

Groton Daily Independent

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Monday, December 16, 2019

4:15pm: Basketball: Girls 7th/8th Game vs. Warner @ Groton Area High School
7th Grade @ 4:15 ~ 8th Grade @ 5:15

4:30pm: Wrestling: Boys 7th/8th Tournament vs. Webster Area High School @ Webster Armory

Tuesday, December 17, 2019

GBB hosts Waubay-Summit

Combined 7th/8th Grade game 4:30 p.m.

Junior Varsity game at 6 p.m. followed by varsity game

Thursday, December 19, 2019

Boys Basketball hosts Redfield - JV at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game

7 p.m.: City Council Meeting at Groton Community Center

Friday, December 20, 2019

Debate at Brookings High School (Brookings Bell Tournament)

End of Second Quarter

Elementary Christmas Concert at 1 p.m. at GHS Gym

School Dismisses for Christmas Vacation at 2 p.m.

Girls Basketball at Redfield

Combined 7th/8th Grade game 5 p.m.

Junior varsity game at 6:30 p.m. followed by varsity game

Saturday, December 21, 2019

Debate at Brookings High School (Brookings Bell Tournament) Brookings Bell

9:00am: Wrestling: Varsity Tournament at Madison

10:00am: Wrestling: Boys 7th/8th Tournament at Watertown HS Arena

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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MS/HS Student of the month for December



From Left in back: Kyleigh Englund (8th), Grace Traphagen (9th), Stella Meier (10th), Karter Moddy (6th)
From Left in Front: Elizabeth Flihs (7th), Kaylin Kucker (12th), Alexa Herr (11th)

Groton Area MS/HS School works to ensure that all levels of academic instruction also include the necessary life skills teaching, practicing, and modeling that encourages essential personal life habits that are universally understood to facilitate helping our students become good human beings and citizens.

It is learning with our heads, hearts and hands to be caring and civil, to make healthy decisions, to effectively problem solve, to be respectful and responsible, to be good citizens, and to be empathetic and ethical individuals.

Students are selected based on individual student growth in the areas of: positive behavior, citizenship, good attendance, a thirst for knowledge, and high academic standards.

Opioids: The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

My patient was in severe pain, suffering from an obstruction in his gastrointestinal tract as a result of spreading cancer. I knew that morphine, one of the opioids, would provide immediate and merciful relief, and it did. We are thankful that we have something that can palliate pain and provide comfort for severe acute pain, especially for patients at the end of their lives. That's good!



By Richard P. Holm, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

In contrast to the good that opioids can do for certain acute pain, we know they are not very effective for musculoskeletal or neuropathic pain and fail terribly in helping long term pain and chronic pain syndrome. Despite this inadequacy, opioids are still being over-prescribed for most post-operative musculoskeletal pain.

Also, our bodies quickly develop tolerance to opioids, thus continually requiring increased doses to get the same effect. In addition, withdrawal symptoms from opioids can be significant making it difficult to stop taking opioids once hooked. It is estimated that about 75 percent of those taking illicit opioids got started from a prescription, more than 100,000 people are regularly using heroin and about 12 million people are taking non-prescribed illicit opioids. That's bad!

It gets worse. Opioids have an insidious potential for overdose which depresses the drive to breathe so much as to suffocate people to death. In the U.S., it is estimated that about 70,000 people die each year from opioid overdose. In comparison, 83,000 die from diabetes, 56,000 from influenza and pneumonia, 47,000 from suicide and 40,000 from motor vehicle crashes. That's very bad!

Ultimately, care providers need to prescribe opioids very judiciously and people must be careful when taking prescribed opioids. AND people need to avoid dangerous illicit forms. We do have an antidote to opioid overdose called naloxone (or Narcan®). If given soon enough, it displaces the opioid from the brain pain receptor and the victim starts breathing again. Thus, every ambulance and emergency room have multiple doses of this lifesaving reversal agent readily available.

Unfortunately, in response to this opioid epidemic, the drug manufacturer of naloxone, which costs 50 cents to six dollars to make, raised its price up to \$4,000 for a dual pen auto-injector. Fortunately, a generic version will be available soon with a two-pack of auto-injectors for \$180. Until then, we pay the higher price. That's ugly!

Bottom line: If we hope to find help for this crisis, we need to understand the good, the bad and the ugly about opioids.

Richard P. Holm, MD is founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace" available on Amazon. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

Weekly Vikings Roundup By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings are 10-4 after defeating the Los Angeles Chargers on Sunday. The Chargers had a 10-9 lead midway through the second quarter, but the Vikings reeled off 30 straight points to put this game to bed with a final score of 39-10. The offense looked good against a solid Chargers team, but it was the Vikings' defense that stole the show with seven turnovers. This was a very good win for the Vikings, as they went on the road and thoroughly defeated an inferior team – the exact type of performance that's expected from a contender.

