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Saturday, December 14, 2019

Robotics at Rapid City Central High School

10:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Tournament at LaMoure High School

Basketball Double Header - Hosting Leola-Frederick

1 p.m. - Girls JV ~ 2 p.m. - Boys JV ~ 3 p.m. - Girls Varsity ~ 4:30 p.m. - Boys Varsity

Help Wanted

The Groton Area School District is accepting applications for the position of Certified Sign Language Interpreter. Applicants should complete and submit the certified staff application

form along with a current cover letter, resume, and three letters of recommendation. All materials should be submitted to Joe Schwan, Superintendent PO Box 410 Groton, SD 57445. EOE (1213.1227)

Closing for Inventory

We will be closing at Noon
on Wednesday, Dec. 18th
for Inventory

We will be reopening for normal hours on
Thursday, Dec. 19th

Thank you for your patronage!

S & S Lumber

HARDWARE HANK

201 East Hwy 12 • 605/397-2361

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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It's Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



Leola/Frederick
Titans VS



Groton Area Tigers

Girls at 3 p.m. ~ Boys at 4:30 p.m.

Saturday, Dec. 14, 2019

Groton Area Arena

THINKING ABOUT HEALTH

Big Questions Underlie Debate About Making Health Care Accessible to All

By Trudy Lieberman, Community Health News Service

In recent days, several tweets shared ominous news about the state of health insurance in the country. One tweeter said she bought an Affordable Care Act policy for a \$1,200 monthly premium and a \$7,500 deductible. By May, she said, she could no longer afford that premium.

Another tweeter said her 59-year-old friend would be paying \$900 a month in premiums with an out-of-pocket maximum of \$8,150. The friend has assets, but the insurance restricts where she can get care, a common policy feature.

A third tweeter was disgusted with his job-based coverage, which he told the world was his fifth insurance plan in four years. That's not an uncommon complaint among workers with employer-based coverage. The man's daughter has Type 1 diabetes, and the constant switching of doctors and plans was disruptive and hardly optimum for her health. It's time to disconnect health insurance from the job, he tweeted.

The tweeters were fed up with the price of coverage and were having trouble either paying for it or accessing care. Millions are in the same pickle. At the crux of their dilemma is the relentless rise in medical prices along with America's inability or unwillingness to provide health care to all its citizens and to establish a mechanism that can finally put the brakes on relentless price increases.

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As Americans grow more dissatisfied with their insurance arrangements, public discussion about the wisdom of switching to a system sometimes referred to as Medicare for All has grown. There's more press attention to this topic than I have ever seen. What's not been discussed, however, is how providing health care for everyone and controlling prices are interrelated.

New U.S. spending data show that the U.S. spent \$1 trillion more on personal health services in 2018 than in 2008. Hospital care accounted for 44 percent of the increase, physician services 23 percent and retail prescription drugs only 9 percent. With increases like those, dissatisfaction is bound to increase.

But in the current discussion of Medicare for All, which a few columnists are beginning to say should be put aside – one New York Times columnist argued that the moral and political case is now stronger for focusing on issues other than health care – the discussion has focused on why such a change won't work: how it will harm the big stakeholders; how much it would cost; and that Americans are satisfied with their current arrangements.

It is the fear of controls on prices, which other advanced countries have, that has kept the U.S. from changing its system for decades. If every American were in the system, including the 30 million who have no health insurance, it might make it easier for federal regulators to control prices, which is what big stakeholders fear. It is the primary reason the idea of Medicare for All, or an equivalent plan, has never advanced very far.

There's another question that must be tackled before we can reach the point of providing coverage for everyone: Should America provide health insurance for every citizen?

The concept of solidarity – which loosely means a unity based on a community of interests, objectives, or standards – is the basis for the health systems in most European countries. It also undergirds our own Social Security retirement and disability programs, workers' compensation, and, of course, Medicare.

When it comes to health care, there is still no universal embrace of the concept of solidarity. But unless Americans agree that every citizen is entitled to medical care and a way to pay for it, this round of discussion about Medicare for All is as likely to fail as all the previous proposals.

But what about Obamacare, you might be thinking? Remember when the former president told us his health plan would bring "affordable, quality care for all"? The Affordable Care Act established the principle that everyone should be able to buy health insurance regardless of preexisting health conditions, but it did not take the further step of guaranteeing everyone the right to medical care and a way to pay for it.

"Winning the argument about universal coverage first is really important," says Joel Kutzin who heads the health care financing team at the World Health Organization.

It's the prerequisite to solving the insurance cost and service problems the three unhappy tweeters shared with the twitterverse.

Should every American have the right to affordable health care? Write to Trudy at trudy.lieberman@gmail.com.

Erdmann places fourth at State FFA LDE

Tessa Erdmann placed 4th in the Employment Skills Leadership Development Event (LDE) at the State FFA LDE held in Pierre on December 8 and 9. In this event she created a resume and coverletter, filled out an job application and wrote a follow up letter to her interviewer. She also went through a round of personal interviews with judges who asked her questions about her selected job. Tessa initially competed at the district level, which she placed first. Then, this past weekend, competed against the top three individuals from the seven districts in the state and placed 4th overall.





Northwestern Area

In our travels we are going to try and get pictures of how schools have displayed the nation's motto, as required by state law. This one is at the Northwestern Area School District.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

Department of Education's strategic plan focuses on championing excellence

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Department of Education has released its strategic plan, which will guide the department's activities through 2024.

"Chief among our priorities is championing excellence in the South Dakota K-12 education system," said Secretary of Education Dr. Ben Jones. "To that end, our top two priorities are to implement focused initiatives to decrease the opportunity gap for students in poverty and to establish a networked community of allies focused on serving Native American learners to improve academic outcomes."

The plan consists of four strategic directions: championing excellence, maximizing and building relationships, achieving effectiveness, and cultivating professional culture. The strategies are intended to achieve the department's vision of supporting local educators, investing in talent development, fostering research and innovation, supporting the whole learner, and reinventing accountability.

The strategic plan can be found on the [Department of Education's website \(https://doe.sd.gov\)](https://doe.sd.gov) by clicking on the Strategic Plan homepage banner.

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Today



Cold

High: 3 °F

Tonight



Mostly Cloudy

Low: -10 °F

Sunday



Partly Sunny

High: 11 °F

Sunday
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 0 °F


Monday





Mostly Sunny

High: 15 °F

Cold This Weekend

 Today: Partly Cloudy.
Highs 0-14°F.

Tonight: Mostly Cloudy. Lows 6 above to 15 below. 

 Sunday: Partly Sunny.
Highs 7-29°F.

ISSUED: 2:20 AM - Saturday, December 14, 2019, National Weather Service, Aberdeen SD

A cold weekend is on tap for the region. Light snow is possible over western and southern South Dakota later today and tonight but the rest of the area should stay dry. The good news: a warm-up is anticipated for next week.

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Today in Weather History

December 14, 1994: Snow accumulated over all of South Dakota on the 14th but was heavy in the central part of the state and at a few places in the northwest. The greatest accumulations were 11 inches at Murdo and 10 inches at the Lake Sharpe project and near Stephan. The storm caused numerous accidents, but no fatalities or injuries were reported. Eight inches of snow fell at McLaughlin and Miller, with 7 inches at Faulkton and McIntosh, 6 inches at Eagle Butte and Timber Lake, and 5 inches at Mobridge, Kennebec, and near Highmore.

December 14, 1996: Heavy snow of 6 to 20 inches fell across most of central, north central, and part of northeast South Dakota during the late evening of the 14th. Strong north winds of 20 to 35 mph created near-blizzard conditions and heavy drifting across the area. Travel was tough if not impossible, with several cars going into the ditch. A two-car accident between Blunt and Pierre left several people injured. Many activities were postponed or canceled. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Fort Pierre, Ipswich, Kennebec, Aberdeen, and Pollock; 7 inches at Mobridge; 8 inches at Lake Sharpe, Clark, and Mellette; 9 inches at Roscoe, Gettysburg, and McIntosh; 10 inches at Highmore, Eagle Butte, 22 miles SSW of Keldron, and at West Whitlock; 11 inches at Blunt and Miller; 12 inches at Ree Heights, McLaughlin, and Onida; 13 inches at Highmore; 14 inches at Redfield; 15 inches at Timber Lake; 18 inches at Faulkton; and 20 inches at Hoven.

December 14, 1287: A powerful storm affected the Netherlands and Northern Germany on this day. Called the St. Lucia's flood, which was the day before, this storm broke a dike, flooding much of the land in what is now the Waddenzee and IJsselmeer. A significant percentage of the country's population perished in this disaster and had been rated as one of the most destructive floods in recorded history. The death toll from this storm was between 50,000 to 80,000 people. Also, 180 residents of Hickling village, which is 137 miles north-east of London was impacted by this storm. The storm surge rose a foot above the high altar in the church. From British-History.ac.uk, "Hickling was one of the townships that suffered most severely from the tremendous storm of December, 1287, no fewer than nine score persons being drowned there. In the priory the water rose more than a foot above the high altar, and all the canons fled away except two, who stayed behind and managed to save the horses and other property by bringing them up into the dormitory over the vaulted undercroft."

December 14, 1952: Trace of snow or sleet at or near Pensacola, Crestview, DeFuniak Springs, Quincy, Carrabelle, Tallahassee, St. Marks, Monticello, Madison, Mayo, Live Oak, Lake City, Glen St. Mary, and Hilliard in Florida. Frozen precipitation occurred before noon at most points, but happened in the afternoon at Mayo and Lake City and near Hilliard. Temperatures were above freezing and snow or sleet melted as it fell.

December 14, 1997: Central Mississippi and western Alabama saw significant snowfall of 4 to 8 inches on this day. In Mississippi, this was one of the heavier snowfalls to occur since 1929. The weight of the snow caused limbs of trees to break, which knocked down power lines.

1924 - The temperature at Helena, MT, plunged 79 degrees in 24 hours, and 88 degrees in 34 hours. The mercury plummeted from 63 above to 25 below zero. At Fairfield MT the temperature plunged 84 degrees in just 12 hours, from 63 at Noon to 21 below zero at midnight. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A powerful storm spread heavy snow from the Southern High Plains to the Middle Mississippi Valley, and produced severe thunderstorms in the Lower Mississippi Valley. During the evening a tornado hit West Memphis TN killing six persons and injuring two hundred others. The tornado left 1500 persons homeless, and left all of the residents of Crittendon County without electricity. Kansas City MO was blanketed with 10.8 inches of snow, a 24 hour record for December, and snowfall totals in the Oklahoma panhandle ranged up to 14 inches. Strong winds, gusting to 63 mph at Austin TX, ushered arctic cold into the Great Plains, and caused considerable blowing and drifting of snow. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Blowing snow was reported in western Kansas, as snow and gusty winds plagued the Central Rockies and Central High Plains. Colorado Springs CO reported thirteen inches of snow. Low pressure in Wisconsin brought heavy snow to the Lake Superior snowbelt area, with 22 inches reported at Marquette MI. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



FACING FEAR WITH FACTS

A bright light on a dark night would frighten most individuals if it was unexpected. How much more frightening would it be if an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared and God's glory lit up the area where sheep were quietly sleeping, and shepherds were watching them carefully and constantly to make certain that they were safe.

Sensing the fear of the shepherds, the angel said confidently, "Don't be afraid of this Light!" The angel wanted to calm their pounding hearts. "I came with Good News. News that will bring great joy to everyone, everywhere who is willing to accept this Good News!"

How gracious is our God! The shepherds did what any of us would have done: react with apprehension and fear. Yet, God, in His love and mercy, first gave them His assurance that they were safe and then explained to them what had happened: "A Savior, Christ, who is the Anointed One, the One that you have been waiting for, even the LORD, has been born!"

There is a wonderful lesson here for each of us. Rarely do we get through any day without something unusual – sometimes a tragedy, perhaps a life-threatening or grief-producing event – invading our lives. It is normal and natural to react with fear when the unwelcomed comes.

But, as God said to the shepherds then and as He says to us every day, "Don't be afraid. Good News awaits you. Your Savior is with you. Turn to Him in faith and He will save you!"

Prayer: How thankful we are, Father, to know that Your Son, our Savior, is with us every moment of every day. Calm our fears and bring peace to our hearts through Him. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Luke 2:8-12 Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 12/03/2019 – Christmas Open House 10am-4pm, James Valley Telecommunications
- 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)
- 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
- 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services (Memorial Day)
- 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat (Halloween)
- 11/14/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)

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News from the Associated Press

South Dakota upholds death sentence in 2000 torture killing

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Supreme Court upheld the sentence of the state's only death row inmate, an Alaska man who pleaded guilty to taking part in a 2000 torture killing.

The justices said the arguments from Briley Piper, 39, of Anchorage, were "untimely" and didn't contest his guilt, the Rapid City Journal reported. Piper was sentenced to death after pleading guilty in the slaying of Chester Allen Poage, of Spearfish.

Another man who pleaded guilty to taking part in the slaying, Elijah Page, has already been executed. A third man, Darrell Hoadley, was convicted at trial and sentenced to life in prison.

Piper argued in his latest appeal that his guilty pleas were not made voluntarily or intelligently, and he blamed his defense counsel for that.

However, the court said in its ruling Wednesday that Piper had "experienced" attorneys who provided sound advice when they told him that the evidence against him was overwhelming and that jurors would convict him. Piper also thought that taking responsibility could serve as a mitigating factor in his sentencing.

Prosecutors say Piper, Page and Hoadley were high on methamphetamine and LSD when they decided to burglarize Poage's home on March 12, 2000. After enticing Poage to go to his home, the men pointed a gun at him, forced him to the floor kicked him in the head until he was unconscious, then tied his hands behind his back, prosecutors said. When he awoke, they forced him to drink a mixture of crushed pills, beer and hydrochloric acid, authorities said.

The trio buried Poage naked in the snow but he was able to run away, prosecutors said. Prosecutors said Poage's attackers then pushed him into a creek, where they kicked him and took turns stabbing him. Poage begged for his life, but his attackers stoned him to death, prosecutors said.

Page was executed in 2007. South Dakota's last execution was in November.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Mega Millions

17-21-29-39-56, Mega Ball: 22, Megaplier: 3

(seventeen, twenty-one, twenty-nine, thirty-nine, fifty-six; Mega Ball: twenty-two; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$340 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$150 million

Friday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS PREP BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 79, Brookings 64

Arlington 61, Florence/Henry 39

Baltic 50, Beresford 32

Burke 63, Scotland 24

Canistota-Freeman 73, Centerville 27

Canton 67, Elk Point-Jefferson 59

Castlewood 65, Deuel 52

Crazy Horse 39, Dupree 34

Crow Creek 66, Flandreau Indian 47

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Custer 67, Newcastle, Wyo. 53
Dell Rapids 57, Colman-Egan 45
Dell Rapids 84, West Central 59
Flandreau 71, Chester 31
Freeman Academy/Marion 56, Alcester-Hudson 42
Hanson 65, Ethan 48
Harding County 71, Newell 26
Harrisburg 68, Pierre 61
Iroquois 62, Mitchell 44
Langford 61, Leola/Frederick 14
Little Wound 77, St. Francis Indian 64
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 63, Gregory 57
New Underwood 62, Edgemont 21
Oelrichs 70, Lead-Deadwood 57
Sioux Falls Lincoln 61, O Gorman 39
Sioux Falls Lincoln 61, Watertown 39
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 52, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 47
St. Thomas More 66, Chamberlain 52
Timber Lake 41, Lemmon 32
Tiospa Zina Tribal 76, Hamlin 47
Vermillion 74, Bon Homme 22
Viborg-Hurley 83, Freeman 29
Wakpala 76, Takini 32
Waubay/Summit 56, Milbank 52
White River 75, Jones County 48
Wilmot 57, Waverly-South Shore 50
Winner 62, Wagner 28
Yankton 77, Spearfish 48
GIRLS PREP BASKETBALL=
Aberdeen Central 48, Brookings 40
Alcester-Hudson 42, Freeman Academy/Marion 7
Arlington 70, Florence/Henry 63
Avon 70, Marty Indian 40
Beresford 57, Baltic 17
Colman-Egan 56, Dell Rapids St. Mary 43
DeSmet 41, Estelline/Hendricks 24
Deubrook 66, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 8
Dupree 81, Crazy Horse 33
Elk Point-Jefferson 40, Canton 16
Flandreau 63, Chester 28
Great Plains Lutheran 49, Evergreen Lutheran, Wash. 16
Hamlin 68, Tiospaye Topa 13
Harrisburg 59, Pierre 41
Hill City 58, Belle Fourche 31
Kimball/White Lake 46, Burke 42
Langford 61, Leola/Frederick 19
Lennox 54, Sioux Falls Christian 36
Lyman 56, Stanley County 20
Newell 64, Harding County 47
Rapid City Stevens 44, Brandon Valley 31

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Sioux Falls Lincoln 56, Watertown 48
Sioux Falls O’Gorman 64, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 31
Timber Lake 48, Lemmon 45
Todd County 60, Valentine, Neb. 44
Waubay/Summit 57, Milbank 19
Waverly-South Shore 57, Wilmot 35
Yankton 51, Spearfish 36

Some high school basketball scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

Wilson lifts S. Dakota St. past Nebraska-Kearney 66-53

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Douglas Wilson had 16 points and nine rebounds as South Dakota State defeated Nebraska-Kearney 66-53 on Friday night.

Alex Arians had 16 points for South Dakota State (7-6), which earned its sixth straight home victory. Brandon Key added six assists. Matt Dentlinger had seven rebounds for the home team.

