, Nunes and Solomon. For instance, on April 10, Giuliani and Nunes talked on three short calls in rapid succession, followed by a text message, and ending with a nearly 3-minute call. Later that day, Parnas and Solomon had a 4-minute, 39-second call.

Solomon, a former reporter for The Associated Press and The Washington Post, now reports for his own website.

The report also shows extensive contact between Giuliani and the White House. On April 24, Giuliani had three phone calls with a number associated with the Office of Management and Budget, and eight calls with a White House number.

One of Giuliani's calls with the White House was 4 minutes, 53 seconds, and another was 3 minutes, 15 seconds. Later that night, the State Department phoned Yovanovitch and abruptly called her home because of "concerns" from "up the street" at the White House.

The phone contacts continued throughout the summer. On Aug. 8, Giuliani connected with the White House Situation Room switchboard for 42 seconds and then again for 1 minute, 25 seconds, the report said. The same day, he texted several times with a number associated with the White House. Democrats were unable to identify the official associated with the phone number. That same afternoon, someone

using a telephone number associated with the White House Office of Management and Budget called Giuliani for nearly 13 minutes.

The calls came as Giuliani and others were trying to persuade Ukraine's new president to investigate the Bidens.

Later that night, Giuliani sent a text message to a phone number associated with the White House. An hour and 15 minutes later, someone using an unidentified number ("1") dialed Giuliani three times in rapid succession. It was not clear who that person was.

After a flurry of calls by Giuliani to the White House, someone using the "1" number called Giuliani and connected for 4 minutes, the report said.

A spokesman for AT&T said the company is required by law to provide information to government and law enforcement agencies. "In all cases, we ensure that requests for assistance are valid and that we act in compliance with the law," spokesman Jim Greer said.

Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

Google co-founders step aside as antitrust scrutiny heats up

By RACHEL LERMAN AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Google's co-founders are relinquishing their executive positions just as state and federal regulators, not to mention the Department of Justice and Congress, are taking a keen interest in possible abuse of its privacy practices and market power.

But their long foreshadowed successor, Sundar Pichai, has been well prepped to serve as the public face of the company in addition to his current role as chief executive.

Larry Page and Sergey Brin are stepping down as CEO and president, respectively, of Google parent company Alphabet. The move caps more than two decades during which the pair have shepherded the one-time startup they founded in a Silicon Valley garage.

Pichai, who has been Google's CEO since 2015, will now also head up Alphabet. The company isn't filling Brin's position as president.

Google is facing increasing criticism and investigations from authorities in the U.S. and Europe about its privacy policies and nature of its many-legged business. That will now fall to Pichai to wrangle and push through — though Brin and Page, both 46, have noticeably backed out of the spotlight already.

Both stopped making appearances earlier this year at the regular question-and-answer sessions with employees, and Page didn't attend this summer's Alphabet shareholders meeting even though he was still in the CEO role.

Last year, Google raised hackles in Congress by refusing to send Page or Pichai to a hearing on Russian manipulation of internet services to sway U.S. elections. Congressional officials left an empty chair for Page at the witness table; top executives from Facebook and Twitter, meanwhile, turned up to testify. Offended lawmakers derided Google as "arrogant."

Although longtime tech analyst Tim Bajarin of Creative Strategies said he doesn't believe Brin and Page are leaving "because the fire is getting hotter," he said Pichai's role at Google has been preparing him for the increased government scrutiny.

Pichai testified before Congress last December for the first time, defending the company against claims from Republicans that the search service is biased against conservatives.

Alphabet has been positioning Pichai as the de facto leader for quite some time. It has also made him the top executive voice at shareholders meetings and on earnings call. Recently, Pichai changed the format of the employee question-and-answer sessions from a weekly occurrence to a monthly one.

Pichai, a 47-year-old immigrant from India, has worked at the company for 15 years, serving as a leader in projects to build Google's Chrome browser and overseeing Android. Pichai, who has an engineering background, took over as the head of Google's products before being promoted to CEO when Alphabet was created. He is known as a soft-spoken and respected manager.

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Google has been facing pressure from privacy advocates over its collection and use of personal information to target advertising. It also faces allegations that it abuses its dominance in search and online advertising to push out rivals.

The company is the subject of antitrust inquiries from Congress, the Department of Justice, a group of U.S. state attorneys general and European authorities. The company has also faced harsh criticism about the material on its services. Its video streaming business, YouTube, was fined \$170 million to settle allegations it improperly collected personal data on children without their parents' consent.

In its early days, Google focused on only one business — cataloging the growing internet. Page and Brin started Google soon after they met as Stanford University graduate students in 1995.

The company has now become one of the most influential companies in the world. Google dominates online search and digital advertising and makes the world's most widely used operating system for smartphones, Android. It's hard to make it through a whole day without using one of Google's services — ranging from online tools to email, cloud computing systems, phones and smart speaker hardware.

Bajarin doesn't expect much to change with the executive shuffle. And if anything does, he said, it will be due to government regulation.

Pichai assured employees in an internal email that his new job wouldn't mean he was taking a step back from Google.

"I want to be clear that this transition won't affect the Alphabet structure or the work we do day to day," he wrote. "I will continue to be very focused on Google and the deep work we're doing to push the boundaries of computing and build a more helpful Google for everyone."

Alphabet — an umbrella corporation that the two created in 2015 — still boasts Google as its central fixture and key moneymaker. But it's also made up of what are known as "other bets," or longshot projects. That includes drone company Wing and self-driving car firm Waymo.

Page and Brin, in announcing the news Tuesday, said the company has "evolved and matured" in the two decades since its founding. Both promised to stay active as board members and shareholders.

"Today, in 2019, if the company was a person, it would be a young adult of 21 and it would be time to leave the roost," they wrote in a blog post.

Brin and Page still hold a majority of voting shares of Alphabet. According to a regulatory filing in April, Page holds 26.1% of the Google shareholder vote, while Brin holds 25.2% - both thanks to so-called "super voting" shares.

According to Forbes magazine, Page has a net worth of \$52.4 billion and Brin \$56.8 billion.

"Keep in mind, they are not losing their title as billionaires, but they are changing their roles," Bajarin said.

Google's longest serving CEO is still Eric Schmidt, the former executive brought into the role in 2001 as a so-called "adult supervisor" for Brin and Page. Schmidt stepped into the position as the company's board worried about the relative inexperience of Brin and Page to manage the growing company. He remained CEO until 2011, when Page once again became chief executive. Schmidt stayed on the board until this year.

Page grew up in Michigan, where his late father, Carl, was a computer scientist and pioneer in artificial intelligence, and his mother taught computer programming. Page began working on personal computers when he was just 6 years old in 1979, when home computers were a rarity. The geeky impulses carried into his adulthood, leading him to once build an inkjet printer out of Legos.

AP Technology Writers Mae Anderson in New York and Barbara Ortutay in San Francisco contributed to this story.

Mexican president prays with family of dead US dual citizens

By MARK STEVENSON Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador prayed for the safety of the country with the relatives of nine U.S. dual citizens slaughtered in northern Mexico last month and assured them "at least four" suspects have been detained, a family member said.

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Julian LeBaron said that during the family's Monday meeting with López Obrador and his Cabinet at Mexico City's National Palace, the president pledged to visit the region where the Nov. 4 massacre took place.

Mexican politicians traditionally avoid open displays of faith, and López Obrador has been unusual in recent comments referring to himself as a "follower of Jesus Christ."

"We just bowed our heads" and "prayed for the president and the country, for peace and goodwill, and to protect our loved ones, and protect our country," LeBaron said Tuesday.

The extended LeBaron family has lived in northern Mexico for decades and identify as part of the Mormon tradition though they are not affiliated with the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter-day Saints. Dual nations, they were hotly criticized by some for asking U.S. President Donald Trump to designate Mexican drug cartels as terrorist organizations, something Trump said he would do.

"We think we should all be humble enough, and that's something we discussed with the president, to recognize that we have an immense problem on our hands and we need help," LeBaron said. "Of course, we wouldn't like to see a military invasion."

Three young mothers and six children were killed in the attack near the border of the northern states of Sonora and Chihuahua. Officials have said a drug cartel is suspected in the attack, but they initially suggested that one of the mothers' vehicles was set afire unintentionally, when a bullet hit the gas tank.

LeBaron said officials have confirmed to them that the killers filmed the attack themselves and set fire to the SUV in which one mother — LeBaron's cousin — and her four children died. He said family members have seen the video.

LeBaron is now trying to press for the kind of local anti-crime organizing that his community in Chihuahua state put together in 2009 after a previous attack by drug cartel gunmen.

He envisions communities allowed to form a posse, deputize citizens and bear arms to fight cartel incursions.

"We've been invaded by criminal terrorist organizations within our own country, within our own communities, and our government has absolutely failed to stop the thugs," said LeBaron. "At some point we have to assume responsibility as citizens to put a stop to it."

"The whole western United States was basically built on a structure that worked for communities, what we call the wild west was never the wild west," he said. "Within the community they basically had all the powers to hold people accountable. The whole town could be deputized to bring criminals before justice."

The Who plans 1st Cincinnati area concert since '79 tragedy

By DAN SEWELL Associated Press

CINCINNATI (AP) — The rock band The Who announced Tuesday night it will play its first Cincinnati area concert since 11 fans died 40 years ago in a pre-show stampede.

The Rock & Roll Hall of Fame band will play April 23 at Northern Kentucky University's BB&T Arena, across the Ohio River 7 miles south of the Dec. 3, 1979, concert site, where another two dozen people were injured Dec. 3, 1979, amid confusion and lack of preparation for thousands of fans lined up for hours for first-come seats.

The announcement came after WCPO-TV in Cincinnati aired a Tuesday night documentary featuring interviews with lead singer Roger Daltrey and guitarist Pete Townshend, the remaining original members of the British band that emerged in the 1960s featuring songs of youthful rebellion such as "My Generation" and its "Summertime Blues" cover.

Both have said they've been haunted by the tragedy. Townshend recently told The Associated Press he was looking forward to discussing it in Cincinnati.

"Now we can have a conversation about it when we go back," Townshend said.

"We will meet people and we'll be there. We'll be there. That's what's important," he said. "I'm so glad that we've got this opportunity to go back."

The band is adding the concert to its "Moving On!" tour 2020 dates.

The Who said it will donate a portion of proceeds from the Cincinnati area concert to a memorial schol-

arship fund benefiting students in the Cincinnati suburb of Finneytown. Daltrey visited a Finneytown High School memorial site in 2018 and the band has for years supported the scholarship effort there. Three of the 11 killed, including two 15-year-old girls who were the youngest victims, had attended Finneytown High.

The band didn't know about the tragedy until the concert was ending. Longtime manager Bill Curbishley had made the decision to have the show go on, warning Cincinnati authorities that they wouldn't be able to control the crowd if the concert was called off.

"Despite everything, I still feel inadequate," he told WCPO. "I don't know about the guys, but for me, I left a little bit of my soul in Cincinnati."

Associated Press writer John Carucci contributed in New York.