Kirk Cousins didn't have a great day on Sunday. He completed 76% of his passes (19/25) but only had 207 yards and a touchdown to go along with an interception. He also fumbled two well-placed snaps from center Garrett Bradbury, although he was able to fall on the ball both times to avoid a turnover. This was the first time this season the Vikings have won a game in which Kirk Cousins had a passer rating under 100.0. The team is 9-0 when he's above that mark.

Adam Thielen was back in action Sunday, but he only had four touches (three catches, one run) for 30 yards. Stefon Diggs led the team in targets (6), catches (4), and total yards (80). Rookie tight end Irv Smith Jr. caught Cousins' lone touchdown toss.

For the second time in the past three weeks, running back Dalvin Cook left the game because of injury and didn't return. It's unclear how long he might be out, which would be a huge blow to a Vikings' offense that heavily relies on the ground game. Alexander Mattison, Cook's backup, wasn't available this week because of an ankle injury, so it was Mike Boone who led the team in carries (13) and rushing yards (56). Boone also had two touchdowns on the day.

This was perhaps the best game the Vikings' defense has played this season. The pass rush seems to be heating up as we get closer to the playoffs, which is great to see. The team's stat line isn't amazing (three sacks, five QB hits, six tackles for a loss and five pass deflections), but the defense did a great job of attacking the ball which led to the seven turnovers. Chargers' quarterback Philip Rivers seemed particularly perturbed, throwing three interceptions and fumbling the ball twice.

The player of the game on offense was Mike Boone, who was thrust into a prominent role on Sunday. Coming into the game, the rarely used RB had carried the ball eight times for 41 yards – but when the team needed him the most, he put in a solid effort to help the team seal the win.

The player of the game on defense was Ifeadi Odenigbo, who filled up the stat sheet with two tackles, one sack, one QB hit and one tackle for a loss. Odenigbo also recovered a fumble and returned it for a touchdown right before the half. The TD was the first of his career (at any level).

Looking ahead, the Vikings have their most important game of the season when the Green Bay Packers come to Minnesota. The two teams will battle it out on Monday Night Football. Kickoff will be at 7:15 pm (CT), and the game will air on ESPN. If the Vikings win this game, they will be tied atop the NFC North with the Packers. ESPN is giving the Vikings a 66% chance to win, while Vegas has Minnesota as a 4-point favorite. Hopefully the defense can remain hot and the home team can put this one away early. Skol!

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Today



Partly Sunny

High: 18 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 9 °F

Tuesday



Partly Sunny

High: 20 °F

Tuesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 0 °F

Wednesday




Partly Sunny

High: 22 °F




**Monday
December 16th**

15-20° East of the Missouri River
25-30° Along/West of the Missouri River




Lows 10-15°

3-Day Outlook

TUE	WED	THU
		
15-35°	20-35°	20-30°

Dry weather and approximately seasonable temperatures are anticipated through the work-week

Updated: 12/16/2019 4:12 AM Central



Dry weather and a gradual warming trend is anticipated through the work-week.

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Today in Weather History

December 16, 1967: With temperatures in the upper 20s, heavy freezing rain fell in west central and southwest Minnesota at night on the 16th, causing widespread ice accumulations on all exposed surfaces, and power and telephone poles and lines went down over a vast region. Some places were without power and phone service for three to four days. This storm was classified as the most severe ice storm in the past 20 years in some areas. Reports were received of turkeys and other poultry dying due to the cold in the countryside. 20 to 30 cars were in the ditch on one slick stretch of road in Rock County. Further west, throughout eastern South Dakota, freezing rain for most of the day formed ice from 3/8 to 3/4 inch on exposed surfaces. Extensive damage was caused to utility lines. All roads became dangerous for traveling, and one death was directly linked to the ice storm. The ice cut off a regular water supply, causing one person to attempt to get water from a cistern. She slipped on the ice into the cistern. Three deaths were indirectly related to the ice storm; two due to automobile accidents, and one due to a heart attack.

December 16, 2000: Northwest winds of 30 to 50 mph, with gusts to 60 mph, combined with newly fallen snow and arctic air to bring widespread blizzard conditions and extreme wind chills as low as 70 below zero to west central Minnesota and much of South Dakota from late on the 15th through the 16th. Events were canceled, travel was shut down, and some motorists were stranded. Both US Highway 12 and Interstate 29 in South Dakota were closed throughout the day. As an indirect result of the low visibility, a semi-truck hit and totaled a pickup truck in the snow just west of Clark.