Morgan Soucie had 14 points and nine rebounds for the Antelopes. Jake Walker added 13 points. South Dakota State takes on Florida Gulf Coast at home on Wednesday.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

This was generated by Automated Insights, <http://www.automatedinsights.com/ap>, using data from STATS LLC, <https://www.stats.com>

Oglala Sioux consider appeal on survey decision for mine

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — The Oglala Sioux Tribe is considering whether to appeal a decision by a panel of judges that a proposed uranium mine site in southwest South Dakota doesn’t have to be surveyed for Native American burials or artifacts.

The three judges with the U.S. Atomic Safety and Licensing Board said the federal Nuclear Regulatory Commission tried diligently to do an on-the-ground survey for Native American burials, artifacts and other historical and cultural resources. But, they say the commission was justified in giving up because the tribe wouldn’t cooperate.

The company proposing the mine, Powertech, a subsidiary of Azarga Uranium, in Canada, still has several more regulatory approvals to obtain before it can begin mining, including licenses and permits from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Azarga Uranium’s president and CEO, Blake Steele, said in a news release Friday that the decision on the survey contention was a “monumental achievement for the company,” the Rapid City Journal reported.

Powertech wants to mine uranium for use in nuclear power plants.

The tribe has until Jan. 6 to file an appeal.

Johnson’s win may deliver Brexit but could risk UK’s breakup

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Leaving the European Union is not the only split British Prime Minister Boris Johnson has to worry about.

Johnson’s commanding election victory this week may let him fulfill his campaign promise to “get Brexit done,” but it could also imperil the future of the United Kingdom of England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland and Northern Ireland didn’t vote for Brexit, didn’t embrace this week’s Conservative

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electoral landslide -- and now may be drifting permanently away from London.

In a victory speech Friday, Johnson said the election result proved that leaving the EU is "the irrefutable, irresistible, unarguable decision of the British people."

Arguably, though, it isn't. It's the will of the English, who make up 56 million of the U.K.'s 66 million people. During Britain's 2016 referendum on EU membership, England and much smaller Wales voted to leave bloc; Scotland and Ireland didn't. In Thursday's election, England elected 345 Conservative lawmakers — all but 20 of the 365 House of Commons seats Johnson's party won across the U.K.

In Scotland, 48 of the 59 seats were won by the Scottish National Party, which opposes Brexit and wants Scotland to become independent of the U.K.

SNP leader Nicola Sturgeon said her party's "emphatic" victory showed that "the kind of future desired by the majority in Scotland is different to that chosen by the rest of the U.K."

The SNP has campaigned for decades to make Scotland independent and almost succeeded in 2014, when Scotland held a referendum on seceding from the U.K. The "remain" side won 55% to 45%.

At the time, the referendum was billed as a once-in-a-generation decision. But the SNP argues that Brexit has changed everything because Scotland now faces being dragged out of the EU against its will.

Sturgeon said Friday that Johnson "has no mandate whatsoever to take Scotland out of the EU" and Scotland must be able to decide its future in a new independence referendum.

Johnson insists he will not approve a referendum during the current term of Parliament, which is due to last until 2024. Johnson's office said the prime minister told the Scottish leader on Friday that "the result of the 2014 referendum was decisive and should be respected."

The Scotsman newspaper summed up the showdown Saturday with front page face-to-face images of Sturgeon and Johnson: "Two landslides. One collision course."

"What we've got now is pretty close to a perfect storm," said historian Tom Devine, professor emeritus at the University of Edinburgh. He said the U.K. is facing an "unprecedented constitutional crisis" as Johnson's refusal to approve a referendum fuels growing momentum for Scottish independence.

Politically and legally, it's a stalemate. Without the approval of the U.K. government, a referendum would not be legally binding. London could simply ignore the result, as the Spanish government did when Catalonia held an unauthorized independence vote in 2017.

Mark Diffley, an Edinburgh-based political analyst, said Sturgeon "has said that she doesn't want a Catalonia-style referendum. She wants to do this properly."

There's no clear legal route to a second referendum if Johnson refuses, though Sturgeon can apply political and moral pressure. Diffley said the size of the SNP's win allows Sturgeon to argue that a new referendum is "the will of the people."

Sturgeon said that next week she will lay out a "detailed democratic case for a transfer of power to enable a referendum to be put beyond legal challenge."

Devine said the administrations in Edinburgh and London "are in a completely uncompromising condition" and that will only make the crisis worse.

"The longer Johnson refuses to concede a referendum, the greater will the pro-independence momentum in Scotland accelerate," he said. "By refusing to concede it, Johnson has ironically become a recruiting sergeant for increased militant nationalism."

Northern Ireland has its own set of political parties and structures largely split along British unionist/Irish nationalist lines. There, too, people feel cast adrift by Brexit, and the political plates are shifting.

For the first time this week, Northern Ireland elected more lawmakers who favor union with Ireland than want to remain part of the U.K.

The island of Ireland, which holds the U.K.'s only land border with the EU, has proved the most difficult issue in Brexit negotiations. Any customs checks or other obstacles along the currently invisible frontier between Northern Ireland and EU member Ireland would undermine both the local economy and Northern Ireland's peace process.

The divorce deal struck between Johnson and the EU seeks to avoid a hard border by keeping Northern

Ireland closely aligned to EU rules, which means new checks on goods moving between Northern Ireland and the rest of the U.K.

"Once you put a border between Northern Ireland and the rest of the United Kingdom, Northern Ireland's going to be part of a united Ireland for economic purposes," Jonathan Powell, who helped negotiate Northern Ireland's 1998 peace accord, told the BBC. "That will increase the tendency toward a united Ireland for political reasons, too.

"I think there is a good chance there will be a united Ireland within 10 years."

In Scotland, Devine also thinks the days of the Union may be numbered.

"Anything can happen," he said. "But I think it's more likely than not that the U.K. will come to an end over the next 20 to 30 years."

Renee Graham in Edinburgh contributed to this story.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>.

UN climate talks in limbo as chair Chile bids for compromise

By FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Chilean officials presiding over this year's U.N. climate talks said Saturday they plan to propose a compromise to bridge yawning differences among countries that have been deadlocked on key issues for the past two weeks.

With the meeting already into extra time, draft documents presented overnight failed to achieve consensus. Observers and environmental groups warned that they risked undoing or stalling on commitments made in the 2015 Paris climate accord.

Later Saturday, Chilean diplomat Andrés Landerretche told reporters that a fresh compromise would be circulated Saturday afternoon, but insisted that there would have to be trade-offs if there was to be a deal supported by all countries.

"It's impossible to have a consensus outcome if you don't compromise," he said.

Asked whether some decisions might be postponed until next year, Landerretche said: "We don't foresee any suspension. We are working with a view toward finishing our work today."

But observers said there were still huge obstacles to overcome.

"I've been attending these climate negotiations since they first started in 1991, but never have I seen the almost total disconnection we've seen here (...) in Madrid between what the science requires and the people of the world demand, and what the climate negotiators are delivering," said Alden Meyer, a climate policy special at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Meyer said the current drafts didn't reflect urgent warnings from scientists that greenhouse gas emissions need to fall sharply, and soon.

"The planet is on fire and our window of escape is getting harder and harder to reach the longer we fail to act," Meyer said.

Growing concern about climate change has been reflected in mass protests staged around the world over the past year, often by young activists concerned about the future they and their children might face as the planet heats up.

Demonstrations took place inside and outside the venue of the talks in the Spanish capital, with Swedish teenage activist Greta Thunberg one of the most prominent voices calling for urgent action to curb emissions.

Some countries said it was time to heed those demands.

"We have the science. We have the collective will to deliver enshrined in the Paris agreement. And now it is time to step up," said Ola Elvestuen, Norway's environment minister.

"A weak encouragement will not be understood by the outside world," he said. "It will send a message that we are not listening to science."

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Senior European officials, including ministers from Spain, Germany and the EU's top climate official, Frans Timmermans, were engaged in last-minute negotiations to prevent the talks from collapsing.

But among the countries pushing back against agreeing new measures to help poor countries and set new emissions cutting targets was the United States, which under President Donald Trump has announced it is pulling out of the Paris accord.

"I've just heard the comments of many others here today on the need to include an expansive additional language on gaps and needs," Kimberly Carnahan, a State Department official representing the U.S., said during a morning debate.

"We don't support such language and we would not think that it would lead to the balance of this text, but rather take us quite far in the other direction."

Small island nations, which fear disappearing beneath the waves over the coming decades as global warming leads to sea level rise, bristled at the U.S. position.

"(Decisions) should be made by countries that are going to be bound by those decisions and not by parties who are not going to be bound by the Paris agreement," said Ian Fry, ambassador for climate change of the Pacific state of Tuvalu.

Harjeet Singh of the humanitarian group Action Aid said the European Union would also shoulder blame if the talks in Madrid fail to make progress.

"It does a lot of sweet talking but it doesn't really help people," he said.

Among the main issues at stake are rules for international carbon markets and a system for channeling money to help poor countries cope with the economic impact of climate change.

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AP FACT CHECK: Trump's impeachment rage, Bloomberg on coal

By HOPE YEN, CHRISTOPHER RUGABER and ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As near-certain impeachment closes in on him, President Donald Trump raged at his accusers, the Democrats. In the process, he offered a highly selective account of the testimony of a damning witness and misrepresented the facts of a phone call at the heart of the constitutional showdown.

Trump also branded Democrats crazy for wanting to impeach him after all the things he's done for the country, some of which he didn't actually do. And he falsely credited his daughter with creating 14 million jobs when it's not clear she's created any.

Meantime Democratic presidential contender Michael Bloomberg came out with an energy plan that claimed he was personally responsible for much of the decline of the coal industry. He wasn't.

A sampling of the past week's political rhetoric:

JOBS

TRUMP, on his daughter, Ivanka: "She has been so extraordinary, in terms of her advocacy for America's working families. Fourteen million people she's gotten jobs for, where she would go into Walmart, she would go into our great companies and say, 'They really want help. They really want you to teach them.' ... She's done over 14 million." — remarks Thursday at White House meeting on child care and paid leave.

THE FACTS: His daughter hasn't created 14 million jobs. The U.S. has only created 6.6 million jobs since Trump took office.

The president is referring to a White House initiative led by Ivanka Trump that has garnered nonbinding commitments from 370 companies to provide 14 million training opportunities in the years ahead. Training for a job is not working at a job for money.

There are questions about how much the administration is willing to spend to help U.S. workers, whether the agreements by companies will result in higher salaries and whether employers will stick to their pledges

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if the economy sours and they have less incentive to invest in employees.

By having companies sign the pledge, the administration is relying on the private sector to take on more of the financial burden of training workers.

The government spends just 0.03% of the gross domestic product on job training, a level of support that has been halved since 2000, according to the Paris-based Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development. Of the 36 countries in the organization, only Japan and Mexico spend less than the U.S. by that measure.

Nor is it clear how many workers were already going to be trained, absent the initiative. In many cases, the pledge simply confers a presidential seal of approval on what some companies are doing anyway.

COAL & CLIMATE

BLOOMBERG says he "helped close more than half the nation's dirty coal plants." — energy plan announcement Friday.

BLOOMBERG announcement: "Coal production in the United States is on the decline, thanks to the efforts spearheaded by Mike over the past decade. ... In 2011, Mike helped launch the Sierra Club's Beyond Coal campaign, which has since shuttered more than half — 299 to date — of America's coal-fired power plants, and counting."

THE FACTS: Bloomberg is taking sweeping, unearned credit for the decline of coal. Market forces, not his money, influence and activism, put coal on this inexorable path.

Drops in prices of natural gas and renewable energy have made costlier coal-fired power plants much less competitive for electric utilities. A new federal report reaffirms that long-standing consensus among experts.

U.S. coal production has fallen steadily since its peak in 2008. That's due largely to a boom in oil and gas production from U.S. shale, begun under the Obama administration, that made natural gas far more abundant and cheaper. Also, advances in technology have spurred wind and solar energy production.

Bloomberg's energy plan calls for constraints on the expansion of natural gas, the primary fuel driving coal's decline. He proposes making rules for new gas plants so tough that energy companies would not want to build them.

IMPEACHMENT

TRUMP: "By the way, a guy like Sondland ___ nobody ever says it ___ he said very strongly that I said, 'I want nothing' and 'no quid pro quo.' Nobody says that. That's what he said. He said it in Congress. Nobody ever says that." — remarks Friday with Paraguayan President Abdo Benítez.

THE FACTS: That's a decidedly partial account of the testimony that Gordon Sondland, Trump's ambassador to the European Union, gave to House investigators.

As one of the officials most deeply involved in trying to get Ukraine to do Trump's bidding, Sondland testified that there was indeed a quid pro quo in the matter and "everyone was in the loop." Specifically, he said it was understood that Ukraine's new president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, would only get a meeting with Trump in the Oval Office if Zelenskiy publicly pledged to investigate Joe Biden and his son Hunter and the Democrats.

"Was there a 'quid pro quo?' Sondland asked in his statement to the House Intelligence Committee. "As I testified previously, with regard to the requested White House call and White House meeting, the answer is yes."

Moreover, on the more serious matter of withholding military aid to Ukraine unless it investigated Democrats, Sondland testified that a this-for-that explanation was the only one that made sense to him.

"I later came to believe that the resumption of security aid would not occur until there was a public statement from Ukraine committing to the investigations of the 2016 election and Burisma," he said, referring to the Ukrainian company on whose board Hunter Biden served.

Testimony from other officials shored up the picture of a president and his associates systematically

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trying to get Ukraine to do what Trump wanted during a period when the military assistance approved by Congress was put on hold without explanation. Sondland said Trump told him on the phone that he was asking nothing of Ukraine. But it is plain from his testimony that Sondland did not believe him.

TRUMP: "They didn't even know probably that we had it transcribed, professionally transcribed, word for word transcribed. So beautiful. Am I lucky I had it transcribed? Think of that. Think of that." — Pennsylvania rally Tuesday.

THE FACTS: No, the White House memo describing Trump's phone conversation with Zelenskiy was not "word for word."

It was presented by the White House as a rough transcript. The public does not know precisely what each leader said.

Officials who were tasked to listen in to the call say the rough transcript is largely accurate in representing the material aspects of the conversation as they heard it.

One such witness testified that some quotations in the account were not exact, though he did not consider the variance to be consequential.

For example, a question remains whether Trump or Zelenskiy named Burisma in their conversation.

In the rough transcript, Zelenskiy said he would have his prosecutor "look into the situation, specifically to the company that you mentioned," and Trump spoke of a situation that "sounds horrible to me" involving Hunter Biden and Joe Biden, explicitly. Whether Burisma was mentioned or not, there is no doubt what company was being discussed.

TRUMP: "How do you get Impeached when you have done NOTHING wrong (a perfect call), have created the best economy in the history of our Country, rebuilt our Military, fixed the V.A. (Choice!), cut Taxes & Regs, protected your 2nd A, created Jobs, Jobs, Jobs, and soooo much more? Crazy!" — tweet Friday.

THE FACTS: He didn't do all of that.

He refers to Choice, a program that allows veterans under some conditions to go outside the Veterans Affairs health care system and seek private care at public expense. President Barack Obama enacted the law creating the program.

Trump routinely tries to take credit for his predecessor's VA achievement. Trump expanded Obama's Choice program.

Trump is also wrong in saying the U.S. economy is the best ever. It is not that.

The economy grew 2.9% in 2018, the same pace it reached in 2015 under Obama, and it hasn't hit historically high growth rates. Growth reached 7.2% in 1984 and topped 4% for four straight years in the late 1990s. The unemployment rate is at a half-century low of 3.5% but the proportion of Americans with a job was higher in the 1990s.

Trump is right that he's cut taxes and regulations and increased military spending, and there's been little movement on gun control.

TRUMP: "They don't even allege a crime. Crazy!" — tweet Thursday.

TRUMP: "There were no crimes. They're impeaching me, and there are no crimes." — Pennsylvania rally Tuesday.

Rep. STEVE CHABOT of Ohio, Republican on the House Judiciary Committee: "This president isn't even accused of committing a crime." — impeachment hearing Thursday.

Rep. DOUG COLLINS of Georgia, top Republican on the committee: "We don't have a crime." — hearing Monday.

THE FACTS: Republicans gave this misleading defense until the bitter end of the impeachment hearings and it will be heard again as the process unfolds. The constitutional grounds for impeachment do not require a statutory crime to have been committed.

In setting the conditions of treason, bribery or high crimes and misdemeanors, the Founding Fathers said a consequential abuse of office was subject to the impeachment process they laid out. As such, the

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“high crimes and misdemeanors” standard is vague and open-ended to encompass abuses even if they aren’t illegal.

Democrats this past week released two articles of impeachment against Trump: abuse of power for asking Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden while withholding nearly \$400 million in military aid as leverage; and obstruction of Congress for stonewalling the House’s investigation.

Frank Bowman III, a University of Missouri law professor and author of “A History of Impeachment for the Age of Trump,” said that while it seems “almost commonsensically right” that the House shouldn’t impeach unless there’s a crime, that has not been the requirement in more than 600 years of British and American law.

STEVE CASTOR, Republican counsel for the House Judiciary Committee: “At the time of the July 25 call, senior officials in Kyiv did not know the security assistance was paused. They did not learn it was paused until the pause was reported publicly in the U.S. media on Aug. 28.” — hearing Monday.

THE FACTS: That’s misleading. Ukrainians knew or at least suspected that hundreds of millions of dollars in military aid were frozen when the call took place, according to testimony heard by House investigators.