Follow Dan Sewell at <https://www.twitter.com/dansewell>.

Northern Mexico fears return to dark past after gunfights

By MARIA VERZA Associated Press

VILLA UNION, Mexico (AP) — Mexico's president says he wants to fight drug cartels with "hugs, not bullets," but after 23 people were killed in a weekend gunbattle in the border state of Coahuila, some communities want a more forceful strategy to prevent cartel assailants from reimposing a reign of terror.

Residents of the small town of Villa Union said Tuesday that they fear a return to the days of 2010-2013, when the old Zetas cartel killed, burned and abducted Coahuila citizens. This past weekend, the Cartel del Noreste — an offshoot of the Zetas — invaded Villa Union to try to reassert a claim to the turf.

Villa Union is 12 miles (20 kilometers) from the town of Allende, the site of a 2011 massacre in which the Zetas killed at least 70 people. Residents said they have learned from experience that the Zetas must be fought.

"You can't give a drug trafficker a hug and not expect to receive a bullet in return," said a former policeman in Allende who would not give his name for fear of reprisals. "That is the only way to fight them off, to prevent them from returning to our towns and ruling them, is with bullets."

The ex-policeman and his family had to flee Allende for a while in 2011 in the face of Zeta threats. He doesn't want to have to flee again.

Many others expressed similar fears.

Sandra Zedillo, a municipal employee in Villa Union, said "it doesn't look good. We are afraid they will return." The atmosphere of dread was underscored by the funeral procession held Tuesday for a local firefighter who was abducted and killed by the gang.

"This hurts," a rancher said. "The firefighter paid for something that he didn't have any part in."

Another resident who asked that his name not be used, said old fears were stirred up by the weekend invasion in which dozens of Cartel de Noreste pickup trucks shot up the town hall, killed two municipal workers and four state police officers, before battling soldiers and police and fleeing.

Some of the suspected gunmen were later arrested and described the incursion as a hit-and-run operation aimed at staking a claim to the territory for use as a drug-trafficking route to the U.S. border. But many thought the gang wanted to rule the border area, not just use its routes.

"This is going to get worse," said the man, who lived through the previous round of violence. "This is what happened with the Zetas. They said they wouldn't stay, but they stayed."

For his part, Coahuila Gov. Miguel Riquelme is planning to fight the cartel's move into the state. The Cartel del Noreste, like the Zetas, is based in the border city of Nuevo Laredo, across from Laredo, Texas, to the east. Nuevo Laredo is in Tamaulipas state.

"This isn't a question of issuing a challenge to the criminal groups," Riquelme said following a meeting with army officers in Villa Union. "It is about protecting the civilian population."

Riquelme announced plans to set up at least three military posts with about 40 soldiers apiece and said more would be added if necessary.

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He said with apparent satisfaction that some of the 10 suspects detained in the weekend attack — several of whom are adolescents — said they had been forced into participating, and said they feared the Coahuila state police.

While President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador wants to avoid confrontations with drug cartels, they appear unavoidable.

And although the president claims the policy of detaining drug lords and the 2006-2012 government offensive against the cartels were failures, those initiatives weakened the Zetas and reduced violence in some parts of the border states of Coahuila, Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas.

Now locals fear the cartels may be resurgent. Some long for the days when Mexican marines successfully patrolled the area until Lopez Obrador reassigned them to other duties. They were known for not getting corrupted by the cartels and not yielding in battle with them.

"The marines are the only ones I trust," said one local mechanic. "The rest are going to take a bribe."

Villa Union bears the scars of the hourslong gunbattles Saturday and Sunday. The fight that unfolded between a cartel force estimated at 100 to 150 men and state police left 23 people dead. At least 50 homes and buildings were riddled with bullet holes.

In the aftermath, authorities found about 20 abandoned vehicles, some with machine-gun turrets and welded armoring. The doors of many were professionally printed with the initials of a drug cartel. At least four had .50-caliber mounted machine guns.

House report: Trump misused power, obstructed Congress

By LISA MASCARO and MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump seriously misused the power of his office for personal political gain by seeking foreign intervention in the American election process and obstructed Congress by stonewalling efforts to investigate, a House report released Tuesday concluded in findings that form the basis for possible impeachment.

The 300-page report from Democrats on the House Intelligence Committee does not render a judgment on whether Trump's actions stemming from a July 25 phone call with Ukraine rise to the level of "high crimes and misdemeanors" warranting impeachment. That is for Congress to decide. But it details "significant misconduct" by the president that the House Judiciary Committee will begin to assess Wednesday.

"The evidence that we have found is really quite overwhelming that the president used the power of his office to secure political favors and abuse the trust American people put in him and jeopardize our security," Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., told The Associated Press.

"It was a difficult decision to go down this road, because it's so consequential for the country," he said. But "the president was the author of his own impeachment inquiry by repeatedly seeking foreign help in his election campaigns."

Schiff added: "Americans need to understand that this president is putting his personal political interests above theirs. And that it's endangering the country."

In a statement, White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said, "Chairman Schiff and the Democrats utterly failed to produce any evidence of wrongdoing by President Trump." She said the report "reads like the ramblings of a basement blogger straining to prove something when there is evidence of nothing."

The president, at a NATO meeting in London, called the impeachment effort by rival Democrats "unpatriotic," and said he wouldn't be watching Wednesday's hearing.

The "Trump-Ukraine Impeachment Inquiry Report" provides a detailed, stunning, account of a shadow diplomacy run by Trump attorney Rudy Giuliani, resulting in layers of allegations that can be distilled into specific acts, like bribery or obstruction, and the more amorphous allegation that Trump abused his power by putting his interests above the nation.

Based on two months of investigation sparked by a still-anonymous government whistleblower's complaint, the report relies heavily on testimony from current and former U.S. officials who defied White House orders not to appear.

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The inquiry found that Trump "solicited the interference of a foreign government, Ukraine, to benefit his reelection," Schiff wrote in the report's preface. In doing so, the president "sought to undermine the integrity of the U.S. presidential election process, and endangered U.S. national security," the report said. When Congress began investigating, it added, Trump obstructed the investigation like no other president in history.

Along with revelations from earlier testimony, the report included previously unreleased cell phone records raising fresh questions about Giuliani's interactions with the top Republican on the intelligence panel, Rep. Devin Nunes of California, and the White House. Nunes declined to comment.

The House intelligence panel voted later Tuesday, in a party-line tally, to send the document to the Judiciary Committee.

Republicans defended the president in their own 123-page rebuttal claiming Trump never intended to pressure Ukraine when he asked for a "favor" — investigations of Democrats and Joe Biden. They say the military aid the White House was withholding was not being used as leverage, as Democrats claim — and besides, the \$400 million was ultimately released, although only after a congressional outcry. Democrats, they argue, just want to undo the 2016 election.

For Republicans falling in line behind Trump, the inquiry is simply a "hoax." Trump criticized the House for pushing forward with the proceedings while he was overseas, a breach of political decorum that traditionally leaves partisan differences at the water's edge.

House GOP Leader Kevin McCarthy called on Democrats to end the impeachment "nightmare." He said, "They're concerned if they do not impeach this president they can't beat him in an election."

The report will lay the foundation for the Judiciary Committee to assess potential articles of impeachment, presenting a history-making test of political judgment with a case that is dividing Congress and the country.

In prefacing it, Schiff drew deeply from history, citing George Washington, Alexander Hamilton and other Founding Fathers, to explain grounds for impeachment "as a remedy of last resort."

Democrats once hoped to sway Republicans to consider Trump's removal, but they are now facing an ever-hardening partisan split over the swift-moving proceedings on impeaching the president.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi faces a critical moment of her leadership as she steers the process ahead after initially resisting the impeachment inquiry, warning it was too divisive for the country and required bipartisan support.

Possible grounds for impeachment are focused on whether Trump abused his office as he pressed Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to open investigations into Trump's political rivals. At the time, Trump was withholding \$400 million in military aid, jeopardizing key support as Ukraine faces an aggressive Russia at its border.

The report also accuses Trump of becoming the "first and only" president in U.S. history to "openly and indiscriminately" defy House's constitutional authority to conduct the impeachment proceedings by instructing officials not to comply with subpoenas for documents and testimony.

For Democrats marching into what is now a largely partisan process, the political challenge if they proceed is to craft the impeachment articles in a way that will draw the most support from their ranks and not expose Pelosi's majority to messy divisions, especially as Republicans stand lockstep with the president.

While liberal Democrats are pushing the party to go further and incorporate the findings from former Special Counsel Robert Mueller's report on Russian interference in the 2016 election and other actions by Trump, more centrist and moderate Democrats prefer to stick with the Ukraine matter as a simpler narrative that Americans understand.

Trump's campaign is spending robustly to run ads against front-line freshmen lawmakers, many from districts Trump won in 2016 but that flipped in 2018 to give Democrats the House majority. Pelosi will be protective of these lawmakers as the proceedings unfold.

Hearing from legal experts at Wednesday's session, Democrats could begin drafting articles of impeachment against the president in a matter of days. The Judiciary Committee could vote next week and the full House could vote by Christmas. Then it moves to the Senate for a trial in 2020.

The White House declined an invitation to participate Wednesday, with counsel Pat Cipollone denouncing the proceedings as a "baseless and highly partisan inquiry."

Trump had previously suggested he might be willing to offer written testimony under certain conditions, though aides suggested they did not anticipate Democrats would ever agree to them.

Cipollone, who will brief Senate Republicans on Wednesday, left open the question of whether White House officials would participate in additional House hearings.

Republicans on the committee, led by Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, plan to use procedural moves to stall the process and portray the inquiry as unfair to the president.

House rules provide the president and his attorneys the right to cross-examine witnesses and review evidence before the committee, but little ability to bring forward witnesses of their own.

Associated Press writers Zeke Miller, Colleen Long, Eric Tucker and Jill Colvin contributed to this report.

Elon Musk tells jurors insult provoked 'pedo guy' tweet

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Elon Musk testified Tuesday that he was being insulting, not literally calling a British cave diver a pedophile when he lashed out on Twitter and ended up in a defamation lawsuit from the man who helped rescue a dozen boys and their soccer coach from a flooded Thailand cave last year.

The Tesla CEO told jurors that he called Vernon Unsworth "pedo guy" because he was upset the spelunker had belittled his efforts to build a mini-submarine to transport the boys to safety. The sub was never used and Unsworth called it nothing more than a "PR stunt" and said Musk could stick the craft "where it hurts."

"It was wrong and insulting, so I insulted him back," the billionaire said in federal court in Los Angeles. "It was an unprovoked attack on what was a good-natured attempt to help the kids."

Unsworth's lawyers argue that Musk's tweet overshadowed what should have been one of the diver's proudest moments and left him no choice but to sue.

At the time, Musk said he didn't know Unsworth had helped with the rescue. He said his tweet wasn't asserted as a fact.

"Just as I felt he didn't mean to sodomize me with a submarine, I likewise didn't think ("pedo guy") required any clarification," Musk said. "I will say it again, I apologize to Mr. Unsworth."