December 16, 1811: An estimated Magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck the Mississippi Valley near the town of New Madrid in Missouri at 2:15 am local time. People were awakened by the shaking in New York City, Washington D.C., and Charleston, South Carolina. The ground motions were described as most alarming and frightening in places like Nashville, Tennessee, and Louisville, Kentucky. In the epicentral area, the ground surface was described as in great convulsion with sand and water ejected tens of feet into the air.

December 16, 1941: In 1941, only two women were employed by the Weather Bureau. By 1945, more than 900 women are employed by the Weather Bureau as observers and forecasters, as a result of filling positions of men during World War II. Eleven days after Pearl Harbor, the Army requested that all weather broadcasts be discontinued. The fear was that the enemy would use this information to plan an attack on the United States.

1835 - New England experienced one of their coldest days of record. At noon on that bitterly cold Wednesday the mercury stood at four degrees below at Boston, 15 degrees below at Norfolk CT, and 17 degrees below at Hanover NH. The temperature at Boston was 12 degrees below zero by sunset. Gale force winds accompanied the severe cold, and that night a great New York City fire destroyed much of the financial district. (David Ludlum)

1917 - An ice jam closed the Ohio River between Warsaw, KY, and Rising Sun, IN. The thirty foot high ice jam held for 58 days, and backed up the river a distance of 100 miles. (David Ludlum)

1987 - A Pacific storm battered the coast of California with rain and high winds, and dumped heavy snow on the mountains of California. Winds along the coast gusted to 70 mph at Point Arguello, and winds in the Tehachapi Mountains of southern California gusted to 100 mph at Wheeler Ridge. Snowfall totals ranged up to 24 inches at Mammoth Mountain. Snow fell for two minutes at Malibu Beach, and Disneyland was closed due to the weather for only the second time in twenty-four years. A winter storm which began in the Southern Rockies four days earlier finished its course producing snow and high winds in New England. Snowfall totals ranged up to 19 inches at Blanchard ME. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Fairbanks, AK, reported freezing rain and record warm temperatures. The afternoon high of 41 degrees was 43 degrees above normal. Snow and high winds continued to plague the mountains of southern California. Mount Wilson CA reported two inches of rain in six hours during the early morning, and a storm total of more than 3.50 inches of rain. (The National Weather Summary)

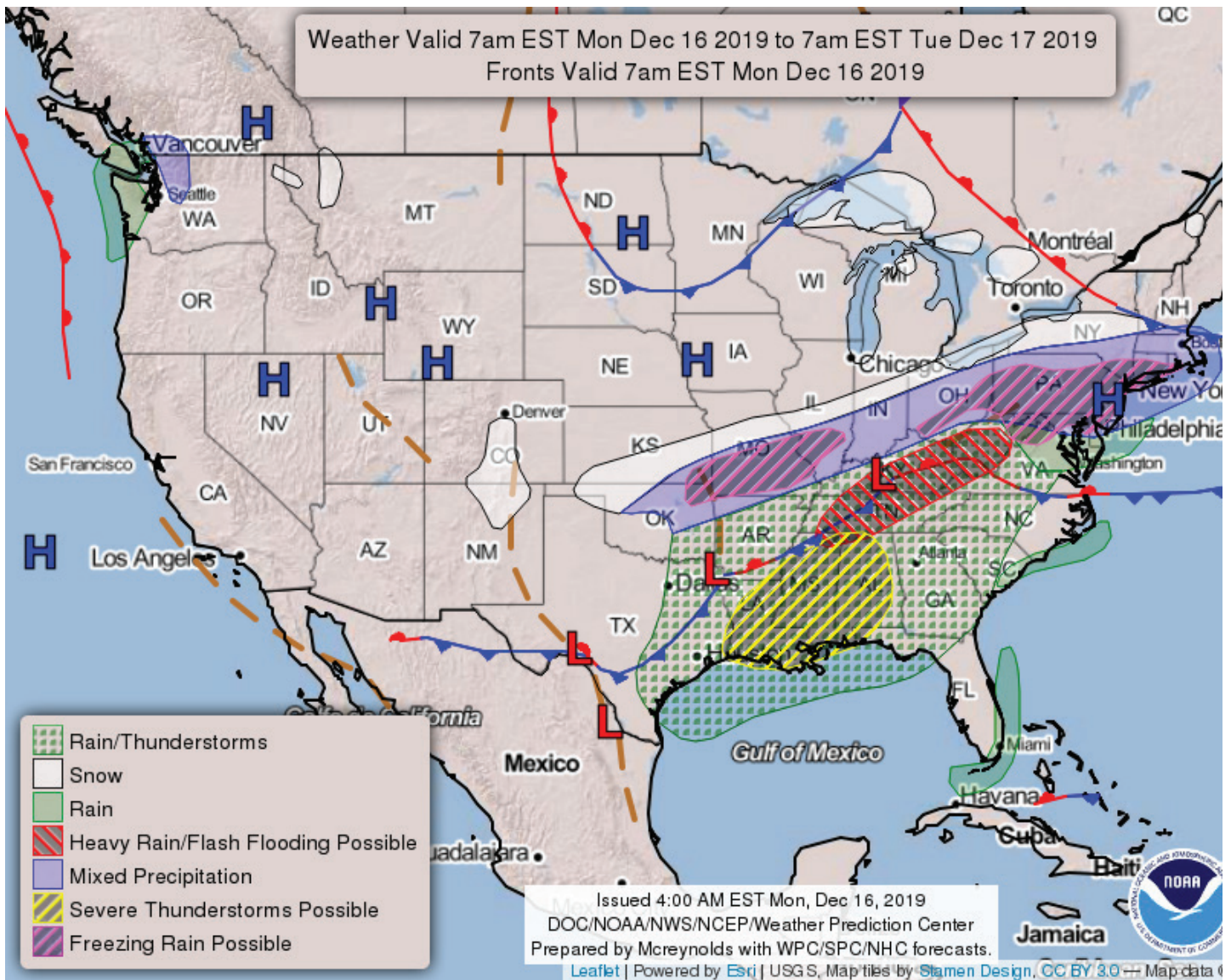
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 23 °F at 9:09 PM
Low Temp: 2 °F at 12:00 AM
Wind: 20 mph at 10:39 AM
Day Rain: 0.00