Laura Cooper, the deputy assistant secretary of defense, told the House Intelligence Committee last month that her staff received an email on July 25 from a contact at Ukraine’s Embassy asking “what was going on with Ukraine’s security assistance.” That’s the same day Trump spoke by phone with Zelenskiy and pressed for an investigation of Democrats.

Cooper said she “cannot say for certain” that Ukraine was aware the aid was being withheld, but said, “It’s the recollection of my staff that they likely knew.”

Republicans have argued there couldn’t be a “quid pro quo” — investigations into Democrats in exchange for military aid — if Ukrainians weren’t aware of a hold on the aid at the time. Even so, Zelenskiy knew months before the call that much-needed U.S. military support might depend on whether he was willing to help Trump by investigating Democrats.

Democratic Rep. JERROLD NADLER of New York, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee: “Multiple witnesses — including respected diplomats, national security professionals, and decorated war veterans — all testified to the same basic fact: President Trump withheld the aid and the meeting in order to pressure a foreign government to do him that favor. ... These facts are not in dispute.” — hearing Monday.

THE FACTS: He’s right that plentiful testimony points to Trump conditioning military aid to Ukraine on the investigation he wanted Ukraine to conduct on Democrats. But is it a rock-solid case?

None of the witnesses who testified in House Intelligence Committee hearings last month could personally attest that Trump directly tied the release of the military aid to an agreement from Ukraine to conduct the investigations.

Sondland testified to a “quid pro quo” that involved arranging a White House visit for Zelenskiy in return for Ukraine announcing investigations of Burisma and a discredited conspiracy theory that Ukraine had interfered in the 2016 U.S. presidential election.

But Sondland says no one told him that hundreds of millions of dollars in security assistance to Ukraine were similarly contingent on satisfying Trump’s request for investigations. He said he simply presumed that was the case, based in part on the absence of any other credible explanation.

RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

TRUMP, on former FBI employees Peter Strzok and Lisa Page: “This poor guy. Did I hear he needed a restraining order after this whole thing to keep him away from Lisa? That is what I heard. I don’t know if it’s true.” — Pennsylvania rally.

THE FACTS: He’s passing on baseless innuendo about FBI employees who exchanged texts criticizing him.

TRUMP: “They spied on my campaign!” — tweet Wednesday.

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TRUMP: "My Campaign for President was conclusively spied on. Nothing like this has ever happened in American Politics. A really bad situation. TREASON means long jail sentences, and this was TREASON!" — tweet May 17, 2019.

THE FACTS: The Justice Department watchdog report released Monday doesn't use "spied" or "treason." But it's certainly the case that some of the investigative steps the report describes supports the fact that some of Trump's campaign staffers were under surveillance.

Although the report says the FBI did not place any confidential human sources inside the campaign, it did task several of its sources to interact with multiple campaign officials. Those include Carter Page and campaign aide George Papadopoulos — during and after their times on the campaign — as well as an unidentified "high-level" campaign official who was not a subject of the investigation.

The report says that the use of those sources, though brushing up against protected First Amendment speech, followed protocol.

It also rejects one of Papadopoulos' theories that he was framed.

Papadopoulos, who pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI, has alleged that a Maltese professor who told him that Russia possessed stolen Hillary Clinton emails — a revelation that initiated the investigation — was some sort of intelligence asset or perhaps even worked with the FBI.

But the report says the FBI searched its database of confidential human sources and found no evidence suggesting that the professor, Joseph Mifsud, was one of them, "or that Mifsud's discussions with Papadopoulos were part of an FBI operation."

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures

Associated Press writers Eric Tucker, Mark Sherman, Darlene Superville and Cal Woodward contributed to this report.

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North Korea conducts another test at long-range rocket site

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea said Saturday that it successfully performed another "crucial test" at its long-range rocket launch site that will further strengthen its nuclear deterrent.

The test — the second at the facility in a week, according to North Korea's Academy of Defense Science — possibly involved technologies to improve intercontinental ballistic missiles that could potentially reach the continental United States.

In a separate statement, Pak Jong Chon, chief of the Korean People's Army's general staff, asserted that North Korea has built up "tremendous power" and that the findings from the recent tests would be used to develop new weapons to allow the country to "definitely and reliably" counter U.S. nuclear threats.

The North in recent weeks has been dialing up pressure to coax major concessions from the Trump administration as it approaches an end-of-year deadline set by leader Kim Jong Un to salvage faltering nuclear negotiations.

The Academy of Defense Science did not specify what was tested on Friday. Just days earlier, the North said it conducted a "very important test" at the site on the country's northwestern coast, prompting speculation that it involved a new engine for either an ICBM or a space launch vehicle.

The testing activity and defiant statements suggest that the North is preparing to do something to provoke the United States if Washington doesn't back down and make concessions to ease sanctions and pressure on Pyongyang in deadlocked nuclear negotiations.

An unnamed spokesman for the academy said scientists received warm congratulations from members of the ruling Workers' Party of Korea Central Committee who attended the test, which lasted from 10:41

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to 10:48 p.m. Friday at the Sohae Satellite Launching Ground, where the North has conducted satellite launches and liquid-fuel missile engine tests in recent years.

The spokesman said the successful outcome of the latest test, in addition to the one on Dec. 7, "will be applied to further bolster up the reliable strategic nuclear deterrent of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea," referring to North Korea's formal name.

"Genuine peace can be safeguarded and our development and future be guaranteed only when the balance of power is completely ensured. We have stored up a tremendous power," Pak said in a statement carried by the North's official Korean Central News Agency.

"We should be ready to cope with political and military provocations of the hostile forces and be familiar with both dialogue and confrontation," Pak said. "Our army is fully ready to thoroughly carry out any decision of the supreme leader with action. ... U.S. and other hostile forces will spend the year-end in peace only when they hold off any words and deeds rattling us."

Kim Dong-yub, a former South Korean military officer and currently an analyst from Seoul's Institute for Far Eastern Studies, said the North mentioning its nuclear deterrent makes it clear it tested a new engine for an ICBM, not a satellite-launch vehicle. Kim said it was notable that North Korea announced the specific length of the test, which he said possibly signals a larger liquid-fuel ICBM engine.

North Korea's current ICBMs, including the Hwasong-15, are built with first stages that are powered by a pair of engines that experts say are modeled after Russian designs. When the North first tested the engine in 2016, it said the test lasted for 200 seconds and demonstrated a thrust of 80 tons-force.

The North Korean statement came a day before Stephen Biegun, the U.S. special representative for North Korea, was to arrive in South Korea for discussions with South Korean officials over the nuclear diplomacy. It was unclear whether Biegun would attempt contact with North Korean officials at the inter-Korean border, which has often been used as a diplomatic venue, or whether such an effort would be successful.

During a provocative run of weapons tests in 2017, Kim Jong Un conducted three flight tests of ICBMs that demonstrated potential range to reach deep into the U.S. mainland, raising tensions and triggering verbal warfare with President Donald Trump as they exchanged crude insults and threats of nuclear annihilation.

Experts say that the North would need further tests to establish the missile's performance and reliability, such as improving its accuracy and ensuring that the warheads survive the harsh conditions of atmospheric reentry.

Relations between Kim and Trump became cozier in 2018 after Kim initiated diplomacy that led to their first summit in June that year in Singapore, where they issued a vague statement on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, without describing when or how it would occur.

But negotiations faltered after the United States rejected North Korean demands for broad sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of the North's nuclear capabilities at Kim's second summit with Trump in Vietnam in February.

Trump and Kim met for a third time in June at the border between North and South Korea and agreed to resume talks. But an October working-level meeting in Sweden broke down over what the North Koreans described as the Americans' "old stance and attitude."

Kim, who unilaterally suspended nuclear and intercontinental ballistic missile tests last year during talks with Washington and Seoul, has said North Korea could seek a "new path" if the United States persists with sanctions and pressure against the North.

North Korea has also conducted 13 rounds of ballistic missile and rocket artillery tests since May, and has hinted at lifting its moratorium on nuclear and long-range missile tests if the Trump administration fails to make substantial concessions before the new year.

Some experts doubt that Kim would revive the tensions of 2017 by restarting nuclear and ICBM tests, which would cross a metaphorical "red line" and risk shattering his hard-won diplomacy with Washington. They say Kim is likely to pressure Trump with military activities that pose less of a direct threat to the U.S. and by bolstering a united front with Beijing and Moscow. Both are the North's allies and have called for the U.N. Security Council to consider easing sanctions on Pyongyang to help nuclear negotiations move

forward.

Saturday's news of the test came after U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft criticized the North's ballistic testing activity during a U.N. Security Council meeting on Wednesday, saying that the tests were "deeply counterproductive" and risk closing the door on prospects for negotiating peace.

She also cited North Korean hints of "a resumption of serious provocations," which she said would mean they could launch space vehicles using long-range ballistic missile technology or test ICBMs, "which are designed to attack the continental United States with nuclear weapons."

While Craft said that the Trump administration is "prepared to be flexible" and take concrete, parallel steps toward an agreement on resuming talks, North Korea described her comments as a "hostile provocation" and warned that Washington may have squandered its chance at salvaging the fragile nuclear diplomacy.

Boris Johnson goes north to celebrate crushing election win

By MIKE CORDER and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson pledged Saturday to repay the trust of voters in the working-class heartland of northern England who rejected the Labour Party and helped give him an 80-seat majority at this week's election.

Speaking to cheering supporters at a cricket club in Sedgefield — the constituency once held by Labour former prime minister Tony Blair — Johnson acknowledged the seismic shift that helped sweep him to victory in Thursday's election.

"I know that people may have been breaking the voting habits of generations to vote for us," he told supporters. "And I want the people of the northeast to know that we in the Conservative Party and I will repay your trust."

In a victory speech outside 10 Downing Street on Friday, Johnson called for an end to the acrimony that has festered throughout the country since the divisive 2016 Brexit referendum, and urged Britain to "let the healing begin."

Johnson's campaign mantra to "get Brexit done" and widespread unease with the leadership style and socialist policies of opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn combined to give the ruling Conservatives 365 seats in the House of Commons, its best performance since party icon Margaret Thatcher's last victory in 1987. Labour slumped to 203 seats, its worst showing since 1935.

While Johnson was on a victory lap Saturday, Corbyn — who has pledged to stand down next year — was under fire from within his own party, where there was little sign of healing starting any time soon.

Former lawmaker Helen Goodman, one of many Labour legislators to lose their seat in northern England, told BBC radio that "the biggest factor was obviously the unpopularity of Jeremy Corbyn as the leader."

Another former Labour lawmaker criticized the election campaign more broadly as muddled. Anna Turley told the BBC that the party put forward an overwhelming number of policies and voters "just didn't believe we were the party that could deliver on any of it."

John McDonnell, Labour's finance spokesman, said Saturday he would stand down from the position when Corbyn is replaced.

"I've done my bit. We need to move on at that stage with that new leader," he told reporters.

Armed with his hefty new majority, Johnson is set to start the process next week of pushing Brexit legislation through Parliament to ensure Britain leaves the EU by the Jan. 31 deadline. Once he's passed that hurdle — breaking three years of parliamentary deadlock — he has to seal a trade deal with the bloc by the end of 2020.

"We've just been going over the timetable we can definitely get it in before Christmas, and we're out on Jan. 31," Johnson said.

While Johnson's large majority means he has relatively clear air ahead on Brexit, he faces turbulence over renewed calls for a referendum on Scottish independence following the strong election showing of the Scottish National Party.

The front page of Saturday's edition of The Scotsman newspaper featured photos of Johnson and Scot-

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tish National Party leader Nicola Sturgeon and the headline: "Two landslides One collision course."

Johnson owes his success, in part, to traditionally Labour-voting working class constituencies in northern England that backed the Conservatives because of the party's promise to deliver Brexit. During the 2016 referendum, many of those communities voted to leave the EU because of concerns that immigrants were taking their jobs and neglect by the central government in London.

In Sedgefield, he paid tribute to his new lawmakers who turned those concerns into a big election victory. "Thank you for your wonderful achievement in transforming our party, transforming the political map of this country," he said.

Follow AP's full coverage of Brexit and British politics at <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>.

Trump impeachment vote underscores a harshly partisan era

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — This coming week's virtually certain House impeachment of President Donald Trump will underscore how Democrats and Republicans have morphed into fiercely divided camps since lawmakers impeached President Bill Clinton.

Twenty-one years ago this Thursday, a Republican-led House approved two impeachment articles against Democrat Clinton. While that battle was bitterly partisan, it was blurrier than the near party-line votes expected this week when the House, now run by Democrats, is poised to impeach Republican Trump.

Two of the four Clinton impeachment articles were killed — something party leaders today would jump through hoops to avoid for fear of highlighting divisions. All four Clinton articles drew GOP opposition, peaking at 81 on one vote. That's an unthinkable number of defections today.

"Obviously it was partisan, but it wasn't as intensely partisan as today is," said Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., one of four Republicans who opposed all the Clinton impeachment articles and the last remaining member of that group in Congress. "So you could basically argue conscience, you could say you looked at it and didn't think this was the way to go."

In the upcoming votes on impeaching Trump, Democrats expect support from all but a few — two to perhaps five — of their members. Republican leaders envision no GOP desertions.

Few defections are expected by either party when the GOP-run Senate holds a trial, probably in January, on whether to oust Trump from office. No one expects Democrats to muster the two-thirds Senate majority needed for removal over charges that he leveraged U.S. military aid and a White House meeting coveted by Ukrainian leaders to pressure them to announce investigations of his Democratic political foes.

Most Democrats were dismissive of the GOP's impeachment charges that Clinton lied to a grand jury and others about his affair with White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

"The Constitution is really to protect the nation against the abuse of presidential power. Any husband could lie under oath about an affair. It doesn't take presidential powers to do that," Rep. Zoe Lofgren, D-Calif., who opposed the Clinton impeachment and is still in Congress, said in an interview Friday.

Clinton was a lame duck but widely popular president who was presiding over a booming economy, and polling showed that impeachment had little support. That gave Democrats little reason to back the effort to remove him and made many Republicans think twice about backing impeachment.

That helps explain why 81 Republicans opposed one defeated Clinton impeachment article. The other three articles drew 28, 12 and 5 GOP "no" votes. No more than five Democrats backed any of the articles impeaching Clinton.

Former Rep. Tom DeLay, R-Texas, was chief House GOP vote counter in 1998 and was known as "The Hammer" for his effectiveness in lining up support. In an interview Friday, he said he urged wavering Republicans to read evidence gathered by Ken Starr, the independent counsel who headed the investigation into Clinton that led to the impeachment.

DeLay said party leaders "cannot break arms" on an impeachment vote because it is too important. That echoes current Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., who has said she's not lobbying Democrats on the

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upcoming Trump votes.

"I knew where the votes were all along, and why they were wavering and why they were struggling," DeLay said. "The questions they had, we wanted to make sure that we got answers for them."

Trump faces reelection next year and has a strong track record of weaponizing Twitter to demolish the political careers of Republicans who oppose him. Retired GOP Sens. Jeff Flake of Arizona and Bob Corker of Tennessee left Congress following running battles with Trump, and South Carolina Rep. Mark Sanford lost a party primary last year after running afoul of him.

"If you cross Trump, you're a short-timer when it comes to politics," said John Feehery, a GOP consultant and former House leadership aide.

In contrast, several House Republicans who opposed at least one Clinton impeachment article saw their political careers prosper. They include John Thune of South Dakota, now the No. 2 Senate GOP leader; John Kasich, who became a two-term Ohio governor and challenged Trump for the 2016 presidential nomination; and current Sens. Rob Portman of Ohio and Richard Burr of North Carolina.

Sanford rose to South Carolina governor, but abandoned the job after admitting to an extramarital affair. He returned to the House but was defeated after clashing with Trump.

Clinton's impeachment came four years after Republicans led by Rep. Newt Gingrich of Georgia captured House control for the first time in four decades.

Gingrich became speaker and embraced aggressive confrontations with Democrats. That culminated in the House impeachment of Clinton, which the GOP-led Senate later rejecting.

But even the Gingrich era's battles were tamer than today's fights, with Clinton's impeachment a case in point.

Back then, each party had scores of moderate lawmakers who would cross party lines on issues such as abortion, taxes and spending. Those numbers have dwindled dramatically, especially among House Republicans. Only three come from districts that Democrat Hillary Clinton carried in the 2016 presidential election. Thirty-one Democrats represent Trump-won districts, and they are their party's most nervous members about impeachment.

The calendar of both impeachment votes is another factor.

The House's Clinton impeachment votes came a month after congressional elections, giving incumbents two years — a lifetime in politics — until they next faced voters.

This year's Trump impeachment votes will come as the 2020 primary season is about to begin, putting recalcitrant Republicans at risk of facing Trump-backed primary challengers.

Reparations mark new front for US colleges tied to slavery

By CAROLYN THOMPSON Associated Press

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP) — The promise of reparations to atone for historical ties to slavery has opened new territory in a reckoning at U.S. colleges, which until now have responded with monuments, building name changes and public apologies.

Georgetown University and two theological seminaries have announced funding commitments to benefit descendants of the enslaved people who were sold or toiled to benefit the institutions.

While no other schools have gone so far, the advantages that institutions received from the slavery economy are receiving new attention as Democratic presidential candidates talk about tax credits and other subsidies that nudge the idea of reparations toward the mainstream.

The country has been discussing reparations in one way or another since slavery officially ended in 1865. This year marks the 400th anniversary of the arrival of the first slave, launching the violence afflicted on black people to prop up the Southern economy.