Unsworth is seeking unspecified damages for pain, suffering and emotional distress from the tech entrepreneur whose net worth exceeds \$20 billion.

Musk's lawyer, Alex Spiro, said earlier that Unsworth deserves nothing for what he called "joking, taunting tweets in a fight between men."

The shame and mortification Unsworth said he experienced is undercut by the attention he received after the rescue, Spiro said, including honors from the Thai king and British prime minister and offers from agents and film crews.

Musk deleted the July 15, 2018, tweets and apologized on Twitter, though subsequent statements he made have called into question what he meant.

In an email to a BuzzFeed reporter seeking comment on the threat of a lawsuit by Unsworth's lawyer, Musk wrote the journalist "should stop defending child rapists," followed by expletives.

Musk maintained his composure throughout an afternoon of questioning from Unsworth's lawyer, who called him as his first witness.

Dressed in a charcoal suit and white shirt, Musk calmly answered the questions and slipped in an occasional droll remark that drew snickers from jurors and the gallery.

When asked about the final line of his email to the BuzzFeed reporter that said he hoped Unsworth would sue him, Musk quipped: "I guess be careful what you wish for."

Throughout the testimony, he didn't back down from his assertion that he didn't mean pedophile in his tweet, saying it was only meant as "creepy old man" where he grew up in South Africa, though he said the phrase was widely used across the English language.

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Unsworth's lawyers laughed off that explanation, saying Musk responded to a question on Twitter about whether he had accused Unsworth of being a pedophile with another tweet that said, "Bet ya a signed dollar it's true."

Musk also made a crack about that tweet, joking that it was a "very high stakes situation."

"If I really thought that it was true, I would have said more than a dollar," he testified.

Musk admitted one of his staffers tried to enlist a man to dig up dirt on Unsworth, but the investigator turned out to be a con man who got \$52,000 for his efforts and produced nothing damning about Unsworth.

The lawsuit is not the first time Musk's tweets have landed him in hot water.

Musk and Tesla reached a \$40 million settlement with the Securities and Exchange Commission last year over allegations he misled investors with a tweet declaring he had secured financing to buy out the electric car maker. He agreed in the settlement to have future tweets about the company screened.

He went back to court on accusations he violated that agreement by tweeting a misleading figure about how many cars Tesla would manufacture this year. The SEC sought to hold him in contempt of court, which led to a new agreement imposing tighter controls on Musk's tweets about the company.

This story has been corrected to show Musk did not call a diver a pedophile and claimed his use of "pedo guy" was merely an insult.

Ex-chief says he didn't intentionally 'deceive' anyone

By SOPHIA TAREEN Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — Ousted Chicago Police Superintendent Eddie Johnson said Tuesday that he didn't "intentionally mislead or deceive" anyone about the mid-October night he was found sleeping behind the wheel of his SUV.

Johnson, 59, released a statement through his attorney a day after Mayor Lori Lightfoot fired him for "ethical lapses," just weeks before he was set to retire. She said an inspector general's report, which hasn't been released publicly, revealed he misled her and the public about the circumstances of that evening and showed "flawed decision-making."

Two Chicago newspapers published reports Monday night that seem to contradict Johnson's public account in which he blamed an issue with his medication, saying he felt lightheaded while driving home and fell asleep after pulling over. Lightfoot said he'd told her he had "a couple of drinks with dinner."

One of the newspapers, the Chicago Sun-Times, reported that multiple employees are under investigation for an alleged cover-up the night Johnson was found asleep in his vehicle and the next day. Department spokesman Anthony Guglielmi said he did not know what the inspector general is investigating but that the inspector general's office has not requested any member of the department's command staff or any officers be relieved of their police powers or that any other action be taken.

The Sun-Times reported that Johnson, who is one of the most recognizable figures in Chicago, was drinking for hours with a female member of his security detail at a downtown restaurant and that sources told the paper that restaurant video shows the two kissing repeatedly. The Chicago Tribune reported that the inspector general's investigation includes video showing Johnson drinking for hours with a woman at a Chicago Board of Trade building restaurant. Both newspapers attributed the information to sources they didn't identify.

"One thing I want everyone to know is this: I did not intentionally mislead or deceive the Mayor or the people of Chicago," Johnson said in the statement. "I acknowledge that I made a poor decision and had a lapse of judgment on the night of October 16. That was a mistake and I know that."

Johnson said he has "no interest in fighting a battle" for his reputation after three decades with the police department.

"Reputations are not built in a day and not damaged in a day either," he said. "I will simply rely on the reputation for integrity that I think I have earned during my long career, with the faith that we should all be judged by the entirety of our lives and not on what happened on our worst days."

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Johnson's attorney, Tom Needham, said Tuesday that the former police chief would not have comments beyond his statement.

Lightfoot fiercely criticized Johnson Monday for a series of "intolerable" actions, at a City Hall news conference, including lying to her and public about that evening. She said an inspector general's report, which includes video evidence, showed a different account. She declined to discuss it.

"While at some point, the inspector general's report may become public and those details may be revealed, I don't feel like it is appropriate or fair to Mr. Johnson's wife or children to do so at this time," Lightfoot said.

Johnson, who during his term as chief has been hospitalized for a blood clot and a kidney transplant, was found in his car by officers early Oct. 17. The officers did not conduct any sobriety tests and let their boss drive home. It was unclear if they would be disciplined. The Tribune reports that Johnson partially rolled down the window on his police vehicle, showed his superintendent's badge and drove away.

Johnson was set to retire at the end of the month after three decades with the Chicago Police Department. Former Los Angeles Police Chief Charlie Beck, who was named as an interim replacement, took over Monday and spent the day meeting with department officials.

"This is not at all how I envisioned the transition but, and I think this is very important, this will not deter the transition," he said Tuesday at a news conference on an illegal gun operation. "You know, Superintendent Johnson and I will talk. We have talked. He has the best interests of the city and CPD at heart as do I."

He said he and Johnson are friends, but everyone has to be accountable.

"None of us are perfect. Everybody makes mistakes," Beck said. "But we have to live with that. We have to live with our errors."

Associated Press writers Kathleen Foody and Don Babwin contributed to this report.

Follow Sophia Tareen on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sophiatareen>.

Lingering snowstorm wreaks havoc on Boston commute

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press.

BOSTON (AP) — A long-lasting snowstorm hit much of New England at the height of the morning commute Tuesday and continued to hang around for most of the day, snarling travel and closing schools.

The wintry weather that moved into the region Sunday night brought more than 2 feet of snow to parts of upstate New York, western Massachusetts and Vermont on Tuesday, according to tallies from the National Weather Service.

Boston and other coastal communities in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut saw less than 6 inches of snow, but its arrival just before the rush hour commute could hardly have been worse.

At one point, a jackknifed tractor-trailer blocked all southbound lanes on Interstate 95 just south of Boston, causing backups.

The Boston region's much-maligned transit system also lived up to its reputation, with mechanical problems, power outages, and other equipment failures causing delays on multiple lines and frustrating commuters.

Leigh Franco was about an hour into her ride to her job in Cambridge when her subway train started spewing smoke and sparks before breaking down in a downtown Boston station.

The 23-year-old Melrose resident still had a few more stops, a transfer and another subway ride to look forward to. So, as passengers were being shuffled off the train and out of the station, Franco pulled out her phone to dash off an email to her colleagues.

"At this point, I'm just going to turn around and head back home," she said. "I didn't want to go in today anyway."

The rest of the work week is expected to be slightly colder than normal, with temperatures in the Boston-area hovering around the mid-30 degrees, according to the National Weather Service. Parts of New England might also see light rain or even snow Friday night.

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Tuesday's snowstorm was related to the system that pummeled parts of the West and Midwest over the long Thanksgiving weekend. Duluth, Minnesota, got over 21 inches of snow, and blizzard conditions closed major highways in Wyoming and Colorado.

In New England, scores of school districts closed for a second straight day and governors urged people to work from home. Work for nonessential state employees was delayed or outright canceled in some states.

More than 100 flights were canceled and nearly 300 more delayed at Boston's Logan Airport Tuesday morning, according to the website FlightAware.

Among those left stranded was Joanne Harvey, a 62-year-old retiree from Rockland, Massachusetts, who was looking forward to a vacation in Bonita Springs, Florida, with a travelling companion.

The two were originally scheduled to leave Tuesday morning, but had to hunker down in the airport for their flight slated to leave that night.

"With only one hour's sleep, we're tired," she said. "We've been moving all over the place in here, trying to find a comfortable place that's not too cold, the chairs aren't too uncomfortable. Right now we're in limbo."

In New Jersey, more than 40,000 homes and businesses were without electricity Tuesday even as the storm moved out of the region.

In New York City, hundreds of Brooklyn households also dealt with power outages caused by overnight manhole fires. A Consolidated Edison spokesman said snow-melting salt can sometimes seep into the system, corroding wires and causing fires.

Hospitals in Massachusetts also reported a rash of snowblower-related hand injuries.

In Lawrence, near the New Hampshire state line, firefighters freed a man's hand from his snow blower, then helped him finish shoveling his driveway.

In Vermont, ski resorts Stratton Mountain and Mount Snow relished receiving more than two feet of fresh powder.

And in Warwick, Rhode Island, where residents were digging out from 4 inches of fresh snow, Doreen Goy worked a snowblower with a singular focus.

"I need to get to the gym," she said as she cleared a sidewalk in front of her home.

Associated Press reporters Mark Pratt and Rodrique Ngowi in Boston, Karen Matthews in New York, William Kole in Rhode Island, David Sharp in Maine, Holly Ramer in New Hampshire and Lisa Rathke in Vermont contributed to this story.

Global carbon pollution continues to rise, but more slowly

By **SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The world continues to increase the amount of heat-trapping carbon dioxide it pumps into the air, but it's not rising as fast as in the previous couple years.

Led by big jumps from China and India, the world is projected to spew 40.57 billion tons (36.8 billion metric tons) of carbon dioxide into the air in 2019. That's up nearly 255 million tons (231 million metric tons) from 2018, according to two scientific studies released Tuesday. The studies by Global Carbon Project, a group of international scientists who track emissions, show a 0.6% increase from last year.

In previous years, global carbon dioxide emissions grew by 2.1% and 1.5% after a few years in the mid 2010s when global emissions barely rose, according to the studies in Environmental Research Letters. Carbon dioxide from the burning of coal, oil and gas has caused 1.8 degrees of warming (1 degree Celsius) since pre-industrial times and world leaders are meeting in Madrid to try to limit warming to another 1.8 degrees from now.

"Emissions grew more slowly than last year but we still set a global record. It's hard to be upbeat about that," said study co-author Rob Jackson, a Stanford University climate scientist. "The U.S. National Academy of Sciences sounded the alarm on carbon and climate 40 years ago. Since then, global carbon dioxide emissions have doubled, and the world is hurtling towards catastrophic climate change."

The 2019 estimate is based on data through the first nine to ten months of the year, with a few national

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estimates based only on six months of data, said co-author Glen Peters, a climate scientist in Norway. Past projections have proven pretty accurate, he said.