Record High: 62° in 1962
Record Low: -28° in 1951
Average High: 25°F
Average Low: 5°F
Average Precip in Dec.: 0.25
Precip to date in Dec.: 0.11
Average Precip to date: 21.45
Precip Year to Date: 28.06
Sunset Tonight: 4:51 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:08 a.m.



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GIFTS

Christmas gifts generate great excitement and interest. After the presents are wrapped and placed under the tree, many people spend countless hours trying to figure out what might be on the inside. Sometimes the gifts are carefully shaken or lifted to see if the weight or size might give an indication about what the contents might be.

But when God gave us the first Christmas gift, its value was obvious. It was a gift of love that could not be measured or found outside of Him. It was a gift of mercy that only He could provide. And, it was a gift of grace that only God could give us through His Son.

God's love is ultimately expressed in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. His love is the source of His mercy and grace, and it is because of His love that we have mercy and grace. It was because of His love for us that He gave His one and only Son so that whoever believes in Him will find His mercy and enjoy His grace and be with Him forever in eternity.

John says something very significant about this love. "If God loved us," he says, "we ought to love one another." His love does not end with our salvation and then begins with our obligation to share His love with others. It begins a pattern of self-sacrificing love that Christians must live by sharing His mercy and grace with others.

Prayer: Lord, we often forget how responsible we are to share Your gifts of love, mercy, and salvation with others. Give us no peace until we share Your gifts. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 1 John 4:11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

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2019 Groton SD Community Events

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)

News from the Associated Press

Man reaches plea deal in fatal Sioux Falls shooting

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man accused of shooting and killing a man in a downtown Sioux Falls alley has pleaded guilty in exchange for a lighter sentence.

The Argus Leader reports 28-year-old Heriberto Perez-Torres pleaded guilty to first-degree manslaughter and possession of a controlled substance on Friday.

As part of a plea bargain, Judge Natalie Damgaard capped Perez-Torres' potential sentence at 25 years in the January death of 37-year-old Jeremy Flynn.

Sentencing is set for next month.

A court affidavit says the Torres was dating Flynn's ex-girlfriend. Torres told police he went to meet Flynn and that the two began to fight and wrestled over a handgun.

The affidavit says Torres told police he punched Flynn in the groin, shot him, dropped the gun and drove away.

Bolstering impeachment case, Dems say Trump betrayed nation

By **LISA MASCARO** and **JONATHAN LEMIRE** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bolstering its case for impeaching President Donald Trump, a House panel released a lengthy report Monday detailing its rationale for the charges and accusing Trump of betraying the nation for his own political gain.

Trump faces two articles of impeachment by House Democrats: abuse of power and obstruction of Congress. They point to Trump pressuring Ukraine to investigate 2020 political rival Joe Biden while withholding as leverage military aid the country relies to counter Russia as well as his efforts to block the House investigation.