University of Buffalo senior Jeffrey Clinton said he thinks campuses should acknowledge historical ties to slavery but that the federal government should take the lead on an issue that reaches well beyond higher education.

"It doesn't have to be trillions of dollars ... but at least address the inequities and attack the racial

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wealth gap between African Americans and white Americans and really everybody else, because this is an American-made institution. We didn't immigrate here," said Clinton, a descendant of slaves who lives in Bay Shore, New York.

A majority of Georgetown undergraduates voted in April for a nonbinding referendum to pay a \$27.20-per-semester "Reconciliation Contribution" toward projects in underprivileged communities that are home to some descendants of 272 slaves who were sold in 1838 to help pay off the school's debts.

Georgetown President John DeGioia responded in October with plans instead for a university-led initiative, with the goal of raising about \$400,000 from donors, rather than students, to support projects like health clinics and schools in those same communities.

Elsewhere, discussions of reparations have been raised by individual professors, like at the University of Alabama, or by graduate students and community members, like at the University of Chicago.

At least 56 universities have joined a University of Virginia-led consortium, Universities Studying Slavery, to explore their ties to slavery and share research and strategies.

In recent years, some schools, like Yale University, have removed the names of slavery supporters from buildings. New monuments have gone up elsewhere, including Brown University's Slavery Memorial sculpture — a partially buried ball and chain — and the Memorial to Enslaved Laborers under construction at the University of Virginia.

"It's a very diffused kind of set of things happening around the nation," said Guy Emerson Mount, an associate professor of African American history at Auburn University. "It's really important to pay attention to what each of these are doing" because they could offer learning opportunities and inform national discussions on reparations.

Virginia Theological Seminary in September announced a \$1.7 million endowment fund in recognition of slaves who worked there. It said annual allocations would go toward supporting African American clergy in the Episcopal church and programs that promote justice and inclusion.

The Princeton Theological Seminary in New Jersey followed with a \$27.6 million endowment after a historical audit revealed that some founders used slave labor.

"We did not want to shy away from the uncomfortable part of our history and the difficult conversations that revealing the truth would produce," seminary President M. Craig Barnes said in October.

In an October letter to Harvard University's president, Antigua and Barbuda's prime minister noted the developments at Georgetown and the seminaries and asked the Ivy League school to consider how it could make amends for the oppression of Antiguan slaves by a plantation owner whose gift endowed a law professorship in 1815. Harvard's president wrote back that the school is determined to further explore its historical ties to slavery.

Harvard in 2016 removed a slave owner's family crest from the law school seal and dedicated a plaque to four slaves who lived and worked on campus.

At the University of Buffalo, some have urged the public school to consider the responsibility it bears having been founded by the 13th U.S. president, Millard Fillmore, who signed the Fugitive Slave Act to help slave owners reclaim runaways. Students have not formally raised the idea of reparations, according to a school spokesman, but they led a discussion on the topic as part of Black Solidarity Week last month.

William Darity, a Duke University public policy professor and an expert on reparations, said the voices of college students have helped bring attention to reparations in a way that hasn't been seen since Reconstruction.

But he has warily watched what he sees as a piecemeal approach to an issue he believes merits a congressional response.

"I don't want anybody to be under the impression that these constitute comprehensive reparations," Darity said.

Supporting a reparations program for all black descendants of American slaves "would be the more courageous act," he said.

Few Americans support reparations, according to a recent Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs

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Research poll. It showed that only 29% say the government should pay cash reparations to descendants of enslaved black people.

University of Buffalo associate professor Keith Griffler, who specializes in African and African American studies, said he sees the cusp of a movement on college campuses.

"And it's probably not surprising that some of the wealthier private institutions have been the first to take those kinds of steps, because public universities still have their funding issues.

"The conversations, just acknowledging these kinds of things," Griffler said, "I think would go a long way toward making students feel that at least their voices are being heard."

Associated Press writer Martha Waggoner in Raleigh, N.C., contributed to this report.

Shooting shows New Jersey's gun laws aren't stopping imports

By MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

TRENTON, N.J. (AP) — Officials from states with strong gun restrictions have called for stricter firearm control in places with weaker laws to thwart traffickers, but the fatal attack on a Jewish market in New Jersey shows how fruitless those efforts can be.

Three civilians and a police officer were gunned down Tuesday by two killers with anti-Semitic and anti-law enforcement beliefs, the state's attorney general said.

The attackers carried five firearms and a pipe bomb in the U-Haul van they drove to the Jersey City Jewish market before opening fire, officials said. Two of the weapons used by David Anderson, 47, and Francine Graham, 50, were bought by Graham in Ohio last year, police said. It's unknown where they got the three other guns.

New Jersey is among the states with the toughest gun restrictions in the country, and in the past two years, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy has signed over a half-dozen new restrictions into law, including a lower bullet limit for gun magazines and a red flag law.

He's also made a priority of highlighting the so-called iron pipeline of firearms from other states — particularly along the Interstate 95 corridor. Murphy, for example, is requiring state police to publish data monthly on guns recovered from crimes. The data shows nearly 80% of so-called crime guns are from out of state.

Murphy says it's important to "name and shame" states with weaker gun laws that effectively import weapons into New Jersey. And in California, its Democratic governor and attorney general this year both criticized the continued ability to bring in illegal firearms from other states despite California's strict gun laws.

For years, Chicago officials have complained that street violence often comes from the muzzles of guns sold in states with less-stringent laws.

Officials there and elsewhere have renewed demands for gun control at the federal level.

"It keeps happening, over and over and over again, on their damn watch," California Democratic Gov. Gavin Newsom said of federal politicians. "I can't put borders up in a neighboring state where you can buy this damn stuff legally."

Federal legislation is the missing factor, agreed Murphy's top gun adviser.

"If we're being honest, New Jersey is not an oasis and that's why it's extraordinarily frustrating," said Bill Castner. "We will continue to push and identify the most aggressive actions, but without a federal solution, it's extraordinarily challenging."

Shannon Watts, the founder of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America, said her group is pressing ahead with state level gun control because of the political headwinds in Washington.

"What we have to do until we have the right president and Congress is go state by state," Watts said in an interview. "That's what we have to do now because of the political makeup. Every state is only as safe as the closest state with the weakest gun laws."

Second Amendment advocates, though, push back on the need for tougher state and national laws. Scott Bach, the executive director of the New Jersey Association of Rifle and Pistol Clubs, an affiliate of

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the NRA, invoked a common criticism of tougher restrictions: criminals break laws, they don't follow them. "Criminals laugh at gun regulations — the only thing they understand is severe punishment for actual gun crime," Bach said.

Officials are still investigating the Jersey City attack and have yet to release details about how the deceased attackers obtained their weapons.

AP writer Don Thompson in Sacramento, California, contributed to this report.

China welcomes preliminary deal in trade war it blames on US

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China expressed cautious optimism Saturday about a first-step trade agreement that dials down a trade war it blames the U.S. for starting.

Chinese experts and news media joined government officials in saying the deal would reduce uncertainty for companies, at least in the short term. They remained cautious, saying both sides will have to show a willingness to compromise to resolve the more fundamental differences between them.

"It at least stabilizes the situation and lays a foundation for the next round of trade talks or canceling additional tariffs in the future," said Tu Xinquan, a professor at the University of International Business and Economics in Beijing. "I cannot predict what achievement can be made during the future talks."

The two countries announced a "Phase 1" agreement Friday under which the U.S. will reduce tariffs and China will buy more U.S. farm products. Chinese officials said the nine-chapter text, which includes intellectual property, technology transfer, financial services and dispute settlement, has to undergo legal and translation review before it can be signed.

At a late night news conference in Beijing, timed to coincide with the U.S. morning, the officials said the United States would begin phasing out tariffs on Chinese imports, rather than continue to raise them. The deal was announced just two days before higher tariffs were set to kick in. China would make similar tariff cuts, the officials said, but they gave no details.

China portrayed the agreement as in line with the opening up of its economy and the deepening of its economic reforms. Increased imports of high-quality products from the United States and elsewhere will "meet the growing needs of the people for a better life," said Wang Shouwen, a deputy commerce minister and trade negotiator.

Bai Ming, an economic expert described as being close to the commerce ministry, told the state-owned Global Times newspaper that the U.S. tariff cuts demonstrate a positive attitude.

"They are not showing enough of it, but it's an improvement," he was quoted as saying.

In a separate piece, the Global Times called the agreement a new beginning. It pointed to stock market gains in recent days as word of a possible deal emerged. The dispute between the world's two largest economies had rattled markets and depressed global growth.

"China and the U.S. have been locked in a trade war for about 20 months and neither side could overwhelm the other to recklessly impose its own will on the other," said the newspaper, which is known for its nationalistic views.

It added, though, that both countries are capable of prolonging the trade war, and that resolving their differences will require patient negotiations.

"Rome was not built in a day," it wrote.

Associated Press researcher Henry Hou contributed to this report.

US finally giving boot to official foot measurement

By **SETH BORENSTEIN** AP Science Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Change is afoot for the official measuring stick used to size up big places in America. The reason? There are actually two different definitions of the 12-inch measurement known as a foot. Some land surveyors use what's known as the U.S. survey foot. Others use the definition that's more accepted by the broader world: the international foot.

The difference between them is so tiny that you can't see it with the naked eye on a 12-inch ruler. But over big distances, it matters. So, to reduce the chance for errors and confusion, the federal government has announced it's finally giving the boot to the survey foot.

The international foot is the smaller one — adding about an eighth of an inch of difference when measuring a mile. That means the United States is 28.3 feet wider when measured using the international foot instead of the survey foot.

The change started in 1959, when the federal government mandated that everyone use the international foot but allowed surveyors to keep to the old U.S. survey foot for a while. That temporary reprieve has lasted 60 years, but it will finally end in 2022, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and the National Institute of Standards and Technology announced in October.

Surveyors in 40 U.S. states and territories still use the larger U.S. foot. The rest use the smaller international one.

"We have chaos," says Michael Dennis, a project manager for NOAA's National Geodetic Survey. Geodetics is surveying that takes into account the curve of the Earth. "This is a mess."

The small difference may not seem like much, but it caused trouble in planning for high speed rail in California, Dennis said. It also created a mess for bridge work between Oregon, which uses the international foot, and Washington, which uses the U.S. one, he said.

Dennis also relayed a horror story one surveyor sent him: A contractor from a state that uses the U.S. foot planned a building in the glide path of a major airport in a state that uses the international foot. The confusion over the two different feet caused delays, extra cost and redesign of the building to be one floor shorter. (Dennis wouldn't identify the airport.)

"It's embarrassing that we even had this going on for 60 years," Dennis says. "This whole thing is ridiculous."

Dennis knows some will squawk.

The U.S. foot "sounds very patriotic, very American," he said in a webinar. "Then there's the word 'international foot,' which sounds kind of new world order, U.N.-sanctioned, maybe with a whiff of socialism."

But it makes sense to be using the same measuring stick as the rest of the world to save time and eliminate embarrassing errors, he says.

Those who fear this is a slippery slope leading to the metric system are worrying a century too late, NIST metric coordinator Elizabeth Benham says. Since 1893, the official definition of a foot is based on the meter.

"We are metric," Dennis says. "The foot is subservient to the meter. That's the way it is."

The issue is how the two different feet are defined.

In 1893, the U.S. government defined a foot as 1,200 meters divided by 3,937. Plug those numbers into a calculator and you get 0.3048006 meters. Those last three digits (and it goes on even longer if you want to be technical) are important. Don't forget them.

In 1933, the international foot was invented. It was simpler: 0.3048 meters, exactly. Those last three digits just get eliminated.

But those digits kept bedeviling engineers. So in 1959, the U.S. government started the international switch and it will finish the job in 2022.

When it finally happens, the U.S. foot will be relegated to history, NIST's Benham says, "just like a cubit."

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears.

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Ex-Sudan strongman al-Bashir gets 2 years for corruption

By NADIR AHMED and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — A court in Sudan convicted former President Omar al-Bashir of money laundering and corruption on Saturday, sentencing him to two years in a minimum security lockup.

That's the first verdict in a series of legal proceedings against al-Bashir, who is also wanted by the International Criminal Court on charges of war crimes and genocide linked to the Darfur conflict in the 2000s.

The verdict comes a year after Sudanese protesters erupted in revolt against al-Bashir's authoritarian rule. During his three decades in power, Sudan landed on the U.S. list for sponsoring terrorism, and the country's economy was battered by years of mismanagement and American sanctions.

Al-Bashir has been in custody since April, when Sudan's military ousted him after months of nationwide protests. The uprising eventually forced the military into a power-sharing agreement with civilians.

Sudan's military has said it would not extradite him to the ICC. The country's military-civilian transitional government has not indicated whether they will hand him over to the The Hague.

The Sudanese Professionals' Association, which was the backbone of the protest movement, welcomed Saturday's verdict as a "moral and political conviction" against the former president and his regime.

Under Sudanese law, al-Bashir, 75, will be sent to a state-run lockup for elderly people who are convicted of crimes not punishable with death. But he will remain in jail amid an ongoing trial on separate charges regarding the killing of protesters in the months prior to his ouster.

The former strongman appeared in the defendant's cage on Saturday wearing a traditional white robe and turban. He had arrived in a white Land Cruiser SUV amid tight security at the Judicial and Legal Science Institute in the capital, Khartoum.

As the verdict was read, a handful of al-Bashir's supporters briefly disrupted the proceedings, shouting Islamist slogans before being pushed out of the courtroom by security forces.

Hundreds of al-Bashir's supporters also protested near the presidential palace in Khartoum, where security forces closed off access to the palace and the military's headquarters.

Defense lawyer Mohammed al-Hassan said Saturday's verdict was expected and that an appeal would be filed before a higher court, adding that the ex-president's "morale is high."

Al-Hassan also said security forces detained al-Bashir's second wife, Widad Babakr, last week for questioning about her alleged bank accounts and assets. That's part of a wider corruption-related investigation into the al-Bashir family's wealth. Babakr had been under house arrest in Khartoum since al-Bashir's overthrow.

Prosecutors had questioned al-Bashir last week over his role in the Islamist-backed military coup which brought him to power in 1989.

Anti-government demonstrations erupted last December over steep price rises and shortages, but soon shifted to calls for al-Bashir to step down. Security forces responded with a fierce crackdown that killed dozens of protesters in the months prior to his ouster and arrest.

Millions of U.S. dollars, euros and Sudanese pounds were later seized in al-Bashir's home.

In August, al-Bashir told the court he had received through his office manager \$25 million from Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

He said the crown prince did not want to reveal that he was the source of the funds, so he did not deposit the money in the country's central bank.

He said the money was being used for donations not for his own benefit. Al-Bashir however did not provide documents or records for the spending.

Magdy reported from Cairo.

Cries of abuse in Catholic Church start to be heard in Japan

By YURI KAGEYAMA Associated Press

TOKYO (AP) — During Pope Francis' recent visit to Japan, Harumi Suzuki stood where his motorcade passed by holding a sign that read: "I am a survivor."

Katsumi Takenaka stood at another spot, on another day, holding up his banner that read, "Catholic child sexual abuse in Japan, too."

The two are among a handful of people who have gone public as survivors of Catholic clergy sexual abuse in Japan, where values of conformity and harmony have resulted in a strong code of silence.

But as in other parts of the world, from Pennsylvania to Chile, Takenaka and Suzuki are starting to feel less alone as other victims have come forward despite the ostracism they and their family members often face for speaking out.

Their public denunciation is all the more remarkable, given Catholics make up less than 0.5% of Japan's population. To date, the global abuse scandal has concentrated on heavily Catholic countries, such as Ireland, the U.S. and now, many countries in Latin America.

All of which could explain why the Catholic hierarchy in Japan has been slow to respond to the scandal, which involves not only children being sexually abused but adults in spiritual direction — an increasingly common phenomenon being denounced in the #MeToo era.

In a recent case, police were investigating allegations by a woman in Nagasaki, the region with the greatest concentration of Catholics in Japan, that a priest touched her inappropriately last year.

Japanese media reports said the woman had been hospitalized for PTSD. Police confirmed an investigation was underway but the church declined to provide details, citing privacy concerns.

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan launched a nationwide investigation into sexual abuse of women and children this year, responding to the Vatican's demand for an urgent response to the global crisis.

The results haven't been disclosed, and it's unclear when they might be ready. Similar studies have been carried out by the U.S., German and Dutch churches, with the findings made public, and government-mandated inquiries have devastated the church's credibility in countries like Australia and Ireland.

The Japanese bishops' conference has said it carried out various investigations since 2002, but the names of the accused, the nature of the allegations or any other details have never been released.

Broadcaster Japan News Network said 21 cases were found in the latest investigation. The conference declined to confirm that number. It's unclear whether that includes decades-old cases like Takenaka's and Suzuki's.

In a rare case of the church taking action, Takenaka received a public apology earlier this year from Nagasaki Archbishop Joseph Mitsuaki Takami for the sexual abuse he suffered as a child at the Salesian Boys' Home in Tokyo, where he was placed after his parents' divorce.

"I think his apology was sincere in his own way. But the response has lacked a sense of urgency, and there is no sign they will take any real action," Takenaka told The Associated Press.

Takenaka's alleged perpetrator was a German priest, who he said initially took off the boy's clothes to examine bruises from beatings he suffered from other boys at the home. The priest's examinations escalated to fondling and other sexual acts, which went on for months until the priest was transferred, he said. He reported that the priest told him he would go straight to hell if he told anyone, and gave him candy and foreign stamps.