That means every second this year people put 2.57 million pounds of carbon dioxide in Earth's atmosphere. That's the equivalent weight of two Airbus A380s, the world's largest passenger airliner, going into the air every second.

Both the United States and the European Union saw emissions drop 1.7% from 2018 to 2019, but China saw a 2.6% increase and India had a 1.8% rise. China is by far the biggest carbon polluter, with 28% of the 2019 emissions. The United States is No. 2 at 14.5%.

"Generally, I think this is bad news. Not terrible news, but bad news," said Cornell University climate scientist Natalie Mahowald, who wasn't part of the report. "A stronger switch from coal to solar or wind needs to happen to reach low climate targets."

Led by 10% drops in both the United States and Europe, carbon pollution from coal dropped worldwide nearly 1% but increased 2.6% from cleaner natural gas, according to the studies. Coal still is the No. 1 source of man-made carbon pollution putting 16 billion tons (14.6 billion metric tons) of carbon dioxide in the air this year, followed by oil and then gas. Coal generally emits 76% more carbon dioxide than natural gas to produce the same amount of energy, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

"I don't think we have completely seen the end of coal yet, but it is certainly in the death throes," Peters said. "Though, I would imagine a slow and protracted decline of coal because of the young infrastructure in Asia."

But with coal dropping or even just plateauing, it is now apparent that the world is not quite on the worst-case scenario carbon emissions path of the four charted by the UN's Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, Peters said. But the next two highest emission scenarios, which the world is closer to, are not "pleasant worlds to live in," he said.

Princeton University climate scientist Michael Oppenheimer, who wasn't part of the study, called the numbers grim: "Stepping back and looking at 30 years of data, there is nothing at all that reveals any reason to be optimistic that the world is about to turn the corner on reducing carbon dioxide emissions."

The United States, which is in the early part of a year-long process of pulling out of the 2015 Paris climate agreement, has reduced its carbon dioxide pollution by 9.7% between 2000 and 2018, Jackson calculated. Critics of the Paris agreement said the U.S. is the world leader in reducing emissions, but Jackson's numbers show 11 other nations have had bigger percentage cutbacks this century.

From 2000 to 2018, the United Kingdom has cut its carbon pollution by about one-third, Greece and Italy cut their emissions by more than 28%. At the same time, China's carbon pollution has tripled and India's has increased by 157%.

"The numbers show that the U.S. is not leading in terms of overall emissions reductions and this proves that we could be doing better," said University of Michigan environment dean Jonathan Overpeck. "This highlights that more, not less, U.S. international leadership is urgently needed. I'm still hopeful we can turn this all around... If we don't, the planet is cooked."

Read more stories on climate issues by The Associated Press at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears .

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DHS may require US citizens be photographed at airports

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

DALLAS (AP) — Federal officials are considering requiring that all travelers — including American citizens — be photographed as they enter or leave the country as part of an identification system using facial-

recognition technology.

The Department of Homeland Security says it expects to publish a proposed rule next July. Officials did not respond to requests for more details.

Critics are already raising objections.

Sen. Edward Markey, D-Mass., said Tuesday he will introduce legislation to block the plan and prohibit U.S. citizens from being forced to provide facial-recognition information. He said a recent data breach at Customs and Border Protection shows that Homeland Security can't be trusted with the information.

Facial recognition is being tested by several airlines at a number of U.S. airports. American citizens are allowed to opt out of being photographed, although a 2017 audit by a federal watchdog agency found that few U.S. travelers exercised that right — barely more than one per flight.

Federal law requires Homeland Security to put into place a system to use biometrics to confirm the identity of international travelers. Government officials have made no secret of their desire to expand the use of biometrics, which they say could identify potential terrorists and prevent fraudulent use of travel documents.

Homeland Security announced the possibility of expanding biometrics to U.S. citizens in a recent, brief filing. A spokesman for U.S. Customs and Border Protection, part of Homeland Security, said there would be a chance for the public to comment on any change in regulations.

In a November 2018 report, Homeland Security said facial recognition is the best biometric approach at borders because it can be done quickly and "with a high degree of accuracy." The agency said privacy risks "are mostly mitigated." Photos used to match Americans to their identities are deleted within 12 hours, according to the report.

Jay Stanley, a policy analyst for the American Civil Liberties Union, said the government has told the public and Congress repeatedly that American citizens would be exempt from mandatory biometric screening.

"This new notice suggests that the government is renegeing on what was already an insufficient promise," Stanley said in a statement. "Travelers, including U.S. citizens, should not have to submit to invasive biometric scans simply as a condition of exercising their constitutional right to travel."

Domingo's accusers: Nothing 'chivalrous' about groping women

By JOCELYN GECKER Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Two opera singers who accused Placido Domingo of sexual misconduct said Tuesday that it was disappointing and disturbing that the opera legend recently claimed he has always behaved like a gentleman and never acted improperly toward women.

Angela Turner Wilson and Patricia Wulf were among more than 20 women who accused Domingo of sexual harassment or inappropriate sexually charged behavior in two Associated Press reports this summer.

Their new statement came in response to comments Domingo made in two recent interviews with European publications, in which he disputed the allegations against him and said he never abused his power. He said he always behaved like a gentleman but that "gallant gestures are viewed differently nowadays."

"There is nothing 'chivalrous' or 'gallant' about groping a woman in the workplace, in any country or era," Wilson and Wulf said in the statement issued through their attorney, Debra Katz.

The Grammy Award-winning singer is one of the most celebrated men in the opera world and regarded as one of the greatest opera singers of all time. The long-married, Spanish-born star also is a prolific conductor and longtime administrator, having served as the general director of both the Los Angeles Opera and Washington Opera.

In the AP stories, several singers, a dancer and backstage staff at opera companies accused Domingo of sexual harassment and other inappropriate, sexually charged behavior that included unwelcomed kisses, touching and late-night phone calls.

Many said Domingo tried to pressure them into sexual relationships and sometimes punished them professionally if they rejected him. The accusers and dozens of others interviewed said Domingo's behavior was an open secret in the opera world.

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Until recently, the 78-year-old had not spoken publicly about the allegations and had limited his reaction to statements from his lawyer and publicist. He had called the accusations "in many ways, simply incorrect" without elaborating.

Last week, Domingo gave an interview to Spanish online newspaper El Confidencial in which he again stopped short of flatly denying the women's allegations but insisted he had never behaved improperly. He added that Spaniards are by nature "warm, affectionate and loving.

"I have been gallant but always within the limits of gentlemanliness, respect and sensitivity," he said.

Domingo also spoke to Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera, denying he abused his power and saying casting decisions were not made by him but by "a team of four or five people." He said that "very offensive things were said about me as a human being."

Turner and Wulf's statement said Domingo's "continued failure to take responsibility for wrongdoing or to express any remorse is extremely disappointing and deeply disturbing."

"He did not behave like a gentleman when he repeatedly propositioned women for sex in the workplace ... and when he groped them and kissed them over their objections," the statement said. "He did not behave respectfully when he offered to assist with the careers of aspiring female opera singers if they came to his apartment and had sex with him."

The most serious allegation lodged against Domingo came from Turner, a soprano, who told the AP that he forcefully grabbed her breast in a makeup room at the Washington Opera in 1999 after she rejected his advances for weeks.

Wulf, a mezzo soprano, said Domingo persistently propositioned and harassed her during performances at the Washington Opera in 1998, when he was general director.

Another singer said when she worked with Domingo at the Los Angeles Opera in the mid-2000s, he stuck his hand down her skirt after asking her to sing for him at his apartment. Others said he forced wet kisses on their lips.

U.S. opera houses canceled Domingo's upcoming performances following the accusations, and he resigned from the LA Opera, where he had been general director since 2003. It's investigating the allegations.

European theaters have supported Domingo and maintained his appearances.

"It is deeply upsetting and unfair that Mr. Domingo can retreat to another world without having to come to terms with what he has done to many, many women here," Wulf said.

The women's statement said Domingo's comments show an attempt to absolve his misconduct by blaming cultural differences and changing rules and standards.

Biden steps up hits on Buttigieg, Warren over health care

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

MASON CITY, Iowa (AP) — Joe Biden is taking aim at Pete Buttigieg and Elizabeth Warren during an eight-day tour of Iowa that the former vice president hopes will help him gain ground in the state that holds the first presidential caucus.

Biden argued Tuesday that Buttigieg, the mayor of South Bend, Indiana, is riding his coattails in pushing for a "public option" government-insurance plan to be sold alongside private insurance. He argued that Warren, meanwhile, is out of step with the Democratic Party and the general electorate with her call for a single-payer "Medicare for All" system that would supplant the private insurance market altogether.

Biden entered the race earlier this year as a front-runner, but his increasingly aggressive stance toward Buttigieg and Warren marks a recognition that the race is far from locked up in the crucial states that kick off the primary season. And by zeroing in on health care, Biden is highlighting an issue that he sees as core to his candidacy.

Biden points to his work helping pass the Affordable Care Act in 2010 as an example of the type of leadership experience most of his rivals lack. And he argues that while the other candidates have shifted their positions, he's been consistent during the 2020 campaign in embracing the public option, which he thinks will be less objectionable to moderate voters than a single-payer system.

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"I was the first guy to come out with the plan to build on Obamacare, and I'm glad Pete has a version of that same plan," Biden told reporters Tuesday in Mason City, Iowa. A day earlier, Biden was even more direct, saying the mayor essentially "stole" his idea after having once endorsed Medicare for All before he became a presidential candidate.

On Warren, Biden said there is "great enthusiasm" among Medicare for All supporters who back the Massachusetts senator, though he clarified that those enthusiastic supporters don't represent a majority of the party. It came a day after he told reporters that he didn't see enthusiasm for Warren.

"I don't think ... that's where the center of the party is or the left or the right of the party," Biden said Tuesday. Most Democrats "know it will take a long time, they know it costs a lot of money, and it's causing some consternation for people," he continued. "And I think ... people are gonna find some version of what I've been talking about for a long time, and it's to build on Obamacare with a public option."

Buttigieg pushed back at Biden's criticisms after attending a health care roundtable in Montgomery, Alabama, in Tuesday. He noted that he has been talking about "Medicare for all who want it" since at least February, before Biden entered the 2020 race.

"I'm glad when there's overlap among Democrats who have shared values," Buttigieg said. "Our policies are not the same, but there are certainly some areas that are consistent because we believe in the same things across this field. I will continue to advocate for what is right and seek to earn support based on that."

Both men have pushed back at Warren and fellow progressive Bernie Sanders on the debate stage this year, casting single-payer as too expensive and impossible to get through Congress.

Buttigieg had taken a different view before his campaign.

In February 2018, Buttigieg was drawn into a Twitter back-and-forth as progressives were urging Democratic politicians to back single-payer. "When/where have you ever heard me oppose Medicare for All?" he asked in a Feb. 17, 2018, response to an activist's query. A day later, he tweeted out a column he wrote as a Harvard University senior, saying he'd "been on record on this one since 2004." On the same day, he declared in a separate tweet: "Gosh! Okay ... I, Pete Buttigieg, politician, do henceforth and forthwith declare, most affirmatively and indubitably, unto the ages, that I do favor Medicare for All, as I do favor any measure that would help get all Americans covered. Now, if you'll excuse me, potholes await."