The House will vote Wednesday on the impeachment articles approved last week by the House Judiciary panel. The vote is all but certain to result in Trump's impeachment, though he's expected to be acquitted in a Senate trial.

The House Judiciary Committee detailed its case against the nation's 45th president in a 650-page report released just after midnight. It said Trump "betrayed the nation by abusing his high office to enlist a foreign power in corrupting democratic elections."

The panel summarized the evidence for impeachment compiled by the House intelligence committee, and said Trump "has demonstrated he will remain a threat to national security and the Constitution if allowed to remain in office."

Trump, by refusing to cooperate with the House impeachment inquiry, violated the Constitution's system of checks and balances, the report said.

In dissent, Republicans on the panel denounced the materials submitted by Democrats as "paltry."

"The paltry record on which the majority relies is an affront to the constitutional process of impeachment and will have grave consequences for future presidents," said Rep. Doug Collins of Georgia, the panel's top Republican. "The quicker the majority report and the majority's actions are forgotten, the better."

Only the fourth U.S. president to be charged in impeachment proceedings, Trump has insisted he has done nothing wrong. Votes are set for Wednesday in the House. But already attention is turning to the Senate trial, where the Republicans are expected to acquit Trump in January.

"There ought to be a fair trial where the whole truth comes out," Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer told reporters Sunday in New York. "And I'm going to work to get that done."

The top Senate Democrat called for new evidence and testimony from former national security adviser John Bolton, acting White House chief of staff Mick Mulvaney and two others as part of a detailed proposal outlined in a letter Sunday to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to spur negotiations with the GOP.

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"This trial must be one that is fair, that considers all of the relevant facts," Schumer wrote. "The trial must be one that not only hears all of the evidence and adjudicates the case fairly; it must also pass the fairness test with the American people."

Trump has expressed interest in a robust trial that would not only clear him of the charges in the Senate but also vindicate him, but his desire for a lengthy proceeding is something Senate Republicans are hoping to avoid.

McConnell and Schumer are expected to meet to discuss how to conduct the trial, much as the Democrats and Republicans did during Bill Clinton's impeachment two decades ago.

The witness list will be key to the proceedings.

Despite Republican control in the Senate, McConnell's slim 53-47 majority limits his ability to steer the impeachment trial. It takes 51 votes to approve most motions in the proceedings, even to set the rules, which means the leader can only afford to lose two Republican senators and still pass his preferred options.

Some Republican senators may feel pressure from Democrats to call additional witnesses or expand the proceedings, especially those up for reelection next year in swing states where voters are split in their views of Trump.

At the same time, Democrats face political risks if Republicans lean into Trump's demands for a showier trial, summoning Biden or his son, Hunter Biden, or others to appear. Republicans claim without evidence that Hunter Biden's work for a gas company in Ukraine merited the investigation Trump sought from that country's officials.

In his letter, Schumer proposes a detailed structure and timeline for a trial to begin Jan. 7, with the swearing-in of Chief Justice John Roberts to oversee the proceedings and stretch for several weeks as Democrats subpoena witnesses and testimony, specifically around Trump's decision to withhold military aid from Ukraine. A day of what Schumer calls "pretrial housekeeping measures" would take place Jan. 6.

Schumer additionally sets out a specific schedule that would allow for 24 hours of opening arguments by the House Democrats' impeachment managers and then 24 hours for the White House lawyers to present their arguments, followed by days of witness testimony. He also sets time for questioning of House managers and Trump's counsel by senators; final arguments by House managers and Trump's counsel; and as many as 24 hours for deliberations by senators. All told, Schumer suggests as many as 126 hours of proceedings.

McConnell has indicated in recent days his preference for a swift trial without calling witnesses in what Republicans fear could become a spectacle. At the same time, the GOP leader has said he's taking his "cues" from the White House and will conduct the proceedings as Trump wants them.

Democrats want to hear from Bolton, who labeled the alternative foreign policy being run by Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani and others as a "drug deal" he wanted no part of. He left the White House in September.

They also want testimony from Mulvaney, who has acknowledged the military aid to Ukraine was being held up, as well as two other White House officials: Robert Blair, a top Mulvaney aide, and Michael Duffey, a budget official who was tasked with handling the Ukraine issue. Those officials defied House Democrats' subpoenas to appear before the inquiry.

In the House, a group of freshmen lawmakers is urging leaders to make an unusual choice by naming Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan as an impeachment manager. A libertarian-leaning conservative, Amash left the GOP and is now an independent after becoming the rare Republican to call for the president's impeachment. Rep. Dean Phillips, D-Minn., has been leading the effort, and talked with both the congressman and party leaders, his spokesman Bryan Doyle said.