Takenaka identified his abuser as the late Rev. Thomas Manhard. The Salesians in Munich confirmed Manhard had worked in Japan from 1934-1985, when he returned to Germany. He died a year later. Spokeswoman Katharina Hennecke said the order had no information in its records about allegations against him.

Takenaka's account was confirmed by the Rev. Hiroshi Tamura, who runs the Salesian Boys' Home and said he was conferring with the Japanese bishops' conference to work out a response to his claim.

Takenaka, a civil servant in his 60s, said the church needs to be proactive in disclosing details about the abuse it has uncovered, identifying offending clergy and how they were penalized. He said an outside

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investigation is needed and a forum for victims to come together.

"The victims are isolated," Takenaka said. "No one knows for sure if the abuse is still going on."

Pope Francis has emphasized the global nature of the abuse problem, summoning bishops conference leaders from around the world to the Vatican this past February and passing a new law requiring all cases be reported to church authorities.

But he didn't refer to the issue during his trip to Japan, focusing instead on messages on nuclear weapons and nuclear disasters.

Both Takenaka and Suzuki said they had relayed requests to meet with Francis but got no answers.

"I am filled with sadness and I am filled with outrage," said Suzuki, who wept as she told her story of being sexually assaulted by a Japanese priest in northeastern Japan in 1977.

Suzuki represents the Japan section of the American organization SNAP, or the Survivors Network of those Abused by Priests, which supports victims of religious authorities.

"I want my dignity back, and I felt I had to act," she said.

She said a few other victims in Japan have contacted her. Takenaka and Suzuki talked by phone for the first time recently, although they have yet to meet.

Suzuki, a nurse, says she was assaulted when she went to a priest for help about the domestic violence she was suffering at the hands of her husband, and other personal problems.

She says she had no expectation the priest would try to have sex with her, and wasn't sure she even had a choice. She remembered he whispered into her ear, "You won't regret this?" and then lifted her up in his arms and carried her upstairs to a bed.

"I could not run away or scream," she said, adding that the naked priest was on top of her before she really knew what was happening.

"I did not ask for sex," she said, adding that she has suffered flashbacks, depression, as well as blackouts about how even she got home that day.

Documents seen by The Associated Press show the Sendai diocese carried out an investigation by a third party of lawyers into her case in 2016.

The investigation determined the sexual act likely did happen but decided no criminal or civil responsibility could be pursued, given the passage of time and that the priest may have thought the act was consensual.

Suzuki denies she consented, and said she remains so terrified she can't go into a church anymore.

"My whole world was turned upside down," she said.

Sendai Bishop Martin Testuo Hiraga, who has frequently met with Suzuki, said a solution was not easy. He said the priest denied there was any sex between them at all.

"I am at a loss as to what to do," he said.

The Catholic hierarchy around the world has largely ignored the problem of adults — seminarians, nuns and laypeople — who are sexually abused by clergy. Yet there is a large body of research that shows that adults can be sexually victimized by clergy because of the power imbalance in the relationship.

A priest can easily take advantage of a parishioner during spiritual direction or in times of personal crisis, such as when a woman has come for help because she is being abused by her husband, since she is in a vulnerable state, these experts say.

The late Diana Garland of Baylor University has argued that women often come to realize they were victims of abusive clergy only when they are asked if the sex would have happened if the pastor was her neighbor. "Overwhelmingly the answer is 'no,'" Garland wrote in 2006. "As she says no, she begins to face the truth that he had power and authority that made meaningful consent impossible for her."

In addition to Takenaka and Suzuki, several victims have spoken out against the religious brothers at St. Mary's International School, a prestigious all-boys parochial school in Tokyo, alleging they were raped or molested decades ago.

The school carried out an investigation, starting in 2014, and denies any abuse is ongoing. There have been no criminal or civil cases at St. Mary's.

Takenaka said he decided to confront the problem of abuse in the Japanese church, demanding answers from the hierarchy and helping sexual abuse victims precisely because he still believes in God.

If he became a bigger person, his emotional scars would seem small in comparison, he said. But he remembered during Christmas Eve Mass last year, he asked in his prayers: "On which side is God's justice on?"

Follow Yuri Kageyama on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/yurikageyama>

AP Exclusive: China tightens up on info after Xinjiang leaks

By The Associated Press undefined

The Xinjiang regional government in China's far west is deleting data, destroying documents, tightening controls on information and has held high-level meetings in response to leaks of classified papers on its mass detention camps for Uighurs and other predominantly Muslim minorities, according to four people in contact with government employees there.

Top officials deliberated how to respond to the leaks in meetings at the Chinese Communist Party's regional headquarters in Urumqi, Xinjiang's capital, some of the people said. They spoke on condition of anonymity because of fears of retribution against themselves, family members and the government workers.

The meetings began days after The New York Times published last month a cache of internal speeches on Xinjiang by top leaders including Chinese President Xi Jinping. They continued after the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists worked with news organizations around the world including The Associated Press to publish secret guidelines for operating detention centers and instructions on how to use technology to target people.

The Chinese government has long struggled with its 11-million-strong Uighur population, an ethnic Turkic minority native to Xinjiang, and in recent years has detained 1 million or more Uighurs and other minorities in the camps.

Xinjiang officials and the Chinese foreign ministry have not directly denied the authenticity of the documents, though Urumqi Communist Party chief Xu Hairong called reports on the leaks "malicious smears and distortions."

The Xinjiang government did not respond to a fax for comment on the arrests, the tightened restrictions on information and other measures responding to the leaks. The Chinese Foreign Ministry did not have an immediate comment.

Xinjiang's government had already mandated stricter controls on information in October, before the news reports, according to three of the people, all Uighurs outside Xinjiang.

They include orders for community-level officials to burn paper forms containing sensitive personal details on residents in their area such as their detention status, and for various state offices to throw away computers, tighten management of classified information, and ensure all information related to the camps is now stored on databases disconnected from the internet in special, restricted-access rooms to bar hackers, the Uighurs said.

"They became much more serious about the transfer of information," one said.

Publication of the classified documents prompted the central government in Beijing to put more pressure on Xinjiang officials, several of the Uighurs said.

Restrictions on information appear to be tightening further. Some university teachers and district-level workers in Urumqi have been ordered to clean out sensitive data on their computers, phones and cloud storage, and to delete work-related social media groups, according to one Uighur with direct knowledge of the situation.

In other cases, the state appears to be confiscating evidence of detentions. Another Uighur who had been detained in Xinjiang years before said his ex-wife called him two weeks ago and begged him to send his release papers to her, saying eight officers had come to her home to search for the papers, then threatened she'd be jailed for life if she couldn't produce the papers.

"It's an old matter, and they've know I've been abroad for a long time," he said. "The fact that they suddenly want this now must mean the pressure on them is very high."

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Some government workers have been rounded up as the state investigates the source of the leaks. In one case an entire family in civil service was arrested. Abduweli Ayup, a Uighur linguist in exile, said his wife's relatives in Xinjiang – including her parents, siblings, and in-laws – were detained shortly after the leaks were published, although Ayup said they had no relation to the leaks as far as he was aware. Some people in touch with relatives outside China were also investigated and seized, Ayup said.

It is unknown how many have been detained since the leaks.

Earlier this week, a Uighur woman in the Netherlands told a Dutch daily, *de Volkskrant*, that she was the source of the documents published by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists. The woman, Asiye Abdulaheb, said that after she posted one page on social media in June, Chinese state agents sent her death threats and tried to recruit her ex-husband to spy on her.

The leaked documents lay out the Chinese government's deliberate strategy to lock up ethnic minorities even before they commit a crime, and to rewire their thoughts and the language they speak. They reveal that facilities Beijing calls "vocational training schools" are forced ideological and behavioral re-education centers run in secret.

The papers also show how Beijing is pioneering a new form of social control using data and artificial intelligence. Drawing on data collected by mass surveillance technology, computers issued the names of tens of thousands of people for interrogation or detention in just one week.

The leaks come at a delicate time in relations between Washington and Beijing, amid ongoing negotiations to end a trade war and U.S. concerns about the situation in Hong Kong, a semi-autonomous Chinese territory where police have clashed with pro-democracy protesters.

Last week, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved the Uighur Human Rights Policy Act, aimed at pressuring China over the mass detentions in Xinjiang. Beijing swiftly denounced the bill as foreign meddling. State media reported that the Chinese government was considering retaliatory measures including visa bans on U.S. officials.

Iowa Democrats worry 'Medicare for All' hurts key industry

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

DES MOINES, Iowa (AP) — Kim Motl doesn't work in the health insurance industry. But her friends and neighbors do. So when she saw Sen. Elizabeth Warren recently in Fort Dodge, Iowa, Motl pressed the Democratic presidential candidate about her "Medicare for All" plan, which would replace private insurance with a government-run system.

"What about the little guys that work in the insurance business, that support our communities? The secretary that works for them, but maybe supports their family, what happens to them?" the 64-year-old housing advocate asked the senator.

"What happens to all of those people who lose their jobs?" Motl asked in a later interview.

Warren reassured her that jobs would not be lost because of her plan. But the exchange is a reminder that while railing against the insurance industry can score points with the progressive Democratic base, it can also alienate potential supporters in Iowa, where voters will usher in the presidential primary in less than two months.

Nearly 17,000 Iowans are either directly employed by health insurance companies or employed in related jobs, according to data collected by America's Health Insurance Plans, an industry advocacy group. Des Moines, the seat of the state's most Democratic county, is known as one of America's insurance capitals partly because of the high number of health insurance companies and jobs in the metro area. Wellmark Blue Cross Blue Shield's health insurance headquarters employs roughly 1,700 in the metro area, and that's just one of the 16 health insurance companies domiciled in Iowa, according to the Iowa Insurance Division.

For many Iowans, the Medicare for All debate is personal, and the prospect of losing a job could influence whom they support in the Feb. 3 caucuses.

Tamyra Harrison, vice-chair of the East Polk Democrats, says she has heard worries at her local Democratic meetings about "the effect it would have on people that work in the insurance industry, and those

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that have small businesses in the area.”

“They’re concerned about the repercussions on people living here that maybe the Democrats aren’t thinking of” when they’re talking about eliminating private insurance, she said.

The Democrats’ health care plans vary widely in terms of the speed and scope with which they would affect health care industry jobs, but experts say every plan marks a substantial reconfiguring of one of the country’s biggest industry and thus all would affect thousands of jobs nationwide.

Some, including Warren and Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, have called for replacing private insurance with a government plan. Asked about this last month in Iowa, Warren said, “Some of the people currently working in health insurance will work in other parts of insurance — in life insurance, in auto insurance, in car insurance,” or for the new government-run system. She also cited five years of “transition support” for displaced workers built into the plan.

Sanders has previously argued that his plan would see “all kinds of jobs opened up in health care,” and his bill includes a fund to help retrain and transition private insurance workers out of their current jobs.

Former Vice President Joe Biden and Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana, would leave room for private insurers, but also include a public option, which they have acknowledged could ultimately put insurance companies out of business. Sen. Cory Booker of New Jersey is trying to walk a line on the issue, having signed onto Sanders’ Medicare for All bill in the Senate but on the campaign trail shied away from eliminating private insurance entirely.

Even those who say they would keep private insurance companies face risks. Buttigieg revealed this week that he worked for Blue Cross Blue Shield in Michigan during his time as a consultant at McKinsey & Co. He said he “doubts” his work contributed to layoffs the company later announced and has instead sought to highlight the impact of his opponents’ plans.

“There are some voices in the Democratic primary right now who are calling for a policy that would eliminate the job of every single American working at every single insurance company in the country,” he said.

Economists say the jobs impact of any shift away from private health care would be felt nationwide by hundreds of thousands of Americans. It’s not just jobs at private insurance companies that could be affected; those working on processing insurance claims at hospitals and other administrative health care jobs could be reduced as well.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2018, nearly 386,000 Americans were employed by health and medical insurance carriers — but some analysts found the number of jobs lost from eliminating private insurance could be much higher. Economists at the University of Michigan found in an analysis of Sanders’ Medicare for All bill that the jobs of nearly 747,000 health insurance industry workers, and an additional 1.06 million health insurance administrative staffers, would no longer be needed if Medicare for All became law.

In Iowa, however, the issue could be particularly problematic.

Around Des Moines, “you can’t swing a dead cat without finding someone who works at an insurance provider or a company,” said Mary McAdams, chair of the Ankeny Area Democrats. She said she believes Democrats in her area aren’t as concerned about what would happen to their jobs if private insurance were eliminated because they don’t have much allegiance to their companies to begin with.

“They know full well these companies would drop them like a habit,” she said.

The economic repercussions of eliminating private insurance jobs could go beyond simply the loss of local jobs, as Paula Dierenfield, a Republican lawyer and the executive director of the Federation of Iowa Insurers, points out.

“This is an industry that employs thousands of employees in high-quality jobs,” she said. “All of those employees pay income taxes, sales taxes, property taxes, and the companies that they work for also pay millions in premium taxes, as well as property taxes. So it would have a significant impact on the Iowa economy generally as well as here in the Des Moines metro area.”

The peripheral effects of eliminating insurance jobs worry Marcia Wannamaker, a real estate agent from West Des Moines who raised her concerns about the fate of private insurance during a recent question-and-answer session with Biden.

“It’s really going to cut our jobs,” Wannamaker said.

She later noted in an interview that if the private insurance industry shrinks, people working for such companies would lose their jobs.

"Then that trickles down to the housing. They're going to have to move. I just think it's going to be a disaster," she said. "When you sell real estate, these people buy homes. It's just part of how the Iowa — and especially in Des Moines, the economy works."

'Wild week' as Washington works amid impeachment

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump and House Speaker Nancy Pelosi don't see eye-to-eye on much these days, but in the throes of impeachment, they're in lockstep on the desire to close out the year by checking off items on their to-do lists.

As the uncertain politics of the effort to remove Trump from office collide with critical year-end legislative deadlines, Washington, for the first time in recent memory, appears intent on demonstrating its capacity to multitask. Lawmakers and White House officials are eager to project the image that they've been focused on anything but the polarizing proceedings that are increasingly consuming their days and nights.

Even President Donald Trump, no stranger to unpredictability and drama, could only marvel at the week of Washington whiplash.

"This has been a wild week," he said Friday morning as he played host to the president of Paraguay in the Oval Office.

On Friday, as the House Judiciary Committee was taking the historic step of passing articles of impeachment against the president. Trump had counter-programming at the ready, announcing new progress on long-delayed negotiations with China to tame an 18-month trade war.

"Take note @SpeakerPelosi - this is what real leadership looks like," tweeted White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham, highlighting the "phase-one" deal.

It was far from the first split-screen moment of the week.

In the span of one hour Tuesday, Pelosi held a press conference to announce articles of impeachment against the president — then swiftly walked down the hall to announce a bipartisan deal to fulfill the president's top legislative priority of the year, the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement on trade.

A day later, as the House Judiciary Committee took up the impeachment articles, the full House passed a compromise defense spending bill that would provide federal employees with 12 weeks of paid parental leave, a priority of the president's daughter. The bill also would bring Trump's long-promised Space Force to life.

The incongruous moments reflect the unease on all sides in Washington about how the polarizing impeachment process will play out politically — and the fact that many voters across the country don't view impeachment as a high priority. So Democrats and the White House are going all-out to show they can do their day jobs despite the impeachment drama on TV.

Washington is set for more of those moments in the coming week, with the anticipated party-line impeachment vote Wednesday sandwiched between Tuesday's expected passage of a budget bill and Thursday's thumbs-up for the USMCA.

For Pelosi, the decision to give the president those victories appeared aimed at trying to protect her caucus against charges — featured prominently in GOP ads aimed at vulnerable Democrats — that their focus on impeachment has distracted from the bread-and-butter issues that voters care about. Democrats maintain that the issues they've made progress on are long-held priorities, like the new parental leave policy for federal employees and stronger labor and environmental protections in the USMCA.

"It's not a coincidence that the USMCA agreement was announced the same morning that the articles of impeachment were introduced," said Alex Conant, a Republican strategist and partner at Firehouse Strategies, which has been polling how impeachment is playing in crucial battleground states. "I think congressional Democrats in swing districts want to be able to show their constituents that they've done more than just impeach the president."

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Conant said he expects to see a concerted effort by moderate Democrats to find areas where they can work with Trump, even while they're impeaching him.

"It's counter-intuitive, but impeachment may actually help the president's legislative agenda," he said.

Pelosi tied the flurry of legislative activity amid impeachment to the calendar, telling reporters: "It's just that as we get to the end of a session, there have to be some decisions made. The timetable for impeachment is the timetable of the committees and that came to an end with a hearing yesterday."

The spurt of bipartisan legislating hasn't necessarily led to any cooling of political tempers.

At the White House, Trump aides highlighted what they called a "week of action," aiming to use it as a cudgel against Democrats whom they have accused of doing nothing besides impeachment. Trump's campaign is already planning to include the developments in new ads promoting the president making good on his 2016 campaign promises while Democrats seek his removal.

"One can make the argument that President Trump has had the best seven-day run of his presidency despite having two articles of impeachment dropped on him, and that is nothing short of remarkable," said Jason Miller, a staunch supporter of the president who served as communications director of his 2016 campaign.

The Trump narrative conveniently leaves out Democrats' significant roles in securing many of the week's achievements.

"As we have said since the Do-Nothing Democrats started this kangaroo court, President Donald J. Trump remains focused on the work of the American people, and this week's unprecedented accomplishments prove that," said White House spokesman Judd Deere.