For his part, Biden can't claim to have cornered the market on a "public option." Two other candidates — Sens. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and Michael Bennet of Colorado — have long backed "public option" legislation on Capitol Hill.

The intraparty debate has proved fraught for other candidates.

California Sen. Kamala Harris, who ended her 2020 bid Tuesday, took a considerable hit over the summer as she backed off her Senate sponsorship of Sanders' Medicare for All bill but then delayed making her own proposal. At least twice as a candidate, she seemingly endorsed a single-payer system that would eliminate private insurance, only to retreat soon afterward. She ultimately produced a plan intended as a sort of hybrid between single-payer and a public option.

Warren, meanwhile, fueled her rise to the top tier of Democratic contenders in part by branding herself as the candidate with detailed policy plans for a range of national challenges. But she noticeably delayed offering a health care proposal, sometimes saying only, "I'm with Bernie." She eventually unveiled a single-payer plan but put a \$20 trillion price tag on the first decade — lower than independent estimates that put the cost at \$30 trillion or more. And, unlike Sanders, she maintains that she could cover the cost without tax increases on middle-class households. Biden openly mocks the contention.

Undecided Democrats like Wendy Ewalt and Diane Schlei will end up settling the issue — at least before the general election.

Ewalt is a 68-year-old retiree who came to hear Biden on Monday in Storm Lake. "We need single-payer because nothing else is working," she said, arguing that Warren and Sanders are pushing a debate the nation must have.

Schlei, 69, is also a retiree. She's not necessarily happy with the existing health care system. But she's not convinced the United States will accept an all-government insurance system — or a presidential candidate who wants one.

"We don't need someone too far out there," she said, saying she'll likely choose between Biden and Buttigieg. "I just don't think they can make it work."

Associated Press writer Kim Chandler in Montgomery, Ala., contributed to this report.

Asylum seekers jam US border crossings to evade Trump policy

By ASTRID GALVAN Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — For months, asylum seekers have been prohibited from filing their claims at U.S. border crossings under a much-criticized Trump administration policy. Now some are sprinting down vehicle lanes or renting cars to try to make it inside the U.S.

The migrants' efforts are causing traffic delays at Arizona crossings because U.S. Customs and Border Protection officials had to barricade lanes used by cars legally entering the U.S. from Mexico, officials said.

Advocates say many have become desperate after waiting for months to legally ask for asylum, often in poor conditions and while facing threats of kidnapping, extortion and violence south of the border.

Shoppers, teachers and visitors traveling to the U.S. through Nogales, Mexico, endured up to five-hour waits Monday and over the weekend, causing concerns among local officials whose tax base relies on Mexican shoppers, especially during the holiday season.

In a statement, Customs and Border Protection said it's committed to the safety of border crossers, adding that there's been an increase of incursions through vehicle lanes "by asylum seekers attempting to evade established entry processes."

"These tactics interfere with CBP officers conducting their responsibilities and exacerbates wait times for daily commuters," the agency said in a statement. "CBP will not allow ports to be overrun, or unauthorized entry."

The traffic jams could hurt sales at stores in Nogales, Arizona that depend on Mexican shoppers during the holiday season, said Mayor Arturo Garino.

Garino, a part-time teacher, said some students and teachers who live in Mexico but attend and work at schools across the border in the U.S. have been leaving their homes as early as 5 a.m. to arrive on time.

Garino said Mexican authorities were not doing enough to stem the problem. The Arizona Daily Star reported the Nogales, Sonora, police officers were checking cars headed north to the border on Monday afternoon.

The metal barricades are large and are meant to seal off traffic lanes.

About 3,000 migrants are living in Nogales, Mexico as they wait their turns to seek asylum, said Katie Sharar, communications director for the Kino Border Initiative, a religious-based group that provides meals to needy migrants on the Mexican side of the border.

Under a policy by the Trump administration known widely as "metering," the asylum-seekers must wait in an unofficial line in Mexico until U.S. authorities call them up in a process that usually lasts several months.

Another policy, colloquially known as "Remain in Mexico," requires asylum seekers to return to Mexico after they have made credible fear claims to justify their asylum requests and wait there while their immigration cases are pending.

"I think there's just a lot of desperation and uncertainty. They don't know what's happening to them, they don't know how the policy changes are gonna affect them," Sharar said.

Sharar said she wasn't familiar with the migrants who have run through vehicle lanes.

Customs and Border Protection did not respond to email and phone messages regarding questions about the migrants who rushed the border, what countries they come from and whether they were detained or faced criminal charges.

Arizona Gov. Doug Ducey, a Republican, said his first concern is public safety and that he is confident U.S. officials will resolve the border traffic problems.

Associated Press writer Bob Christie in Phoenix contributed to this report.

More pressure on Prince Andrew after alleged victim on TV

By GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Prince Andrew was missing when his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, hosted NATO leaders at Buckingham Palace on Tuesday evening, but he was the focus of renewed scrutiny as allegations of sexual misconduct received wide attention on British TV.

Andrew, who has stepped down from royal duties because of his involvement with sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, was the subject of a BBC documentary broadcast Monday night in which he was accused of having sex with a 17-year-old American trafficked by Epstein.

President Donald Trump declined to offer an opinion when asked about the case earlier Tuesday, saying only that he didn't know Andrew but that it was a "very tough story." However, the alleged victim's father did weigh in, telling the ITV network he believes his daughter Virginia Roberts Giuffre's account is factual.

"I feel really sorry that all this happened. But it did happen, and Prince Andrew should pay for it," Sky Roberts said, adding that his daughter is "really brave to be going through all this and to come up against these powerful people."

The royal scandal, closely linked to the Epstein affair, was deepening as Trump and other dignitaries gathered in the splendor of Buckingham Palace to have drinks with the queen ahead of a NATO summit Wednesday. Andrew was not among those invited.

Giuffre, now 35, told the BBC in vivid detail how she was forced to have sex with Andrew in London in 2001 after a night on the town at the exclusive Tramp nightclub. She said she had been recruited into Epstein's sex-trafficking network earlier when she was working as a locker room attendant at Trump's Mar-a-Lago club.

"This is not some sordid sex story. This is a story of being trafficked, this is a story of abuse and this is a story of your guys' royalty," Giuffre said, imploring the British public to back her in her quest for justice. She says Andrew knows what happened and should accept responsibility.

Andrew has denied having sex with Giuffre and says he doesn't have any recollection of meeting her — despite a photo that appears to show him with his arm around her waist.

Andrew, 59, has apologized for his association with Epstein, who died in prison in August in what New York City officials ruled was a suicide. He was facing sex-trafficking charges after earlier serving time for other sex offenses.

The disgraced prince says he is willing to cooperate with appropriate law enforcement inquiries if required to do so. He also faces possible subpoenas from women who are suing Epstein's estate who believe Andrew may have valuable testimony about abuse they suffered.

The scandal is one of the worst to grip the royal household in recent decades and has severely tarnished the reputation of Andrew, one of Queen Elizabeth II's four children.

U.S. law enforcement agencies have not commented publicly on whether Andrew is being investigated for any possible wrongdoing. Many of the court papers related to the Epstein case are still sealed and unavailable to the public, so many details have not yet emerged.

British legal experts, meanwhile, are divided over whether Andrew enjoys immunity from prosecution as a senior British royal and the matter has not been tested in court.

Giuffre complained to British police in 2015, alleging that she was trafficked into England by Epstein to have sex with Andrew, but police did not launch a full-scale investigation.

Police Commander Alex Murray said last week that the force decided it was not the proper agency to prosecute possible trafficking in this case.

"Following the legal advice, it was clear that any investigation into human trafficking would be largely focused on activities and relationships outside the UK," he said. "We therefore concluded that the MPS (Metropolitan Police Service) was not the appropriate authority to conduct inquiries in these circumstances."

He did say police have "liaised with other law enforcement organizations" but have not received a formal request for assistance in connection with the allegation.

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That statement suggests British police may have discussed the case with U.S. law enforcement officials but have not received a legal request seeking to interview Andrew under oath.

Andrew could face possible subpoenas related to civil lawsuits if he goes to the United States, although it might be difficult to serve the papers on a royal who travels with protection officers. Lawyers could also seek to have him deposed in Britain.

Andrew tried to contain the damage by giving a televised interview on the topic in November. But it backfired because he did not express concern for Epstein's victims and defended his friendship with Epstein, a wealthy financier, as "honorable."

The documentary broadcast Monday night painted a detailed portrait of how Epstein abused dozens of young women at his luxury properties in the Caribbean and New York and quoted Giuffre's account of being ordered to have sex with Andrew on three occasions.

Giuffre described how she says she was recruited by Epstein's then girlfriend, Ghislaine Maxwell, to give Epstein massages and later taken to London to meet Andrew.

Breaking down in tears, Giuffre described the humiliating aftermath of being made to have sex with Andrew at a townhouse in London after a night out at the exclusive Tramp nightclub. She said she was told to dance with him by Maxwell.

"It was horrible and this guy was sweating all over me," she said. "His sweat was like it was raining basically everywhere. I was just like grossed out from it, but I knew I had to keep him happy because that's what Jeffrey and Ghislaine would have expected from me."

She said that Maxwell told her she would have to do for Andrew what she had done for Epstein, meaning she would have to have sex with the prince. Maxwell has denied any wrongdoing.

"There was a bath," she said. "It started there, then went into the bedroom. It didn't last very long, the whole procedure. It was disgusting."

"He got up and he said 'Thanks,'" she added. "I sat there in bed, just horrified and ashamed and felt dirty."

Giuffre said she felt trapped. "It was a wicked time in my life. It was a really scary time in my life. I had just been abused by a member of the royal family," she said. "Yeah, I didn't have chains, but these powerful people were my chains."

Giuffre admitted that her memory was foggy at times and that she might have some dates and places wrong but insisted she was certain of the key facts.

Kamala Harris ends White House bid, citing lack of funding

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Sen. Kamala Harris told supporters on Tuesday that she was ending her bid for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination, an abrupt close to a candidacy that held historic potential.

"I've taken stock and looked at this from every angle, and over the last few days have come to one of the hardest decisions of my life," the California Democrat said. "My campaign for president simply doesn't have the financial resources we need to continue."

A senior campaign aide said Harris made the decision Monday after discussing the path forward with family and other top officials over the Thanksgiving holiday.

Her withdrawal marked a dramatic fall for a candidate who showed extraordinary promise in her bid to become the first black female president. Harris launched her campaign in front of 20,000 people on a chilly January day in Oakland, California. The first woman and first black attorney general and U.S. senator in California's history, she was widely viewed as a candidate poised to excite the multiracial coalition of voters that sent Barack Obama to the White House.

Her departure erodes the diversity of the Democratic field, which is dominated at the moment by a top tier that is white and mostly male.