Associated Press writers Laurie Kellman in Washington and Julie Walker in New York contributed to this report.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. WHO SENATE DEMOCRATS WANT TO HEAR FROM IN IMPEACHMENT TRIAL

Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer says Democrats will seek testimony from new witnesses, including John Bolton and Mick Mulvaney, in a trial that party leaders say could last weeks.

2. WHY THOUSANDS OF OHIO VOTERS' ABSENTEE APPLICATIONS WERE DENIED

An Associated Press review has found Ohio voters were held up or stymied in their efforts to get absentee ballots for last year's general election because of missing or mismatched signatures on their applications.

3. DEMOCRATS TO DEBATE FOR LAST TIME IN 2019 AMID TURBULENCE

The seven candidates who will stand on a Los Angeles debate stage this week are being forced to grapple with unprecedented distraction from Washington, questions about their core principles and new signs that the party's energized factions are turning against each other.

4. FORMER FBI DIRECTOR ADMITS 'SLOPPINESS' IN RUSSIA PROBE

James Comey acknowledges that a Justice Department inspector general report revealed problems in the surveillance of a former Trump campaign aide, but says there was no misconduct in the handling of the Russia investigation.

5. WHERE A FEMALE TATTOO ARTIST IS TAKING A BIG RISK

The 26-year-old, divorced single mother started her mobile tattoo shop in ultra-conservative Afghanistan 18 months ago. She has received death threats for taking on the taboo of the ink piercings she does — as well as being a single woman willing to work with men.

6. WHERE A PEACEFUL RALLY ENDED IN CRACKDOWN

Lebanese security forces fired tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons to disperse hundreds of protesters for a second straight day, ending what started as a relatively calm demonstration.

7. HALLMARK WILL REINSTATE SAME-SEX MARRIAGE ADS IT PULLED

The commercials, one of which featured two brides kissing at the altar, were initially axed after a complaint from a conservative advocacy group.

8. OPIOID MAKER PUSHES OVERDOSE TREATMENT ABROAD

The maker of the blockbuster opioid OxyContin, widely blamed for unleashing the American overdose epidemic, is trying to dominate the foreign market for opioid overdose treatment through its international affiliate.

9. WHY UN CHIEF IS 'DISAPPOINTED' BY CLIMATE SUMMIT

Marathon U.N. climate talks end with a slim compromise sparking widespread disappointment after major polluters resisted calls for ramping up efforts to keep global warming at bay. Negotiators postponed debate about rules for international carbon markets for another year.

10. BUFFALO CLINCHES PLAYOFF SPOT IN WIN OVER PITTSBURGH

Quarterback Josh Allen threw a 14-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Kroft with 7:55 to play and the Bills clinched a playoff spot, beating the Steelers 17-10.

UK prime minister to welcome new lawmakers to Parliament

By GREGORY KATZ and DANICA KIRKA undefined

LONDON (AP) — British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is set to give a pep talk Monday to a new group of Conservative Party lawmakers as he begins his push to secure parliamentary approval for his Brexit deal.

Johnson will welcome 109 newly elected colleagues, many of them coming from parts of the country that were once strongholds of the opposition Labour Party.

Buoyed by the party's decisive win in last week's election, Johnson will move fast to deliver on his campaign mantra to "get Brexit done." That means ensuring a Brexit withdrawal agreement bill is passed in time for the U.K. to complete its historic departure from the European Union by the current deadline of Jan. 31.

Johnson has promised to bring the bill to the House of Commons before Christmas. It is expected to

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receive strong support in Parliament, where Johnson's Conservatives hold a strong majority. The party won 365 of the 650 seats in the House of Commons in Thursday's landslide election.

If the bill passes and Britain leaves the EU on time, the country will enter a transition period when EU rules and regulations would still apply in the country and people and goods would still be able to pass freely between the U.K. and the remaining EU members.

Negotiators for the British government and the EU would start trade talks with an eye toward reaching a comprehensive post-Brexit agreement.

Queen Elizabeth II will formally open Parliament on Thursday with a speech outlining the government's legislative program.

The pomp and ceremony surrounding the queen's speech will be less lavish than usual because she last formally opened Parliament just two months ago for what turned out to be a session that was cut short by a vote for an early election.

New lawmakers took to Twitter to chronicle their first day at work.

The new representative for Bury in northwest England, Christian Wakeford, tweeted: "Reality with a bump, 5:33 train down to #Westminster not a morning person at all but couldn't be happier to be on this train."

Newcastle-under-Lyme lawmaker Aaron Bell shared an image of himself smiling in front of the Palace of Westminster: "Good morning Newcastle. A new dawn has broken, has it not?"