Conant said the White House was intent on making the argument that "you shouldn't impeach a president who is doing a good job."

Icy silence, frayed connections: Impeachment takes a toll

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The most raucous committee in Congress sat stone-faced, barely speaking.

One by one, the members around the Judiciary Committee dais voted on the articles of impeachment against President Donald Trump. Then they bolted for the doors and the airports, in more than one case without a word.

The all-business iciness during those eight gavel-to-gavel minutes reflected the gravity of advancing articles of impeachment to the House floor for only the third time in American history. But it also told much of the story about impeachment's toll on Congress, Washington and beyond.

Ever since Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukraine's president sparked official proceedings against the president, impeachment has been a force that's bent congressional business around it, with severe strain.

No one feels sorry for Congress, and its members generally don't feel sorry for themselves. But the wear-and-tear of impeachment is becoming clear in the emotional exchanges and frayed relationships left in its wake.

"I have a problem with this whole damn place. If you can figure out an exit strategy for me I'd appreciate that," said Rep. Ken Buck, R-Colo., a member of the Judiciary panel, on Friday. "This is crazy. The whole thing is crazy," he added of impeachment. "It will take some time to get over."

Tempers are short. Members show signs of being sick of each other, like any colleagues who spend too much time together. But they are operating under the glare of a global spotlight and the weight of history.

Trust, or what remained of it after years of obstruction and smashmouth Trump-era politics, appeared to be a casualty in the short-term.

Thursday's grueling 14-hour Judiciary Committee markup of the abuse and obstruction charges against Trump ignited the smoldering tension. There was no expectation that the articles would be substantially changed, but Trump's allies pushed for amendments, each of which took hours to consider. Democrats, meanwhile, did not want to take final votes too late for Americans to see.

Just before midnight, Chairman Jerrold Nadler announced that the committee would not be voting on

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the impeachment articles until Friday morning — and after he banged his gavel, the microphones were switched off. Livid, Republicans leapt to their feet, yelling “unbelievable” and “sneaky” and talking of a “kangaroo court.” Nadler walked out.

“Chairman Nadler’s integrity is zero. His staff is zero,” fumed ranking Republican Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia. “This chairman has made himself irrelevant.”

The personal stab at the powerful New York House veteran was unusual, as even the most mismatched pairs atop committees typically refrain from attacking each other in personal terms.

“I could feel it myself and I know the rest of us did,” said Rep. Madeleine Dean, a new member from Pennsylvania, in an interview Friday with The Associated Press. “That really was sort of the apex of weeks and months of emotional and mental and intellectual toll.”

It turns out that impeachment is not the Democratic morale-booster that some might have thought in the heady first days of the party’s House takeover this year, when Michigan Rep. Rashida Tlaib vowed to “impeach the motherf—er” on her first day in office.

One Democrat involved in the impeachment investigation was so dispirited by it all that he decided this term will be his last.

“The countless hours I have spent in the investigation of Russian election interference and the impeachment inquiry have rendered my soul weary,” said Rep. Denny Heck, D-Wash., in his retirement announcement Dec. 4. “At times, it is as though there are no rules or boundaries. ... Civility is out. Compromise is out. All or nothing is in.”

There’s a long way to go before knowing which party benefits and which pays for impeachment in the 2020 elections, let alone which fares better in the eyes of history. But trust — by Americans toward Congress — seems to be suffering. And it’s not clear the proceedings are changing minds. Recent polling shows that about half the country supports impeaching and removing Trump from office, fitting the pattern of a deeply polarized nation.

But the proceedings could be costly for both parties.

A plurality of Americans — 44 percent — said they had no trust at all in the House impeachment proceedings, according to a Monmouth University poll conducted in December.

The poll also found that about 6 in 10 Americans said Democrats in Congress are more interested in bringing down Trump than pursuing the facts. Likewise, about 6 in 10 said Republicans in Congress are more interested in defending Trump than pursuing the facts.

With the stakes so high, emotions are, too.

Dean, whose family has grown by two grandchildren since impeachment began in September, grew emotional Friday when she talked about the responsibility of weighing the president’s fate.

“I’ve been thinking about the broader horizon,” she said. The same week of Trump’s July phone call, she happened to talk on the floor of the House with Rep. Elijah Cummings of Maryland, the Oversight Committee Chairman who died in October.

Cummings, she said, reminded her that people will know she was here for what’s expected to be the third presidential impeachment in American history. “It will matter,” she said.

But it will not have come for free.

By the time Nadler gavelled the committee back into session Friday morning, the silences and swift proceedings suggested there was nothing left to say, let alone fight about.

Nadler sat down, pulled out his cellphone and turned it off. He gavelled in the meeting and launched votes on both articles. During the roll call, Rep. Pramila Jayapal, D-Wash., voted aye while holding up a pocket-sized copy of the Constitution. Collins delivered a scripted notice that he reserves the right to file dissenting views.

Nadler dropped the gavel. There was no celebrating or showboating from the Democrats.

“The House will act expeditiously,” he said. “Thank you.”

He took no questions.

Associated Press writers Andrew Taylor, Hannah Fingerhut and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

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

Justices to take up dispute over subpoenas for Trump records

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Supreme Court said Friday it will hear President Donald Trump's pleas to keep his tax, bank and financial records private, a major confrontation between the president and Congress that also could affect the 2020 presidential campaign.

Arguments will take place in late March, and the justices are poised to issue decisions in June as Trump is campaigning for a second term. Rulings against the president could result in the quick release of personal financial information that Trump has sought strenuously to keep private. The court also will decide whether the Manhattan district attorney can obtain eight years of Trump's tax returns as part of an ongoing criminal investigation.

The subpoenas are separate from the ongoing impeachment proceedings against Trump, headed for a vote in the full House next week. Indeed, it's almost certain the court won't hear the cases until after a Senate trial over whether to remove Trump has ended.

Trump sued to prevent banks and accounting firms from complying with subpoenas for his records from three committees of the House of Representatives and Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.

In three separate cases, he has so far lost at every step, but the records have not been turned over pending a final court ruling. Now it will be up to a court that includes two Trump appointees, Justices Neil Gorsuch and Brett Kavanaugh, to decide in a case with significant implications regarding a president's power to refuse a formal request from Congress.

In two earlier cases over presidential power, the justices acted unanimously in requiring President Richard Nixon to turn over White House tapes to the Watergate special prosecutor and in allowing a sexual harassment lawsuit against President Bill Clinton to go forward. In those cases, three Nixon appointees and two Clinton appointees, respectively, voted against the president who chose them for the high court. A fourth Nixon appointee, William Rehnquist, sat out the tapes case because he had worked closely as a Justice Department official with some of the Watergate conspirators whose upcoming trial spurred the subpoena for the Oval Office recordings.

In none of the cases are the subpoenas directed at Trump himself. Instead, House committees want records from Deutsche Bank and Capital One, as well as the Mazars USA accounting firm. Mazars also is the recipient of Vance's subpoena.

In each case, Vance and House Democrats have argued there is no compelling legal issue at stake, since they are seeking records from third parties, not Trump himself.

But Trump said in his appeals that the cases are the first time congressional and local criminal investigators have tried to pry free a president's records to investigate wrongdoing. "This is a case of firsts," Trump's lawyers told the justices about congressional demands for Trump's financial records from Mazars.

The Vance case represents the first time in American history that a "state or local prosecutor has launched a criminal investigation of the President," the lawyers wrote.

Appellate courts in Washington, D.C., and New York brushed aside the Trump arguments in decisions that focused on the subpoenas being addressed to third parties and asking for records of Trump's business and financial dealings as a private citizen, not as president.

Two congressional committees subpoenaed the bank documents as part their investigations into Trump and his businesses. Deutsche Bank has been one for the few banks willing to lend to Trump after a series of corporate bankruptcies and defaults starting in the early 1990s.

Vance and the House Oversight and Reform Committee sought records from Mazars concerning Trump and his businesses based on payments that Trump's former personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, arranged to

keep two women from airing their claims of affairs with Trump during the presidential race.

Boy, 13, arrested in killing of Barnard College freshman

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A 13-year-old boy was arrested Friday in the stabbing death of a Barnard College freshman who was approached in a park by as many as three youths as she ventured from her New York City campus on the eve of final exams.

The arrest of such a young suspect added another tragic element to the slaying of 18-year-old Tessa Majors, a case that has troubled city and campus leaders.

The boy was arrested on charges including felony murder, City Corporation Counsel James E. Johnson said in a statement. The teen appeared Friday in family court and is being held in a juvenile detention facility. He is due back in court Tuesday. Charges will not be formalized until a future court hearing.

Rodney Harrison, the New York Police Department's chief of detectives, said on Twitter that one arrest had been made in the killing and "this remains an active investigation."

At Friday's hearing, Detective Vincent Signoretti testified that the 13-year-old boy said his two friends grabbed Majors, put her in a chokehold and robbed her, The New York Times reported. The detective testified that the teen said he did not stab Majors — the boy watched his friend slash her with a knife and saw feathers flying out from her coat's stuffing.

The boy, whose name has not been made public, is among just a handful of people in their early teens to be charged with murder in the city in recent years. He will be tried as a juvenile delinquent in family court.

The teen's lawyer, Hannah Kaplan of the Legal Aid Society, said police didn't have evidence beyond the statement from her client, who she said hadn't been arrested before.

"There is no allegation my client touched the complainant in this case," Kaplan said. "He was merely present when this took place."

The attackers are all believed to attend a middle school near the park, police have said.

The president of Barnard College said Majors was stabbed during an armed robbery. Authorities on Thursday questioned two people who were later released, police said.

Majors, from Charlottesville, Virginia, played in a rock band in New York and had told an editor from a newspaper internship in high school that she planned to take journalism classes in college.

Flowers and candles were left at a makeshift campus memorial and her family said in a statement Friday that they "are devastated by the senseless loss of our beautiful and talented Tess."

Majors was walking in Manhattan's Morningside Park, which is located down a staircase from street level, just before 7 p.m. Wednesday when she was confronted and stabbed during a struggle, Chief of Detectives Rodney Harrison said.

She staggered up the stairway to a nearby street, where she was spotted by a campus security guard who called 911, Harrison said. Majors died at a hospital.

Investigators recovered a knife Thursday but were not certain whether it was connected to Majors' death. Police have since increased patrols around the park and campus, which is part of the Ivy League's Columbia University.

Mayor Bill de Blasio told WNYC Radio that he was "absolutely confident that any individuals involved in this terrible, heinous attack will be brought to justice and will be brought to justice quickly."

Under state law, the teen can only be tried as an adult if he is charged with intentional murder.

Juveniles convicted in New York state's family courts can be sent to detention facilities until they are 21 in many cases, and are often released after that.

It's increasingly rare for young teens to be charged with murder in New York City, where the homicide total has plunged to below 300 in recent years.

Last year, just two people 14 or younger were charged, according to police records: a 13-year-old girl in a Dec. 16, 2018, killing in Queens and a 14-year-old in the fatal Sept. 21, 2018, shooting of a 16-year-old boy in Brooklyn. Police suspect both killings were gang related.

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In the early 1990s, when the city averaged nearly 2,000 homicides a year, several dozen 13-year-olds faced murder charges.

Majors was killed just as the semester at all-women's Barnard College was winding down, with final exams set to begin Friday followed by a month break.

She sang and played bass guitar in the rock band Patient 0. After her first New York show in October, Majors wrote on Instagram: "Safe to say the first NYC show went well ;)"

Her Instagram account also offered glimpses into Majors' personality and her move from Virginia to the big city, from farewells to the "ville" to posts about college life.

Majors graduated high school in May from the private St. Anne's-Belfield School in Charlottesville, where Head of School David Lourie said she was "a shining light in our community, a good friend, respected classmate, trusted teammate, and creative and passionate musician."

Her father, Inman Majors, is the author of six novels and an English professor at James Madison University in Harrisonburg, Virginia.

"We are thankful for the incredible outpouring of love and support we have received from across the country," the family statement said. "We would also like to express our appreciation for the efforts of the men and women of the NYPD, who continue to work diligently on this case."

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How streaming, diversity, #MeToo shaped TV decade of change

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — "Game of Thrones" was both an unprecedented achievement and old-school role model in the TV decade that's rolling its final credits.

Installments of the elaborately produced hit were doled out one at a time by an established outlet, premium cable channel HBO. That was standard TV operating procedure until, suddenly, it wasn't. The new era arrived in 2013 when a full season's worth of "House of Cards" popped up amid Netflix's on-demand movies and old TV shows.

The drama's unexpected home appeared simply to be an option to the 500-channel universe born in the 1990s. But "House of Cards" foreshadowed a streaming gold rush and volume of programming dubbed Peak TV in 2015 — and with no drop in altitude in sight.

The result: Nothing is the same, whether it's how much television we consume; how and where we do it; who gets to make it, and the level of respect given the creatively emboldened small screen. We don't just watch TV, we binge it until we're bleary-eyed if not sated. We still change channels with a remote control, but more often we're logging in to watch shows on our phones or other devices and on our schedules, not network-dictated appointment TV.

We're couch potatoes and office and car and everywhere potatoes.

A comic strip, "Zits," recently summed up the current reality in three panels. "What's on?" a father asks his teenage son, who's sitting cross-legged in front of a TV set and is bracketed by a smart phone on one side and a laptop on the other. "Everything ever videotaped, filmed, recorded, photographed or otherwise documented whenever I want to watch it," the teen answers, nonchalantly tossing popcorn into his mouth.

"I miss television," the downcast dad tells his wife.

ALL HAIL STREAMING

Generational nostalgia aside, consumers have embraced the change in their media world, said Robert Thompson, director of Syracuse University's Bleier Center for Television & Popular Culture.

"This was the decade that streaming became for many, many people the dominant way in which they watch television," said Thompson. It's a rapid shift that bears little relation to the previous entertainment industry revolution, cable TV.

Only about a quarter of U.S. homes had cable in 1980 despite its availability since the mid-20th century. While growth finally exploded in the '80's, it wasn't until the tail end of the 1990s and the arrival of HBO's "The Sopranos" and "Sex and the City" that premium cable received critical praise and honors, Thompson

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said.

In contrast, it took less than a decade for leader Netflix to skyrocket from about 12 million U.S. subscribers at the decade's start to 60 million this year and 158 million worldwide. The streamer reportedly lavished \$15 billion on programming for 2019 alone, and earned buzz with series including "The Crown," "Stranger Things," and "Orange is the New Black."

Even major films, among them Martin Scorsese's "The Irishman," are making themselves at home on Netflix while still in theaters.

Others in the fray include Hulu and Amazon Prime Video, although "streaming wars" became the aggressive phrase applied to the increasingly competitive marketplace. With newly emboldened (and sometimes mega-expanded) media companies intent on getting a piece of the streaming action, there was a growth surge that won't abate in the new decade.

Apple TV Plus launched Nov. 1 with Oprah Winfrey and Steven Spielberg among its first wave of producers, and was quickly followed by Disney Plus. The latter has a storehouse of Disney movies and TV shows to draw on, along with acquired properties from Marvel Entertainment and Lucasfilm and its "Star Wars" franchise.

Among the other services set for 2020: Peacock from NBCUniversal; Quibi, run by ex-Disney chairman Jeffrey Katzenberg and former eBay head Meg Whitman, and HBO Max, is counting on HBO, TBS and the Warner Bros. studio assets acquired by parent company AT&T to lure subscribers.

While cord-cutting became a quest for viewers seeking to shed hefty cable bills, there is still a price tag for the gusher of riches, as much as \$14.99 monthly for HBO Max alone.

A bonus for viewers as they sort through the competing options: More programming doesn't just mean more of the same.

VARIETY STORE

If retailers can provide every type of yogurt known to humanity, why can't TV take the same eclectic approach? It has in the past 10 years, as the increasing demand for content and the growth of niche programming created opportunities for diverse and candid voices. Ongoing efforts by advocacy groups also contributed to the gradual but unmistakable shift.

Donald Glover illustrates the before and after. The future multi-hyphenate writer, musician, actor and director had a respectable run as a cast member on the network sitcom "Community." Two years later, he was the creator and star of FX's "Atlanta," which drew raves for its innovative storytelling focused on African American characters.

Jill Soloway called on family experience to create the groundbreaking "Transparent," about a trans woman and how her decision to be open has a ripple effect on her children and their circle.

Ryan Murphy, already established as a successful producer with "Nip/Tuck" and "Glee," exercised his clout to make FX's "Pose," set in the LGBTQ ballroom culture scene of the 1980s and '90s. Its star, Billy Porter, became the first openly gay man to win the best actor Emmy. Credit RuPaul and his "Drag Race," which arrived on the cusp of the previous decade and grew in popularity, for setting the table.

Even mainstream broadcasting expanded its field of vision, with ABC the first network in 20 years to air an Asian American family sitcom, "Fresh Off the Boat," ending this season. Nahnatchka Khan was its executive producer, one of the women who gained prominence behind the camera in a sector long dominated by men.

As producers, directors and writers, women put complex female characters in the center of the frame — a switch from the male antiheroes of "The Sopranos," "Breaking Bad" and other turn-of-the-century hits. With women taking the reins as storytellers, female characters became as varied and complex as their male counterparts and began to encompass a fuller view of the modern experience.

Lena Dunham's "Girls" presented more than cookie-cutter young women, both in body and spirit, and foreshadowed the rise of actresses whose talent demands more attention than their weight, including Aidy Bryant of "Saturday Night Live" and Chrissy Metz of "This Is Us."