"She was an important voice in the race, out before others who raised less and were less electable. It's a loss not to have her voice in the race," said Aimee Allison, who leads She the People, a group that promotes women of color.

Harris ultimately could not craft a message that resonated with voters or secure the money to continue

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her run.

She raised an impressive \$12 million in the first three months of her campaign and quickly locked down major endorsements meant to show her dominance in her home state, which offers the biggest delegate haul in the Democratic primary contest.

But as the field grew, Harris' fundraising remained flat; she was unable to attract the type of attention being showered on Pete Buttigieg by traditional donors or the grassroots firepower that drove tens of millions of dollars to Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders.

In her note to supporters, Harris lamented the role of money in politics and, without naming them, took a shot at billionaires Tom Steyer and Michael Bloomberg, who are funding their own presidential bids.

"I'm not a billionaire," she said. "I can't fund my own campaign. And as the campaign has gone on, it's become harder and harder to raise the money we need to compete."

Harris suffered from what allies and critics viewed as an inconsistent pitch to voters. Her slogan "For the people" referenced her career as a prosecutor, a record that was viewed skeptically by the party's most progressive voters.

Through the summer, she focused on pocketbook issues and her "3 a.m. agenda," a message that never seemed to resonate with voters. By the fall, she had returned to her courtroom roots with the refrain that "justice is on the ballot," both a cry for economic and social justice as well as her call that she could "prosecute the case" against a "criminal" president.

At times, she was tripped up by confusing policy positions; particularly on health care. After suggesting she would eliminate private insurance in favor of a fully government-run system, Harris eventually rolled out a health care plan that preserves a role for private insurance.

Stumbles, often of the campaign's making, continued to dog Harris into the winter, stymieing her ability to capitalize on solid moments. Harris kicked off November with a well-received speech at a massive Iowa dinner, just a day after her campaign announced it would fire staff at its Baltimore headquarters and was moving some people from other early states to Iowa.

Her message was regularly overshadowed by campaign aides and allies sharing grievances with the news media. Several top aides decamped for other campaigns, one leaving a blistering resignation letter.

"Because we have refused to confront our mistakes, foster an environment of critical thinking and honest feedback, or trust the expertise of talented staff, we find ourselves making the same unforced errors over and over," Kelly Mehlenbacher wrote in her letter, obtained by The New York Times. Mehlenbacher now works for businessman Bloomberg's campaign.

With Harris' exit, 15 Democrats remain in the race for the nomination. Several praised her on Tuesday.

Former Vice President Joe Biden, who had a memorable debate stage tussle with Harris this summer, called the senator a "solid person, loaded with talent."

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders commended Harris for "running a spirited and issue-oriented campaign."

New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, one of two black candidates still in the campaign, called Harris a "trailblazer."

Harris anchored her campaign in the powerful legacy of pioneering African Americans. Her campaign launch on the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday included a nod to Shirley Chisholm, the New York congresswoman who sought the Democratic Party's presidential nomination 47 years ago earlier.

One of her first stops as a candidate was to Howard University, the historically black college that she attended as an undergraduate.

She spent much of her early campaign focusing on South Carolina, which hosts the first Southern primary and has a significant African American population.

But Harris struggled to chip away at Biden's deep advantage with black voters who are critical to winning the Democratic nomination.

Harris and her aides believe she faced an uphill battle — and unfair expectations for perfection — from the start as a woman of color. Her campaign speech included a line about what Harris called the "donkey in the room," a reference to the thought that Americans wouldn't elect a woman of color.

Harris often suggested it was criticism she faced in her other campaigns — all of which she won.

Her departure from the presidential race marks her first defeat as a political candidate.

Associated Press writers Steve Peoples in New York and Bill Barrow in Mason City, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Wisconsin officers on front lines in 2 student shootings

By **IVAN MORENO, TODD RICHMOND and GRETCHEN EHLKE** Associated Press

OSHKOSH, Wis. (AP) — Wisconsin high school resource officers have found themselves on the front lines in two student shootings in the past two days, underscoring how police in schools can face life-or-death situations and likely adding to the debate over the best ways to respond to school threats.

An Oshkosh Police Department resource officer shot a 16-year-old student Tuesday after the boy stabbed him in the officer's office at Oshkosh West High School. A day earlier, a resource officer at Waukesha South High School helped clear students out of a classroom after a 17-year-old student pointed a gun — it turned out to be a pellet gun — at another student's head. Another police officer entered the room and shot the student. No one in either incident suffered life-threatening injuries.

"Today's tragic event shows that trained school resource officers can save lives," Oshkosh Superintendent Vickie Cartwright said at a news conference.

The debate about the role of armed teachers or police in schools has been a constant in the wake of school shootings across the country. But rarely have armed resource officers been able to prevent a shooting.

An estimated 43% of public schools have armed officers on campus, according to a survey by the National Center for Education Statistics. The survey covered the 2015-2016 school year, the most recent year surveyed. That figure doesn't include schools with armed private security guards or teachers and administrators who carry guns.

The U.S. Department of Justice has adopted best practices for resource officers from the National Association of School Resources. Those guidelines call for resource officers to serve as police officers as well as teachers and mentors.

NASRO recommends such officers have three years of experience and says they should be willing to engage with students and have excellent communication skills. They should complete a school-based policing course before being assigned to the beat and complete an advanced school policing course NASRO provides within a year of completing the basic course. They also should complete bi-annual training on how lone officers should handle threats and assailants.

No Wisconsin laws spell out any special requirements for resource officers or restrictions on their weapons. But the state Department of Justice has adopted best practices similar to NASRO's recommendations, calling for officers to work with schools on the extent of their duties, the skills they need, and where school discipline ends and illegal conduct begins. The state guidelines also suggest officers receive training in child development, restraint policies and de-escalation strategies.

It's not clear what led to Tuesday's stabbing at Oshkosh West High School, which has 1,700 students. Police Chief Dean Smith said only that the officer and the student got into an "altercation" in the officer's office, the student stabbed the officer with an edged weapon — Smith declined to elaborate — and the officer opened fire with his 9 mm pistol, hitting the student once. It's unclear how many times the officer may have fired.

At Waukesha South High School, 80 miles (130 kilometers) south of Oshkosh in suburban Milwaukee, the student apparently grew angry with another student and pointed a pellet gun at the other student. The school's resource officer helped clear students from the classroom.

Linda Ager told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel that the Waukesha shooting happened in the classroom of her husband, Brett Hart, a special education teacher at Waukesha South. Ager said her husband restrained the student until the resource officer arrived.

At some point, another officer entered the room and shot the student who refused to drop the weapon. As school shootings have become more frequent, gun rights advocates and gun control advocates have

sparred over how best to respond to them. Supporters of gun restrictions have argued that putting more guns in schools does little to prevent shootings and just puts students at greater risk.

Last year, for example, armed guards at three high-profile school shootings — Marshall County High School in Benton, Kentucky; Majory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida; and Santa Fe High School in Texas — were unable to stop those shootings. In Parkland, the school's resource officer remained outside rather than enter the building to engage the shooter and try to stop it.

But gun-rights advocates believe having more armed educators and law enforcement in schools will help stop a shooter from going on a rampage.

On Tuesday, U.S. Sen. Ron Johnson, a Republican, praised the officers in Oshkosh and Waukesha.

"This confirms that action can — and should — be taken to mitigate harm and limit casualties when weapons are brought into school," Johnson said.

Ehlke reported from Milwaukee. Associated Press writers Jeff Baenen, Amy Forliti and Steve Karnowski in Minneapolis; and Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin, contributed to this report.

Fears deepen for families of people held in Iran amid unrest

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Families of several U.S. and British people held in Iran expressed fear for their loved ones Tuesday amid the deadliest unrest in decades in the Islamic republic.

The relatives spoke at a news conference in Washington to demand the release of spouses and parents held in Iran — in at least one case for more than a decade. Among those who spoke was a daughter of Robert Levinson, the former FBI agent who disappeared in Iran in 2007.

The protests now roiling Iran, reflecting widespread economic discontent and outrage over spiking gasoline prices, have been an added challenge to families who have gone years without seeing their loved ones. Iranian state television acknowledged Tuesday that security forces shot and killed protesters in multiple cities.

"Of course any kind of protest that goes on in Iran, and any kind of situation, that overlaps potentially with the fact that our families and loved ones are being held there as well," said Babak Namazi, whose brother and father are held captive in Iran. "We've been talking about the brutality of what our family members have been facing. But I guess this is just a reminder of what the abilities and capabilities are."

Prisons are more overcrowded now because of the demonstrations, the internet has been down, and communication has been even more complicated than it already is, Namazi said.

Sarah Moriarty, one of Levinson's seven children, said she was heartened by Iran's recent acknowledgment that it had an open case before its Revolutionary Court after years of denying any involvement in his disappearance.

Moriarty said she interpreted the development as Iran's first acknowledgment that it had indeed taken Levinson into custody, though Iran has also said it regards Levinson's case as a "missing person" file. She said she believes it's clear that Iran knows where her father is and is in a position to send him home immediately.

"This is incredibly significant because it means that they have a case against my father, and it means that they have him," Moriarty said. "And we want to see him, and we want him to be released immediately."

Nearly two dozen of Levinson's relatives are expected in a Washington court this week to testify in a lawsuit that seeks to hold Iran responsible for the capture. The U.S. government, meanwhile, is offering up to \$25 million for information leading to Levinson's rescue.

"We want Iran to know that this is not acceptable, and a big portion of our lawsuit is punitive damages because we want them to discourage them from doing this practice to anyone else," Moriarty said.

Levinson disappeared from Iran's Kish Island on March 9, 2007. For years, U.S. officials would only say that Levinson, a meticulous FBI investigator credited with busting Russian and Italian mobsters, was working for a private firm on his trip.

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In December 2013, The Associated Press revealed that Levinson in fact had been on a mission for CIA analysts who had no authority to run spy operations.

Also present for the news conference was Richard Ratcliffe, whose wife, Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, is a British-Iranian charity worker held in Iran for more than three years. He said that though different Western nations have their own approaches to hostage negotiations, "none of them have worked."

He said sanctions should be considered as one option of punishment for hostage taking.

"There should be a real clear cost to hostage taking," he said. "It should be an anathema in the modern world."

Gun background checks are on pace to break record in 2019

By LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

Background checks on gun purchases in the U.S. are climbing toward a record high this year, reflecting what the industry says is a rush by people to buy weapons in reaction to the Democratic presidential candidates' calls for tighter restrictions.

By the end of November, more than 25.4 million background checks — generally seen as a strong indicator of gun sales — had been conducted by the FBI, putting 2019 on pace to break the record of 27.5 million set in 2016, the last full year President Barack Obama was in the White House.

On Black Friday alone, the FBI ran 202,465 checks.

Some analysts question how accurately the background check figures translate into gun sales, since some states run checks on applications for concealed-carry permits, too, and some purchases involve multiple firearms. But the numbers remain the most reliable method of tracking the industry.