There was no such giddiness on the Labour side as the party prepares for what is likely to be a bruising leadership contest, which is expected to formally begin in early January. The goal is to have a replacement for Jeremy Corbyn in place by the end of March.

Labour took 203 seats in Thursday's election, its worst total since 1935. Corbyn has apologized for the party's dismal performance and has agreed to step down when a new leader is chosen.

WWII allies, ex-enemy Germany mark 75th Battle of the Bulge

By RAF CASERT and MARK CARLSON Associated Press

BASTOGNE, Belgium (AP) — Side by side, the Allies and former enemy Germany together marked the 75th anniversary of one of the most important battles in World War II — the Battle of the Bulge, which stopped Adolf Hitler's last-ditch offensive to turn the tide of the war.

At dawn on Dec. 16, 1944, over 200,000 German soldiers started the most unexpected breakthrough through the dense woods of Belgium and Luxembourg's hilly Ardennes. Making the most of the surprise move, the cold, freezing weather and wearied U.S. troops, the Germans pierced the front line so deeply it came to be known as the Battle of the Bulge.

Initially outnumbered, U.S. troops delayed the attack enough in fierce fighting to allow reinforcements to stream in and turn the tide of the battle by Christmas. After a month of fighting, the move into Germany was unstoppable.

U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper paid tribute to over 19,000 U.S. troops who died in one of the bloodiest battles in the nation's history.

"Their efforts not only defended America but also ensured that the peoples of Europe would be free again," Esper said, calling the Battle of the Bulge "one of the greatest in American history."

Even though German deaths also exceeded well over 10,000 in the battle that stretched deep into January, German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier took special time to thank the U.S. troops.

"On this day, we Germans would like to thank the United States of America. The American armed forces, together with their allies, liberated Europe and they also liberated Germany. We thank you," Steinmeier said.

"Those who died were victims of hatred, delusion, and a destructive fury that originated from my country," he said.

Germany is now an ally of the United States and its wartime partners, united in the NATO alliance. During the poignant ceremonies under leaden skies and rain at the star-shaped Mardasson memorial in Bastogne, the current discord between the United States and several European allies over trade and security were never mentioned.

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Even if it was relatively warm 6 degrees Centigrade (43 degrees Fahrenheit) compared to the shivering conditions 75 years ago, there was also a fog hanging low.

Hitler had hoped the advance would change the course of World War II by forcing U.S. and British troops to sue for peace, thus freeing Germany to focus on the rapidly advancing Soviet armies in the east.

Out of the blue at dawn, over 200,000 German troops counter-attacked across the front line in Belgium and Luxembourg, smashing into battle-weary U.S. soldiers positioned in terrain as foreign to them as it was familiar to the Germans.

Yet somehow, the Americans blunted the advance and started turning back the enemy for good, setting Allied troops on a roll that would end the war in Europe less than five months later.

This battle gained fame not so much for the commanders' tactics but for the resilience of small units hampered by poor communications that stood shoulder to shoulder to deny Hitler the quick breakthrough he so desperately needed. Even though the Americans were often pushed back, they were able to delay the German advance in its crucial initial stages.

"It was ultimately the intrepid, indomitable spirit of the American soldier that brought victory," Esper said.

When the fortunes of war turned, it was most visible in the southern Ardennes town of Bastogne, where surrounded U.S. troops were cut off for days with little ammunition or food.

When Brig. Gen. Anthony C. McAuliffe of the 101st Airborne received a Dec. 22 ultimatum to surrender or face total destruction, he offered one of the most famous — and brief — replies in military history: "'Nuts.'" Four days later, U.S. troops broke the Nazi encirclement.

"News of their fierce defense quickly spread, boosting the morale of allied forces all along the Western Front," Esper said.

After the fighting in the Battle of the Bulge ended on Jan. 28, 1945, Allied forces invaded Germany, eventually leading to the Nazi surrender and the end of the war in Europe.

Casert reported from Brussels. Photojournalist Virginia Mayo contributed from Hamm, Luxembourg.

Turbulence shakes Democrats going into final debate of 2019

By **STEVE PEOPLES** and **WILL WEISSERT** Associated Press

CLINTON, Iowa (AP) — Seven Democratic presidential candidates will stand on stage this week in Los Angeles, a pool of survivors who have withstood almost a year on the campaign trail, sustained attacks from rivals in both major political parties and five rounds of high-pressure debates.

And while the field has been effectively cut down from more than 20 in the span of six months, a deepening sense of volatility is settling over the Democratic primary on the eve of the sixth and final debate of 2019. The remaining candidates, those in the debate and some trying to compete from outside, are grappling with unprecedented distraction from Washington, questions about their core principles and new signs that the party's energized factions are turning against each other.