African American women took the spotlight in creator-star Issa Rae's "Insecure," while Jenji Kohan's

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"Orange is the New Black," featured characters notable for their ethnic, sexual and class diversity. Writer-actress Phoebe Waller-Bridge's "Fleabag" provided the decade's big finish with its bold sexuality, earning six Emmys last fall including top comedy.

Some established female producers further cemented their success. Shonda Rhimes added "Scandal" and "How to Get Away with Murder" to her body of work, with the latter's star, Viola Davis, becoming the first African American to win a best drama actress Emmy. Ava DuVernay, already a filmmaking force, spearheaded "When They See Us" and "Queen Sugar."

Reese Witherspoon, adding producing to her portfolio, made good on her vow to bring strong female characters to the screen with the hit series "Big Little Lies" and "The Morning Show."

Statistics confirm the anecdotal evidence. Across all TV platforms in 2017-18, women accounted for a historic high of 31% of those working in key behind-the-scenes jobs including directors, writers and editors, according to research by San Diego State University's Center for the Study of Women in Television & Film.

Good, but not good enough, said Kirsten Schaffer, executive director of the advocacy group Women in Film, which joined with the Sundance Institute in 2017 to create and lead ReFrame, an initiative that works with companies and others to foster hiring of women across the media landscape.

"Our goal is to have the industry reflect the population of the United States," Schaffer said, and that's 51 percent female and 17 percent women of color.

While television moved toward better reflecting the world at large, it was forced to look inward as well. #METOO FALLOUT

Revelations of sexual misconduct hit the TV industry hard and with more lasting effect than any other sector of Hollywood, even compared to producer Harvey Weinstein's fall from moviemaking heights.

Two of media's top powerbrokers were brought down in the #MeToo era. Les Moonves was ousted in 2018 as CBS CEO after an outside investigation of abuse claims, with Moonves denying any non-consensual sexual relations. Roger Ailes, who built Rupert Murdoch's Fox News Channel into both a lucrative operation and major force in American politics, was forced out in the wake of sexual harassment claims.

Harassment claims also ended the Fox News career of host Bill O'Reilly, who called it a "hit job."

Matt Lauer ("Today"), Charlie Rose ("CBS This Morning") and PBS host Tavis Smiley were wiped away from TV screens for alleged misbehavior of varying types and their denials notwithstanding. "60 Minutes" executive producer Jeff Fager, a CBS News veteran, denied the misconduct claims that got him fired.

Top-tier actors and a famed comedian lost their jobs, including Jeffrey Tambor of "Transparent," Kevin Spacey of "House of Cards" and Louis C.K., whose TV projects included "Louie," which he starred in and produced. Tambor and Spacey rebutted the misconduct allegations, Louis C.K. apologized.

The reverberations continue. NBC repeatedly has been confronted by Ronan Farrow's claim that he was prevented from breaking the Weinstein story on its airwaves, which the network denies, while CBS was criticized for renewing "Bull" despite actress Eliza Dushku's claim that she was dropped for complaining that the show's star, Michael Weatherly, made crude comments about her on set.

Dushku received a reported \$9.5 million settlement under its then-CEO — Les Moonves.

Lynn Elber is at lelber@ap.org and Twitter at <http://twitter.com/lynnelber>.

State mounts largest crackdown on illegal pot shops in LA

By MICHAEL R. BLOOD Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — California regulators mounted dozens of raids against illegal marijuana retailers in Los Angeles this week, the largest crackdown to date against the city's thriving black market, officials announced Friday.

The state has been under pressure from California's legal industry to do more to stop the underground pot economy, which in Los Angeles and other cities often operates in plain sight. According to some estimates, roughly 75% of sales in the state remain under the table, snatching profits from legal storefronts.

Investigators from the state Bureau of Cannabis Control and the Department of Consumer Affairs' Can-

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nabis Enforcement Unit served search warrants at 24 unlicensed shops from Tuesday through Thursday. They seized \$8.8 million in cannabis products, confiscated nearly 10,000 illegal vape pens and \$129,000 in cash, the bureau said.

The crackdown was praised by the United Cannabis Business Association, a Los Angeles-based industry group that has been urging the state to do more to shut down rogue operators.

"For a long time we have been playing a game of whack-a-mole, targeting and shutting down a small handful of illegal shops at a time, only to have them reopen days later in the same location or down the street," said Jerred Kiloh, who heads the group.

He called the raids "the type of systematic action required" to combat the vast illegal market. "Every day, illegal operators are distributing products that are not tested, taxed or tracked by the state, putting not only the ongoing vitality of the legal industry at risk, but also the health and well-being of Californians," Kiloh said in a statement.

California kicked off broad legal sales on Jan. 1, 2018. But the illegal market has continued a bustling business, in part because consumers can avoid steep tax rates by buying in unlicensed dispensaries.

But there's a trade off for saving a buck. Illegal products have not met strict state testing standards and could be tainted by mold, pesticides, heavy metals — even human waste.

The state's top cannabis regulator, Lori Ajax, signaled that more was to come. "We look forward to working with local jurisdictions and law enforcement as we continue to shut down unlicensed operators," she said.

How US-China trade deal achieved a little but left out a lot

By PAUL WISEMAN and KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The limited trade deal that the Trump administration and Beijing announced Friday means Americans will avoid a holiday tax increase on imported toys, clothing and smartphones. U.S. farmers can sell more soybeans and pork to China. And American companies should face less pressure to hand over trade secrets to Beijing.

But what the administration gained from the so-called Phase 1 deal that President Donald Trump celebrated falls well short of the demands the president issued when he launched a trade war against Beijing 17 months ago. Further rounds of negotiations will be required to achieve a more significant agreement.

Still, Friday's preliminary agreement managed to at least defuse a conflict that had put investors on edge and slowed economic growth entering an election year in which Trump plans to campaign, at least in part, on America's prosperity.

Under the agreement, the Trump administration dropped its plan to impose new tariffs on \$160 billion of Chinese imports beginning Sunday — a tax that would have likely led to higher prices on many consumer goods. The administration also agreed to reduce its existing import taxes on about \$112 billion in Chinese goods from 15% to 7.5%.

In return, U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer told reporters, China agreed to buy \$40 billion a year in U.S. farm products over two years, even though U.S. agricultural exports to China have never topped \$26 billion a year. In addition, Beijing committed to ending a long-standing practice of pressuring companies to hand over their technology as a condition of gaining access to the Chinese market.

Lighthizer said China also agreed to lift certain barriers to its market for such products as beef, poultry, seafood, pet food and animal feed.

In all, the U.S. expects a \$200 billion boost in exports over two years as a result of the deal.

"We expect the trade deficit to go down for sure," Lighthizer said, adding that the agreement will likely be signed the first week in January and take effect 30 days later.

"Everything is written," he said. "Everything is completely finished."

Yet the administration released no detailed paperwork on the agreement. And it said the text was still being translated between Chinese and English. In the past, the two sides had appeared to be close to firm agreements only to see negotiations fall apart.

At the same time, the Phase 1 agreement leaves some major issues unresolved, notably complaints that

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Beijing unfairly subsidizes its own companies to give them a competitive edge in world markets.

Many trade analysts said the agreement amounted to a mixed bag.

"This deal should go a long way in reversing the downward spiral in bilateral trade relations and increasing certainty for U.S. businesses," said Wendy Cutler, a former U.S. trade negotiator who is now vice president at the Asia Society Policy Institute.

But, she cautioned, "it's unclear on how far the Phase 1 agreement goes in addressing the key structural issues that brought the U.S. to the negotiating table 17 months ago."

Other analysts were harsher.

"With only limited concessions, China has been able to preserve its mercantilist economic system and continue its discriminatory industrial policies at the expense of China's trading partners and the global economy," said Scott Kennedy, a China specialist at the Center for Strategic and International Studies.

"Trump could reverse course and renew tariffs. But Beijing has bought itself a likely respite from the daily uncertainty for at least a few months and perhaps for the remainder of Trump's current term."

Trump had first announced a Phase 1 deal back on Oct. 11, but negotiations continued for two more months. The president, who announced the latest agreement via Twitter, said that work on a follow-up Phase 2 agreement would begin immediately.

His announcement came minutes after the House Judiciary Committee approved impeachment charges of abuse of power and obstruction of Congress, leading the White House to argue that the president "never stops working and continues to make successful deals that benefit this country."

In Beijing, officials said at a briefing that if the Trump administration reduces its tariffs, China will lower its trade penalties on American goods and also scrap plans for new tariffs Sunday.

The world's two biggest economies are battling over the industries of the future and the way China does business — an unorthodox mix of capitalism and state control.

The administration accuses China of cheating in its drive to develop such advanced technologies as driver-less cars and artificial intelligence. The administration alleges — and independent analysts generally agree — that China steals technology, forces foreign companies to hand over trade secrets, unfairly subsidizes its own firms and throws up bureaucratic hurdles for foreign rivals.

Beijing rejects the accusations and contends that Washington is simply trying to suppress a rising competitor in international trade.

Since July 2018, the Trump administration has imposed a series of trade sanctions on China, sometimes changing or delaying planned tariff rates.

Friday's announcement means the U.S. will still continue to impose 25% import taxes on \$250 billion in Chinese goods and will halve the tariffs on a separate \$112 billion to 7.5%. It will drop plans to target an additional \$160 billion. That step would have extended the tariffs to just about everything China sells the United States and would have hit consumer items such as toys and smartphones that have so far largely been spared.

Beijing has retaliated by taxing \$120 billion in U.S. exports, including soybeans and other farm products that are vital to many of Trump's supporters in rural America.

Rob Atkinson, president of the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation, said "the agreement represents progress" but said "the United States must still comprehensively address China's rampant innovation mercantilist practices."

Mary Lovely, a trade economist at the Peterson Institute for International Economics, said it's unlikely that Friday's deal delivers enough benefits for the U.S. to outweigh the costs of the trade fight so far.

U.S. farmers lost billions of dollars in income, companies paid billions in tariffs and in many cases shifted their supply chains, and consumers saw some prices increase.

"Many of us are highly skeptical that the agreement will be enough to outweigh these other costs," Lovely said. "The U.S. didn't move the needle very much."

Still, the agreement should help smooth some of the uncertainty surrounding global trade, Lovely said.

"We have a cease-fire, we have some roll back, that is very significant," she said. "We were kind of on a brink here, and we saw the negotiators pull us back."

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Lighthizer said the Phase 1 agreement addressed one of the key U.S. concerns: Ensuring that a deal can be enforced. The Trump administration and other critics say China has a long history of violating its promises. Friday's deal establishes a dispute resolution process. If a complaint isn't resolved, the aggrieved party can impose sanctions, including tariffs.

"A skeptic would say, 'We'll see,'" Lighthizer said. "And that's probably a wise position to take. But our expectation is that they'll keep their obligations. And in any event, they're enforceable."

Repeated rounds of negotiations had failed to achieve a substantive deal. The prolonged uncertainty over Trump's trade policies curtailed U.S. business investment and likely held back economic growth. Many corporations have slowed or suspended investment plans until they know when, how or even whether the trade standoff will end.

A far-reaching agreement on China's technology policies will likely prove difficult. It would require Beijing to scale back its drive to become a global powerhouse in industrial high technology, something it sees as a path to prosperity and international influence.

"This deal would amount to a modest de-escalation of trade hostilities but hardly resolves the fundamental trade and economic tensions that are dampening business sentiment and investment in both countries," said Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University and former head of the International Monetary Fund's China division.

Efforts to acquire foreign technology are a theme that runs through Chinese law and government. Security researchers have asserted that Beijing operates a network of research institutes and business parks to turn stolen foreign technology into commercial products.

The Trump administration has been seeking a way to enforce any significant trade agreement with China, reflecting its contention that Beijing has violated past promises. One way to do is to retain some tariffs as leverage.

Associated Press writers Christopher Rugaber and Darlene Superville in Washington and Joe McDonald in Beijing contributed to this report.

Trump calls impeachment vote 'an embarrassment' to nation

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump declared Friday's House committee vote to impeach him "an embarrassment to our country" and refused to back away from the charge that first ensnared him in the scandal. Almost simultaneous to the vote, Rudy Giuliani, the president's personal lawyer, turned up at the White House.

With a vote by the full House expected next week, Trump declared in the Oval Office that the Democrats had "made absolute fools of themselves" by moving ahead with impeachment. Trump stands poised to be the third president in history to be impeached, though it is all but certain he will not be removed from office by the Republican-controlled Senate.

"You're trivializing impeachment when you use it for absolutely nothing other than trying for political gain," Trump said as he sat alongside the president of Paraguay. "It's a sad thing for the country but a good thing for me politically."

Trump's latest pushback on impeachment came a short time after Giuliani turned up at the White House. Giuliani, who has been deeply involved in the Ukraine dealings at the heart of the impeachment inquiry, has been expected to meet with Trump, who requested a briefing from the former New York City mayor on his recent trip to Kyiv.

Trump, who ignored a shouted question about his lawyer, also has urged Giuliani to inform the Justice Department and Republican senators about what he discovered in Ukraine. Giuliani did not immediately respond to a request for comment but tweeted that "The American people have already made up their mind on this #ImpeachmentScam. This is a SMOKESCREEN for the Obama-Biden administration's corruption. It will soon be proven."

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A White House spokesman did not immediately confirm whether Trump met with Giuliani. But Kellyanne Conway, senior counselor to the president, played down the visit, suggesting that Giuliani "may be going to the Christmas party" in the White House.

Still, Giuliani's visit to the White House underscored how Trump has not backed away from the very conspiracy theories and unfounded allegations of corruption that led to the impeachment inquiry imperiling his presidency. House Democrats moved to impeach him after it was revealed that military aid to Ukraine was delayed as Trump pushed Kyiv to investigate his potential Democratic opponent in the 2020 election, former Vice President Joe Biden.

Giuliani's trip last week prompted concern from many White House officials, some of whom blame the lawyer for ensnaring Trump in the Ukraine affair. Giuliani told The Associated Press this week that he was preparing a report but would not reveal its contents.

Trump, who stands poised to be the first impeached president to run for reelection, insisted impeachment may be a political win. His campaign manager, Brad Parscale, added, "The baseless, sham impeachment is just out-of-control partisan politics and the American people are rejecting it."

As for Giuliani, the former mayor has persisted in pushing the belief — previously held only on the fringes of the conservative movement — that Ukraine may have attempted to interfere in the 2016 election. There is no evidence that happened.

The former mayor also wanted to bring attention to the work that Biden's son Hunter did in Ukraine and urged Trump to demand Kyiv investigate his political foe.

Even as impeachment swirled, Giuliani stunned Washington by traveling to Ukraine this month to further his probe. The journey drew condemnation from Democrats and some scorn from Republicans and White House aides, many of whom believed the trip drew unwanted scrutiny ahead of the impeachment vote. Trump, though, showed no concern.

"He says he has a lot of good information," Trump said Saturday. "I hear he has found plenty."

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a staunch Trump ally, has said he had no plans for Giuliani to appear before the Senate Judiciary Committee, which has launched an inquiry into Joe Biden and his communications with Ukrainian officials. And Attorney General William Barr and Secretary of State Mike Pompeo both have told West Wing aides that the attention-seeking former mayor had become a liability to Trump.

While Trump has at times grown frustrated with Giuliani, the president has told people close to him that he appreciates the former mayor's willingness to defend him on television and his aggressive pursuit of corruption.

Giuliani returned Saturday from a trip that took him to Ukraine, Hungary and Austria, where he said he was looking for documents and witnesses to support unproven claims he has made about Hunter Biden and Ukraine's role in the 2016 election.

He was accompanied by correspondents from the conservative One America News Network, which is producing a documentary about his work.

Blue-collar character actor Danny Aiello has died at age 86

By **MARK KENNEDY** AP Entertainment Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Danny Aiello, the blue-collar character actor whose long career playing tough guys included roles in "Fort Apache, the Bronx," "Moonstruck" and "Once Upon a Time in America" and his Oscar-nominated performance as a pizza man in Spike Lee's "Do the Right Thing," has died. He was 86.

Aiello (pronounced eye-YEL-o) died Thursday night after a brief illness, said his publicist, Tracey Miller, who runs Tracey Miller & Associates. "The family asks for privacy at this time," she said in a statement.

In a tweet, Cher mourned the man she called "a genius comedic actor." The two had starred in "Moonstruck" and she called it "one of the happiest times in my life." Actor Michael Rapaport tweeted that Aiello was a "huge inspiration" and actor Kirk Acevedo mourned: "We lost a great actor today."

Recognizable, if not famous, for his burly build and husky voice, he was an ex-union president who broke into acting in his 30s and remained a dependable player for decades, whether vicious or cuddly or some

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of each.

His breakthrough, ironically, was as the hapless lover dumped by Cher in Norman Jewison's hit comedy "Moonstruck." His disillusion contributed to the laughter, and although he wasn't nominated for a supporting-role Oscar (Cher and Olympia Dukakis won in their categories), Aiello was inundated with movie offers.

"Living in New York City gave me training for any role," he said in a 1997 interview. "I've seen people killed, knifed. I've got scars on my face. I have emotional recall when I work; the idea is simply to recreate it. I've seen it and experienced it. I've played gangsters, teachers but most of my work has been in the police area. And for that I'm adored by the police in New York City."

The ebullient Aiello became a favorite of several directors, among them Woody Allen, who used him in the Broadway play "The Floating Light Globe" and the movies "Broadway Danny Rose," "The Purple Rose of Cairo" and "Radio Days."