In the years since President Donald Trump took office, the industry has struggled through what has been referred to as the Trump Slump, a falloff in sales that reflected little worry among gun owners about gun control efforts.

But with the 2020 presidential election less than a year out and virtually every Democratic candidate offering proposals to restrict access to firearms, fears appear to be driving up sales again.

"The Trump Slump is real, but the politics of guns has changed a little bit over the last year," said Adam Winkler, a professor at the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law and an expert on gun rights and politics. "As we're coming up upon another presidential election, Donald Trump is vulnerable, and the Democratic presidential contenders are falling all over themselves to propose more aggressive gun reforms than their opponents."

Trump has been viewed as one of the most gun-friendly presidents in modern history and has boasted of strong support from the National Rifle Association. He has addressed every one of its annual conventions since the 2016 campaign, and the powerful gun lobby pumped about \$30 million into efforts to elect him.

Still, hopes of expanded gun rights under Trump's watch haven't materialized. Legislation that would make it easier to buy silencers stalled in Congress. In addition, Trump pushed through a ban on bump stocks, which allow semiautomatic rifles to mimic machine-gun fire. The gunman who killed 58 people in Las Vegas in 2017 in the deadliest mass shooting in modern U.S. history used such a device.

The industry has been going through one of its toughest periods, with some gunmakers, such as Remington Arms, filing for bankruptcy. More recently, Smith & Wesson's parent company, American Outdoor Brands, announced plans to spin off its firearms unit, and Colt said it would suspend production of AR-15 rifles.

Amid some high-profile mass shootings in recent years, especially the Parkland school attack in Florida that left 17 people dead, gun control advocates have gained some momentum.

The crowded field of Democrats running for the White House has offered a variety of proposals to curtail gun rights. Former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke, whose state has seen repeated mass shootings this past year, went so far as to push for a mandatory buyback program for AR- and AK-style rifles before dropping out of the race, stoking gun owners' fears when he declared during a debate, "Hell, yes, we're going to take your AR-15, your AK-47."

The gun industry says the figures from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System reflect

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the Second Amendment politics of the White House race.

"Americans are choosing to invest their hard-earned dollars in their ability to exercise their rights and buy the firearms they want before gun control politicians attempt to regulate away that ability," said Mark Oliva, spokesman for the National Shooting Sports Foundation, which represents the gun industry.

Still, some experts took issue with the figures and said it is premature to declare the Trump Slump is over. "These numbers cannot be taken at face value," said Jurgen Brauer, a retired business professor and now chief economist at Small Arms Analytics, which consults on the firearms industry.

Brauer said the numbers are increasingly skewed by states such as Kentucky that also run background checks when they issue or renew a permit to carry a concealed firearm. In October, for example, the state ran more than 280,000 checks through the NICS system for permits.

"That number has been rising over time as increasingly states check with some frequency on their existing permits," Brauer said.

The NICS system was created after passage of the Brady Bill, which mandated background checks to buy a firearm. Convicted felons, domestic abusers and people who have been involuntarily committed to a mental institution are among those who cannot legally purchase a weapon.

In 1999, the first full year the system was used, just over 9 million background checks were conducted. It was near the end of Democrat Bill Clinton's second term and in the midst of a 10-year ban on assault rifles that expired in 2004.

Background checks declined under President George W. Bush but picked up again in 2006 and have mostly risen since then, except for 2014 and 2017. In 2018, there were 26.18 million background checks.

"Gunmakers are promoting the idea that you should buy these guns now because they may be banned in the future," Winkler said.

This story has been corrected to delete the number of seconds per background check on Black Friday.

Cicely Tyson, Seth MacFarlane joining TV Hall of Fame

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Cicely Tyson, Seth MacFarlane and Walt Disney Co. chief executive Bob Iger will be joining the Television Academy's Hall of Fame.

Geraldine Laybourne, who helped create the Nickelodeon channel and co-founded Oxygen Media, and veteran TV director Jay Sandrich also were announced Tuesday as inductees. Sandrich's credits include "The Mary Tyler Moore Show" and "The Golden Girls."

Tyson won three Emmy Awards over her nearly seven-decade acting career, including two trophies for 1974's "The Autobiography of Miss Jane Pittman" and one for 1994's "Oldest Living Confederate Widow Tells All."

MacFarlane, a writer, director, producer and performer, is a five-time Emmy winner for his animated series "Family Guy."

Iger became CEO of Disney in 2005, and during his tenure the company acquired Pixar, Marvel, Lucasfilm and 21st Century Fox and launched the new Disney Plus streaming service.

Frank Scherma, chairman and CEO of the academy that organizes the Emmy Awards, said the five individuals' "remarkable contributions" continue to shape the TV industry.

Lucille Ball, Walter Cronkite, Bob Hope, Shonda Rhimes and Ron Howard are among the nearly 150 people who have been inducted in the Hall of Fame since its start in 1984. The newest group will be honored at a Jan. 28 ceremony.

Court sides with Congress in battle for Trump's bank records

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal appeals court in New York handed President Donald Trump another legal defeat, ruling Tuesday that Congress can see his banking records for investigations into possible foreign influence in U.S. politics or other misdeeds.

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A panel of 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals judges said two banks, Deutsche Bank and Capital One, should comply with subpoenas from the House Financial Services and Intelligence committees seeking records related to Trump's business ventures.

The court said Congress was acting within its constitutional authority to investigate a series of significant issues, including whether Trump was "vulnerable to foreign exploitation."

It rejected arguments that the subpoenas were meant merely to embarrass the president, though the court said Trump did deserve some privacy protections and outlined procedures for protecting some sensitive personal information in the documents from public disclosure. It also gave Trump a limited chance to object to disclosure of certain documents.

Judge Debra Ann Livingston said in a partial dissent that the lower court should take a longer look at the "serious questions" raised by the case and give the parties time to negotiate.

Jay Sekulow, Trump's personal lawyer, said in a statement that an appeal to the Supreme Court was under consideration.

"We believe the subpoena is invalid as issued. In light of the Second Circuit decision, we are evaluating our next options," he said.

The ruling by the appeals court upheld a May ruling by U.S. District Judge Edgardo Ramos, who had said Trump and his company were unlikely to succeed in proving that the subpoenas were unlawful and unconstitutional. The 2nd Circuit panel said three of his children had not shown a likelihood of success on any of their claims and had not identified a single factual issue to take to trial or a single witness or document that might add substance to their claims at trial.

Lawyers for the House committees, both of which are controlled by Democrats, say they need access to documents from the banks to investigate possible "foreign influence in the U.S. political process" and possible money laundering from abroad.

In a decision written by Circuit Judge Jon O. Newman, the appeals court said that while Trump and his children might suffer a loss of privacy if the documents were disclosed to Congress, the records had to do with their business ventures, not intimate personal details.

"The Committees' interests in pursuing their constitutional legislative function is a far more significant public interest than whatever public interest inheres in avoiding the risk of a Chief Executive's distraction arising from disclosure of documents reflecting his private financial transactions," the decision said.

Deutsche Bank has lent Trump's real estate company millions of dollars over the years.

The court noted that the president had not disputed that the bank loaned him at least \$130 million when no other bank would do so.

"That unusual circumstance adequately supports requests for information to determine whether proper banking procedures have been followed," the decision said.

The ruling is likely to put several appeals over Trump's financial records at the Supreme Court's door at once.

In mid-November, Trump's lawyers filed an emergency appeal with the high court over a ruling in a Washington, D.C., case involving a subpoena from a House committee for financial records held by Trump's accountants.

And Trump's lawyers are also counting on the Supreme Court to rule by next summer whether Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr. can obtain Trump's tax returns since 2011 from his accountant as part of a wide-ranging criminal grand jury probe. They argue that Trump cannot be prosecuted or even investigated for crimes while he's president.

Associated Press Writer Eric Tucker in Washington contributed to this report.

Greta Thunberg says voyage 'energized' her climate fight

By BARRY HATTON and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

LISBON, Portugal (AP) — Climate activist Greta Thunberg told cheering supporters Tuesday that her

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three-week journey across the Atlantic had "energized" her for the fight against climate change as she arrived in Portugal.

The Swedish teen, whose one-woman protests outside the Swedish parliament helped inspire a global youth movement, sailed into the port of Lisbon after making a last-minute dash back from the United States to attend this year's U.N. climate conference.

The 16-year-old has been steadfast in her refusal to fly because of the amount of greenhouse gases emitted by planes, a stance that put her planned appearance at the meeting in doubt when the venue was moved from Chile to Spain a month ago.

"We've all been on quite an adventure," Thunberg told reporters shortly after stepping off the catamaran La Vagabonde, on which she'd hitched a ride back home to Europe. "It feels good to be back."

Thunberg's appearances at past climate meetings have won her plaudits from some leaders — and criticism from others who've taken offense at the angry tone of her speeches.

"I think people are underestimating the force of angry kids," said Thunberg, who has berated heads of government for failing to do enough to cut back the greenhouse gas emissions that fuel global warming.

"If they want us to stop being angry, then maybe they should stop making us angry," she said.

Being invited to express her criticism in front of political leaders can also feel awkward, said Thunberg.

"I feel strange when I get applauded by people in power ... because it's obvious that it's them I'm criticizing, but they can't show that in front of the cameras," she said. "It's quite funny sometimes."

The white 48-foot (15-meter) yacht carrying Thunberg, her father Svante, an Australian family and professional sailor Nikki Henderson arrived in Lisbon amid blue skies, with a small flotilla of boats escorting it to harbor.

Her trip contrasted with the many air miles flown by many of the U.N. meeting's more than 25,000 registered attendees.

Thunberg wanted a low-carbon form of transport to get to the climate meeting, which was switched at short notice from Chile due to unrest there.

The yacht leaves little or no carbon footprint when its sails are up, using solar panels and hydro-generators for electricity.

"I am not traveling like this because I want everyone to do so," said Thunberg. "I'm doing this to sort of send the message that it is impossible to live sustainably today, and that needs to change. It needs to become much easier."

Looking ahead to next year's presidential election in the United States, Thunberg said: "I just hope that someone wins that can think on the long term, not just the short term."

Thunberg said she planned to spend several days in the Portuguese capital before heading to Madrid, where delegates from nearly 200 countries are discussing how to tackle global warming.

Chile's environment minister, Carolina Schmidt, saluted Thunberg's role speaking out about the threat of climate change.

"She has been a leader that has been able to move and open hearts for many young people and many people all over the world," Schmidt told The Associated Press at the summit in Madrid.

"We need that tremendous force in order to increase climate action," said Schmidt, who is chairing the two-week talks.

Near to the conference, some 20 activists cut off traffic in central Madrid and staged a brief theatrical performance to protest climate change.

Members of the international group called Extinction Rebellion held up a banner in Russian that read: "Climate Crisis. To speak the truth. To take action immediately."

Meanwhile, the U.N. weather agency released a new report showing that the current decade is likely to set a new 10-year temperature record, providing mounting evidence that the world is getting ever hotter.

Preliminary temperature measurements show the years from 2015 to 2019 and from 2010 to 2019 "are, respectively, almost certain to be the warmest five-year period and decade on record," the World Meteorological Organization said.

"Since the 1980s, each successive decade has been warmer than the last," the agency said.

While full-year figures won't be released until next March, 2019 is also expected to be the second- or third-warmest year since measurements began, with 2016 still holding the all-time temperature record, it said.

This year was hotter than average in most parts of the world, including the Arctic. "In contrast a large area of North America has been colder than the recent average," the U.N. said.

The World Meteorological Organization's annual report, which brings together data from numerous national weather agencies and research organizations, also highlighted the impacts of climate change including declining sea ice and rising sea levels, which reached their highest level this year since high-precision measurements began in 1993.

Jordans reported from Berlin. Associated Press writers Helena Alves in Lisbon and Aritz Parra and Paul White in Madrid contributed to this report.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

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NATO downplays divisions as infighting roils alliance

By LORNE COOK and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

WATFORD, England (AP) — NATO leaders on Wednesday played down their differences and insisted that they remain united over security issues and determined to defend each other despite a series of spats between the presidents of some of the alliance's biggest member countries.

Before a summit near London, French President Emmanuel Macron had lamented the "brain death" of NATO due in part to what he called a lack of U.S. leadership. President Donald Trump branded his remarks as "very disrespectful." Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan suggested that Macron himself is "brain dead."

The infighting is mostly due to Turkey's invasion of northern Syria. Macron has complained that Trump pulled U.S. troops out of the region without warning his NATO allies. Turkey saw the move as a greenlight to send its troops in.

"NATO is agile, NATO is active, NATO is adapting," NATO-Secretary Jens Stoltenberg said when asked by reporters whether the world's biggest security alliance is brain dead.

"As long as we are able to deliver substance... then NATO proves once again that we are able to respond to a shifting security landscape, and that's the best way to also provide unity of this alliance," he said before chairing the meeting at a luxury hotel and golf resort.

Summit host Prime Minister Boris Johnson — also busy with a divisive British election campaign — said "clearly it is very important that the alliance stays together, but there is far, far more that unites us than divides us."

Johnson said NATO's success is due to "the very simple concept of safety in numbers. At the heart of it is a pledge that we will come to one another's defense: all for one and one for all."

Erdogan didn't speak to waiting media. Trump arrived via a different entrance, away from media.

Macron, however, refused to apologize for his remarks, saying they had ignited a debate at NATO about important strategic issues.

"It's allowed us to raise fundamental debates," he said, chief among them being "how to build sustainable peace in Europe."

He said NATO "debates should be about other things than budgets and finances."

Stoltenberg noted that European allies and Canada have added \$130 billion to their defense spending since 2016, even as Trump has complained that they are too slow to boost their military budgets.

"This is unprecedented, this is making us stronger," Stoltenberg said of the spending effort.

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After Russia annexed the Crimean Peninsula in 2014, NATO countries halted their post-Cold War spending cuts and began increasing spending. They pledged to "move toward" spending 2% of their annual GDP on national defense by 2024.

Trump said Tuesday that much more needs to be done.

"You could make the case that they've been delinquent for 25-30 years," Trump said. The figure of 2%, he added, "is a very low number, it really should be 4."

Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel conceded that "we have experienced easier times. But we're allies after all and we're going to speak about everything."

"The atmosphere last night was much more relaxed than what I expected after hearing what had happened over the last 24 hours. But I think differences can arise. We just have to talk about them," Bettel said, referring to receptions late Tuesday at Buckingham Palace and at Downing Street.

After a working session of a few hours on Wednesday, the leaders of the 29-nation trans-Atlantic alliance are due to publish a declaration underlining their commitment to NATO on its 70th birthday, and to show that the alliance is adapting to modern threats and potential new adversaries like China.

Asian stocks follow Wall Street lower on trade worries

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stock markets followed Wall Street lower Wednesday after President Donald Trump cast doubt over the potential for a trade deal with China this year.

Benchmarks in Tokyo and Hong Kong fell more than 1% while Shanghai and South Korea also retreated.

Trump said he has "no deadline" for a trade deal and doesn't mind waiting until after next year's presidential election to make one. Investors had hoped for at least enough progress to stave off new U.S. tariffs on Chinese goods, including smartphones and laptops, scheduled to start Dec. 15.

Tensions flared last week after Trump signed legislation expressing U.S. support for pro-democracy demonstrators in Hong Kong.

"Until both sides dial down their hawkish rhetoric, markets will continue to pull back earlier optimism," said DBS Group analysts in a report. "Trade war will be the key driver of sentiment in the immediate few weeks."

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index sank 1.3% to 23,087.80 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng gave up 1.1% to 26,093.81.

The Shanghai Composite Index retreated 0.3% to 2,876.44 and Seoul's Kospi declined 1.1% to 2,060.81. Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 fell 1.5% to 6,611.80 and benchmarks in Taiwan, New Zealand and Southeast Asia also retreated.

On Wall Street, the benchmark S&P 500 index fell 0.7% to 3,093.20. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 1% to 27,502.81. The Nasdaq dropped 0.6% to 8,520.64.

Negotiators have yet to agree on details of an interim deal that Trump has called "Phase 1" deal.

Investors also are also weighing the potential for additional trade disputes.

On Tuesday, Trump proposed tariffs on \$2.4 billion in French products in retaliation for a tax on global tech giants including Google, Amazon and Facebook. That follows a threat Monday to raise tariffs on steel and aluminum from Argentina and Brazil.

Also Wednesday, Australia disappointed investors by reporting third-quarter economic growth declined to 0.4% over the previous quarter from 0.6% in the three months ending in June. The Australian central bank had described the economy as experiencing a "gentle upturn."

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude rose 40 cents to \$56.50 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract gained 14 cents on Tuesday to close at \$56.10. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 48 cents to \$61.30 per barrel in London. It lost 10 cents the previous session to \$60.82.

CURRENCY: The dollar declined to 108.59 yen from Tuesday's 108.63 yen. The euro edged down to \$1.1080 from \$1.1084.

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Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Dec. 4, the 338th day of 2019. There are 27 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Dec. 4, 1978, San Francisco got its first female mayor as City Supervisor Dianne Feinstein (FYN'-styn) was named to replace the assassinated George Moscone (mahs-KOH'-nee).

On this date:

In 1783, Gen. George Washington bade farewell to his Continental Army officers at Fraunces Tavern in New York.

In 1867, the National Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry, also known as The Grange, was founded in Washington, D.C., to promote the interests of farmers.

In 1875, William Marcy Tweed, the "Boss" of New York City's Tammany Hall political organization, escaped from jail and fled the country.

In 1918, President Woodrow Wilson left Washington on a trip to France to attend the Versailles (vehr-SY') Peace Conference.

In 1942, during World War II, U.S. bombers struck the Italian mainland for the first time with a raid on Naples. President Franklin D. Roosevelt ordered the dismantling of the Works Progress Administration, which had been created to provide jobs during the Depression.

In 1954, the first Burger King stand was opened in Miami by James McLamore and David Edgerton.

In 1965, the United States launched Gemini 7 with Air Force Lt. Col. Frank Borman and Navy Cmdr. James A. Lovell aboard on a two-week mission. (While Gemini 7 was in orbit, its sister ship, Gemini 6A, was launched on Dec. 15 on a one-day mission; the two spacecraft were able to rendezvous within a foot of each other.)

In 1980, the bodies of four American churchwomen slain in El Salvador two days earlier were unearthed. (Five Salvadoran national guardsmen were later convicted of murdering nuns Ita Ford, Maura Clarke and Dorothy Kazel, and lay worker Jean Donovan.)

In 1986, both houses of Congress moved to establish special committees to conduct their own investigations of the Iran-Contra affair.

In 1995, the first NATO troops landed in the Balkans to begin setting up a peace mission that brought American soldiers into the middle of the Bosnian conflict.

In 1996, the Mars Pathfinder lifted off from Cape Canaveral and began speeding toward the red planet on a 310 million-mile odyssey. (It arrived on Mars in July 1997.)

In 2000, in a pair of legal setbacks for Al Gore, a Florida state judge refused to overturn George W. Bush's certified victory in Florida and the U.S. Supreme Court set aside a ruling that had allowed manual recounts.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama began putting the finishing touches on a fresh job creation proposal, telling a community college crowd in Allentown, Pennsylvania, "I still consider one job lost one job too many." Gunmen and a suicide bomber attacked a mosque in a military installation in Rawalpindi, Pakistan, killing 35. Paula Hawkins, a Republican who in 1980 became the first woman elected to a full U.S. Senate term without a family political connection, died in Orlando, Florida, at age 82.

Five years ago: The Obama administration acknowledged that many people covered under the Affordable Care Act would face higher premiums next year. Police waged hours-long gun battles with Islamic militants who attacked Chechnya's capital of Grozny, leaving at least 20 people dead. Jeremy Thorpe, an influential British politician who'd helped revive the Liberal Party before his career was cut short by scandal, died in London at age 85.

One year ago: Long lines of people wound through the Capitol Rotunda to view the casket of former President George H.W. Bush; former Sen. Bob Dole steadied himself out of his wheelchair to salute his old friend and one-time rival. On Instagram, Kevin Hart revealed that he'd been chosen to host the 2019 Academy Awards; he would step down as host by week's end following an outcry over previous anti-gay

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tweets, and the ceremony ended up taking place with no host. The National Hockey League Board of Governors unanimously approved adding Seattle as the league's 32nd franchise, with play set to begin in 2021. Ohio State University football coach Urban Meyer abruptly announced his retirement, citing health concerns and a difficult year that included a three-game suspension over his handling of domestic violence allegations against an assistant.

Today's Birthdays: Game show host Wink Martindale is 86. Pop singer Freddy Cannon is 83. Actor-producer Max Baer Jr. is 82. Actress Gemma Jones is 77. Rock musician Bob Mosley (Moby Grape) is 77. Singer-musician Chris Hillman is 75. Musician Terry Woods (The Pogues) is 72. Rock singer Southside Johnny Lyon is 71. Actor Jeff Bridges is 70. Rock musician Gary Rossington (Lynyrd Skynyrd; the Rossington Collins Band) is 68. Actress Patricia Wettig is 68. Actor Tony Todd is 65. Jazz singer Cassandra Wilson is 64. Country musician Brian Prout (Diamond Rio) is 64. Rock musician Bob Griffin (formerly with The BoDeans) is 60. Rock singer Vinnie Dombroski (Sponge) is 57. Actress Marisa Tomei is 55. Actress Chelsea Noble is 55. Actor-comedian Fred Armisen is 53. Rapper Jay-Z is 50. Actor Kevin Sussman is 49. Actress-model Tyra Banks is 46. Country singer Lila McCann is 38. Actress Lindsay Felton is 35. Actor Orlando Brown is 32. Actress Scarlett Estevez (TV: "Lucifer") is 12.

Thought for Today: "People who have what they want are fond of telling people who haven't what they want that they really don't want it." — Ogden Nash, American humorist and poet (1902-1972).

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