Lee was another admirer and for "Do the Right Thing" cast Aiello as a pizzeria operator in a black neighborhood of Brooklyn, the movie climaxing with a riot that destroys his eatery. "This is my pizzeria!" he cried. Lee had first offered the role to Robert De Niro, but Aiello's performance brought him an Oscar nomination for supporting actor.

Lee on Instagram on Friday lauded Aiello for "making cinema history together" on "Do the Right Thing" and the director wished his friend a final goodbye: "May you rest in paradise."

Among Aiello's other movies: "Fort Apache, the Bronx" (as a cop who threw a boy from a building), "Once Upon a Time in America," "Harlem Nights," "Jack Ruby" (as Ruby) and "City Hall." He also appeared in TV miniseries, including "The Last Don," "A Woman Named Jackie" and in the 1985-86 police series "Lady Blue." It was Aiello who played Madonna's father in the pop icon's "Papa Don't Preach" video.

A child of New York's Hell's Kitchen neighborhood, Aiello retained the pugnacity he learned on city streets. "During the early times in my acting career, I would fight at the drop of a hat," he said in 1985. "I was very hungry. If there were obstacles, I tried to remove them." He added that sometimes he engaged in fistfights with actors after work because of incidents during filming or rehearsals.

Daniel Louis Aiello Jr. was born June 20, 1933, to Italian parents. His father, a laborer, left the family of seven children, and Daniel started working at age 9 selling newspapers, working in a grocery store and bowling alley, shining shoes and loading trucks. In his teenage years, he joined a street gang and, he claimed, engaged in burglary and safe-cracking. He dropped out of high school before graduating, got married in 1955 and joined the Army.

After three years in the service, he worked at several factory jobs, landing as a baggage man at Greyhound. The ambitious Aiello rose to become president of the transit union.

"I wanted to become a politician," he told a reporter in 1995. "I always thought that I could talk, that people liked me, that I can represent them." But when Greyhound accused him of starting a wildcat strike and the union leaders agreed, Aiello quit his job.

He worked at one job after another, and in 1970 was hired as a bouncer at the New York comedy club, Improvisation. One night, he was asked to act as an assistant emcee. "It was no big deal; it was just 'Danny, go up and announce the acts,'" he recalled in 1997. "There was a little bantering between acts, and I kept that short. I was terrified."

Yet Aiello soon branched out, playing small roles in the movies "Bang the Drum Slowly" and "The Godfather, Part II," and as the bartender lead in a musical play "Lamppost Reunion." Starting in 1980 he averaged three films a year, plus appearances in theater and television. Off-Broadway, he appeared in "The Shoemaker" in 2011.

Aiello and his wife of more than 60 years, Sandy, lived in Ramsey, New Jersey. He also is survived by three children — Rick, Jamie and Stacy — and 10 grandchildren. A fourth son, stuntman and stunt coordinator Danny Aiello III, died in May 2010 of pancreatic cancer.

A memorial service will be held Dec. 19 at the Riverside Memorial Chapel on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Mark Kennedy is at twitter.com/KennedyTwits

In surprise decision, US approves muscular dystrophy drug

By **MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer**

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. health regulators approved a second drug for a debilitating form of muscular dystrophy, a surprise decision after the medication was rejected for safety concerns just four months ago.

The ruling marks the second time the Food and Drug Administration has granted preliminary approval for the disease based on early results and is likely to stoke questions about its standards for clearing largely unproven medications.

The FDA said late Thursday it approved Sarepta Therapeutics' Vyondys 53 for patients with a form of Duchenne's muscular dystrophy. Duchenne's affects about 1 in every 3,600 boys in the U.S., causing muscle weakness, loss of movement and early death, usually when patients are in their 20s or 30s. The drug is for a specific type that affects about 8 percent of boys with Duchenne's.

In August, the FDA appeared to reject the injectable medication, sending a letter to the company that flagged risks of infections and cases of kidney injury in animal studies. But Sarepta disputed the decision, raising it to FDA's drug center leadership. The company resubmitted its application and data, and the FDA reversed its decision, according to a Sarepta press release.

The FDA said Thursday doctors should monitor the kidney function of patients taking the drug. The drug's most common side effects include headache, fever, abdominal pain and nausea. Other reactions include rash, fever, hives and skin irritation.

The surprise approval sent company shares rocketing more than 36% in trading Friday. But some Wall Street analysts said the approval suggests loosening standards at the agency.

"The abruptness of the decision making at the agency does not inspire confidence, in our view," analyst Debjit Chattopadhyay wrote in a note to investors.

It's the second time a Sarepta drug has followed an unusual path to approval. In 2016, FDA leaders cleared the company's first muscular dystrophy drug, overruling agency reviewers who said there was little evidence it worked. The decision also followed an intense lobbying campaign by patients' families, politicians and physicians. Agency critics suggested the FDA may have bowed to outside pressure.

Vyondys received "accelerated approval" based on preliminary results showing it boosts a protein that aids the growth of muscle fibers. But the drug has not yet been shown to improve patients' mobility or health. The FDA is requiring Sarepta to conduct followup studies on those measures for both drugs. If the company fails to show the drugs help patients, the FDA can withdraw approval — though it rarely does so.

The follow-up study for Vyondys is due by 2024. The drug will cost \$300,000 per year for the typical patient — a child weighing 44 pounds, the company said. That's the same price as Sarepta's earlier drug.

Analysts said the unexpected decision could bode well for other experimental drugs with questionable study results, including a closely watched drug Alzheimer's drug that will soon come before the agency.

The drug's developers reported results in October suggesting their medication could be the first to slow mental decline in Alzheimer's. But many experts are skeptical, noting unusual study changes and analyses used during the drug's development.

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter: @AP_FDWriter

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By **BEATRICE DUPUY, ARIJETA LAJKA and RAFAEL CABRERA Associated Press**

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these is legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the real facts:

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CLAIM: A video circulating online shows a person firing an AR-15 rifle, and some posts identify her as Swedish environmental activist Greta Thunberg.

THE FACTS: The shooter in the video is not Thunberg. It's another young Swede named Emmy Slinge, who uploaded the original video to her Twitter account. The video, which some posts described as showing Thunberg discharging a rifle, began to circulate after the teenage environmental activist took part in a global climate summit in Madrid earlier this month. "Greta with a gun? Will the hypocritical lefties still support her, or is this now a call to arms?" asked one Facebook post containing the video. But the person firing the rifle is actually Slinge, who originally tweeted the video Dec. 7, with no reference to Thunberg. Some of her other tweets also contain images showing guns and shooting practice. Slinge confirmed to AP that she was the person firing the rifle in the video. She tweeted that her friends have been joking for months about her resemblance to the Swedish climate activist. On Saturday, after she tweeted the video of her firing the AR-15, the situation spun out of control on social media, with "unexpected consequences," she said. These days, she said, have been "the strangest" of her life. "All this because I look a little like Greta? What strange times we live in."

CLAIM: The photo of 4-year-old Jack Williment-Barr lying on the Leeds General Infirmary floor on top of a coat with an oxygen mask nearby was staged.

THE FACTS: The photo was not staged, despite claims circulating online suggesting that it was. Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust confirmed the details of the photo, with a statement explaining that the hospital in Leeds, England, did not have enough beds for the boy and that he had to wait four hours before being admitted to the Children's Assessment and Treatment Unit. "We are extremely sorry that there were only chairs available in the treatment room, and no bed," Dr. Yvette Oade, Chief Medical Officer at Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust, said in the statement. "This falls below our usual high standards, and for this we would like to sincerely apologise to Jack and his family." The photo gained traction Monday after a video surfaced showing Prime Minister Boris Johnson refusing to look at the photo. By Tuesday, social media users began spreading a Facebook post from one user who said her friend was a senior nursing sister at the hospital where Jack was being treated. "The boy shown on the floor by the media was in fact put there by his mother who then took photos on her mobile phone and uploaded it to media outlets before he climbed back into his trolley," the post said. "He was on a hospital trolley in the paediatric A&E having been seen within 20 minutes." Social media users then took screenshots from the Facebook post and continued to spread them on Facebook and Twitter even after the original post was taken down. Oade said in a statement that the hospital unit was experiencing exceptionally high levels of demand at the time, requiring the boy to wait in a treatment room until a bed became available. The Yorkshire Evening Post first ran the original story detailing Jack's hospital experience after his mother reached out. In additional photos with the story, the 4-year-old can be seen wearing an oxygen mask and standing next to a medical supply cart. Daniel Sheridan, who first reported the story, addressed the false claims on Twitter. "No story would ever be published by @LeedsNews without full verification," Sheridan said on Twitter, referencing the Post's Twitter handle.

CLAIM: Photos show two attackers from a recent, fatal Jersey City shooting.

THE FACTS: The photos circulating on social media are from a different murder case that dates back to August. They don't show the assailants involved in Tuesday's Jersey City gunbattle. The pair of photos emerged Wednesday, falsely describing them as showing the two attackers involved in a shooting that killed six in Jersey City a day earlier. The people in the photo were actually Darius Bolden, and Yasmin Tejada, who were linked to an August shooting. The Gateway Pundit, a conservative blog, posted photos of Bolden and Tejada in a story about Tuesday's shooting; the photos also appeared in a Gateway Pundit tweet linking to their story. Several other Twitter and Facebook accounts also posted the incorrect photos. Bolden and Tejada were arrested earlier this year for the fatal shooting of Jason Dunbar in August, also

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in Jersey City. The same photos were posted on the Facebook page of the Hudson County Prosecutor's Office in October. According to local reports, Bolden was arrested and charged for the murder of Dunbar, while Tejada was charged with hindering the homicide investigation. In the separate attack on Tuesday, the assailants, David N. Anderson, 47, and Francine Graham, 50, opened fire on civilians and police officers in Jersey City, New Jersey authorities confirmed in a press conference on Wednesday. The attack began at a cemetery and ended at a kosher market, leaving six people dead -- a police officer, the two attackers and three bystanders. New Jersey Attorney General Gurbir Grewal later said the attack was driven by hatred of Jews and law enforcement and is being investigated as an act of domestic terrorism.

CLAIM: Video shows migrants trying to disrupt a parade of St. Nicholas in Austria only to have men dressed as Krampus, a goat-like Central European folk figure with horns, defend the festival.

THE FACTS: Event organizers posted on Facebook that the people in the video seen running from the devilish characters were locals dressed in padded clothing who volunteered to be part of the festivities in Vipiteno-Sterzing, a town in northern Italy. The town's mayor also said no migrants were attacked at the event. In the video, shot Dec. 5, people are running from locals dressed as Krampus, a folkloric character who punishes misbehaving children during the Christmas season. The video goes on to show people dressed as Krampus striking people running down the street with bundles of birch branches. At one point in the video, two people dressed as Krampus can be seen striking and kicking a man who has fallen to the ground. Social media users began sharing the video after the event to suggest that it showed migrants disrupting Christmas festivities, and people dressed as Krampus retaliating. The organizers of the event posted a statement on Facebook after the false claims began circulating, saying the people seen in the video are not migrants but locals wearing padded clothing who volunteered to provoke the Krampus characters. "The racist accusations have no bearing in truth," the statement reads. "The youth being whipped in the video are friends and acquaintances of the devils of Vipiteno." The group's page includes photos of people dressed as Krampus, wearing horns, red clothing and black paint on their faces. The mayor of the town, Fritz-Karl Messner, spoke out to local news outlets confirming that no migrants were insulted or attacked at the event. Messner told Rai News 24, an Italian news outlet, that for outsiders the whipping may seem strange, but it is all part of the Krampus tradition.

CLAIM: Singer R. Kelly sentenced to 104 years in prison.

THE FACTS: The 52-year-old R&B singer, who is in federal custody, hasn't been sentenced. Kelly is facing a series of sexual misconduct charges in state and federal cases in Illinois, New York and Minnesota. A post has been circulating for at least a month on Facebook and Twitter falsely claiming that Kelly was sentenced to 104 years in prison. One Facebook post alone had over 15,000 shares. According to AP reporting, Kelly was arrested in Chicago in February on 10 counts of sexually abusing three girls and a woman. In May, Cook County prosecutors charged Kelly, adding 11 sex-related counts, which include sexual assault of a minor. Kelly has pleaded not guilty to those charges. In July, he was again arrested while walking his dog in Chicago. He was hit with two separate federal indictments, one filed in Illinois and another in New York. The two indictments charged Kelly with an array of sex-related crimes, including producing child pornography, kidnapping, racketeering and sexual exploitation of a child. He pleaded not guilty to those charges. Last Thursday, federal prosecutors brought new charges against Kelly related to his marriage to singer Aaliyah. The two wed in a secret ceremony in 1994, when Aaliyah was 15 and Kelly was 27. Due to her age at the time, the marriage was annulled months later. In the charges announced Thursday, federal prosecutors accused Kelly of paying a bribe to obtain a false ID for an unnamed female the day before their wedding. Aaliyah died in a plane crash in 2001. The singer is scheduled to face trial in federal court in Chicago in April, and in Brooklyn in May. A Cook County judge ordered the singer to stand in a local trial for one of four sexual abuse cases in September. If convicted on all the charges he faces, Kelly could spend his life in prison.

This is part of The Associated Press' ongoing effort to fact-check misinformation that is shared widely

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online, including work with Facebook to identify and reduce the circulation of false stories on the platform.

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Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today in Saturday, Dec. 14, the 348th day of 2019. There are 17 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 14, 2012, a gunman with a semi-automatic rifle killed 20 first-graders and six educators at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut, then committed suicide as police arrived; the 20-year-old had also fatally shot his mother at their home before carrying out the attack on the school.

On this date:

In 1799, the first president of the United States, George Washington, died at his Mount Vernon, Virginia, home at age 67.

In 1819, Alabama joined the Union as the 22nd state.

In 1861, Prince Albert, husband of Queen Victoria, died at Windsor Castle at age 42.

In 1911, Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen (ROH'-ahl AH'-mun-suhn) and his team became the first men to reach the South Pole, beating out a British expedition led by Robert F. Scott.

In 1916, President Woodrow Wilson vetoed an immigration measure aimed at preventing "undesirables" and anyone born in the "Asiatic Barred Zone" from entering the U.S. (Congress overrode Wilson's veto in Feb. 1917.)

In 1939, the Soviet Union was expelled from the League of Nations for invading Finland.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court, in Heart of Atlanta Motel v. United States, ruled that Congress was within its authority to enforce the Civil Rights Act of 1964 against racial discrimination by private businesses (in this case, a motel that refused to cater to blacks).

In 1981, Israel annexed the Golan Heights, which it had seized from Syria in 1967.

In 1985, Wilma Mankiller became the first woman to lead a major American Indian tribe as she took office as principal chief of the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma. Former New York Yankees outfielder Roger Maris, who'd hit 61 home runs during the 1961 season, died in Houston at age 51.

In 1988, President Reagan authorized the U-S to enter into a "substantive dialogue" with the Palestine Liberation Organization, after chairman Yasser Arafat said he was renouncing "all forms of terrorism."

In 2003, a weary, disheveled Saddam Hussein was displayed on television screens worldwide, a day after his capture by American troops.

In 2005, President George W. Bush defended his decision to wage the Iraq war, even as he acknowledged that "much of the intelligence turned out to be wrong."

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama implored top bankers to help keep the fragile recovery from faltering by boosting lending to small businesses and getting behind an overhaul of financial regulation. Dubai got a \$10 billion lifeline from oil-rich Abu Dhabi, securing a last-minute cash infusion aimed at preventing a default that risked sparking broader fears about the city-state's shaky finances.

Five years ago: A last-minute deal salvaged U.N. climate talks in Lima, Peru, from collapse. Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe scored a decisive election victory and promised to push efforts to revitalize the world's third largest economy. Politician, TV personality and onetime Miss America Bess Myerson died in Santa Monica, California, at age 90.

One year ago: President Donald Trump picked budget director Mick Mulvaney to be his acting chief of staff, replacing John Kelly. Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker signed a sweeping package of Republican legislation that weakened the incoming Democratic governor and attorney general. Stocks fell to eight-month

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lows after weak economic data from China and Europe set off more worries about the global economy. A federal court found that a 1974 New York state ban on nunchucks, the martial arts weapon made famous by Bruce Lee, was unconstitutional under the Second Amendment.

Today's Birthdays: Singer-actress Abbe Lane is 88. Actor Hal Williams is 85. Actress-singer Jane Birkin is 73. Pop singer Joyce Vincent-Wilson (Tony Orlando and Dawn) is 73. Entertainment executive Michael Ovitz is 73. Actress Dee Wallace is 71. Rhythm-and-blues singer Ronnie McNeir (The Four Tops) is 70. Rock musician Cliff Williams is 70. Actor-comedian T.K. Carter is 63. Rock singer-musician Mike Scott (The Waterboys) is 61. Singer-musician Peter "Spider" Stacy (The Pogues) is 61. Actress Cynthia Gibb is 56. Actress Nancy Valen is 54. Actor Archie Kao is 50. Actress Natascha McElhone is 50. Actress-comedian Michaela Watkins is 48. Actress-comedian Miranda Hart is 47. Rhythm-and-blues singer Brian Dalrymple (Soul For Real) is 44. Actress KaDee Strickland is 44. Actress Tammy Blanchard is 43. Actress Sophie Monk is 40. Actor-singer-musician Jackson Rathbone is 35. Actress Vanessa Hudgens is 31. Rock/R&B singer Tori Kelly is 27.

Thought for Today: "The trouble with our times is that the future is not what it used to be." — Paul Valery, French philosopher (1871-1945).

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