Lest there be any doubt about the level of turbulence in the race, it's unclear whether Thursday's debate will happen at all given an unsettled labor union dispute that might require participants to cross a picket line. All seven candidates have said they would not do so.

The Democratic dilemma is perhaps best personified by Elizabeth Warren, whose progressive campaign surged through the late summer and fall but is suddenly struggling under the weight of nagging questions about her health care plan, her ability to compete against President Donald Trump and her very authenticity as a candidate.

Boyd Brown, a South Carolina-based Democratic strategist who recently decided to back Joe Biden only after his preferred candidate, Beto O'Rourke, was forced from the race, likened Warren's position to that of someone falling down a mountain grasping for anything to slow her descent.

"She's got real problems," Brown said.

Warren has avoided conflict with her Democratic rivals for much of the year, but she has emerged as the chief antagonist of the leading candidates in the so-called moderate lane, former Vice President Joe

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Biden and Mayor Pete Buttigieg of South Bend, Indiana. Seven weeks before Iowa's Feb. 3 caucus, the Massachusetts senator is attacking both men with increasing frequency for being too willing to embrace Republican ideas and too cozy with wealthy donors.

Those close to Warren hope the strategy will allow her to shift the conversation away from her own health care struggles back to her signature wealth tax and focus on corruption. Yet she could not escape questions about her evolving position on Medicare for All as she campaigned in Iowa over the weekend.

When asked about health care, Warren told a crowd of roughly 180 people in the Mississippi River town of Clinton, Iowa, about a plan to expand insurance coverage without immediately moving to a universal, government-run system. She promised that those who wanted government health insurance could buy it before finally concluding, "At the end of my first term, we'll vote on Medicare for All."

The next question came from a man who said he was on Medicare and mostly happy about it, but had lingering issues.

"You call it Medicare for All and it's better. Can't you change the name?" he asked of her proposal.

"I like your suggestion," Warren responded, in a tone suggesting she wasn't entirely joking. "Let's call it health care for everybody." She later added, "Let's call it better than Medicare for All. I'm in."

Even entertaining a name change seemed to mark yet another shift for Warren, who first co-sponsored Medicare for All in 2017, but began pivoting away from the proposal after experts questioned the plan she released in October to pay for it without raising middle-class taxes. She subsequently released a "transition plan" promising to get Medicare for All approved by Congress by the end of her third year as president while relying on existing insurance plans, including those established by Obamacare, to expand health coverage in the interim.

Warren's Democratic critics suggest her evolution on the issue has stalled her momentum because it goes beyond a policy dispute and raises broader questions about what may be the most important personal quality in politics: authenticity.

Indeed, Buttigieg, Biden and other rivals have seized on her shifts. Even Bernie Sanders, Warren's progressive ally and Medicare for All's author, seemed to pile on by promising to send a full bill to Congress implementing the measure during the first week of his administration.

Without naming any of his rivals, Biden adviser Symone Sanders said candidates would not succeed in shifting the conversation away from health care this week even if they wanted to. She said to expect another "robust exchange" on the issue, which "is not going away and for good reason, because it is an issue that in 2018 Democrats ran on and won."

Tough questions for Warren haven't just come from her rivals.

Since Thanksgiving, she's shortened her typically 30-minute and more stump speech to around 10 minutes and used the extra time to take more audience questions — only to be forced further on the defensive about health care.

Barton Wright, a 69-year-old technical writer, pressed Warren on Medicare for All at a recent event in Rochester, New Hampshire, noting after the event that he wants a deeper explanation.

"It just sounds awful," Wright said. "It sounds 'like Hemlock for All' for people who don't like Medicare. And that's a lot of people."

Even after questioning Warren, however, Wright said he was helping her campaign and still plans to vote for her.

Meanwhile, Buttigieg, the surprise member of the top-tier, is grappling with issues of his own that expose another fissure between the moderate and progressive wings of the party.

Protesters aligned with Warren and Sanders tracked him across New York City last week banging pots and pans and calling him "Wall Street Pete" as he continued his aggressive courtship of wealthy donors. The 37-year-old seemed genuinely confused by the protests, which he was forced to acknowledge during at least one Manhattan fundraiser because the noise outside was so loud.

As he faced supporters in Seattle over the weekend, Buttigieg acknowledged that the intra-party attacks will almost certainly continue, although he tried to downplay the intensity of the infighting.

"There's gonna have to be some fighting," Buttigieg said, "but I'm never gonna let us get to where it

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feels like the fight is the point.”

The fighting is almost certain to be on display at Thursday night’s debate, especially among the four candidates in the top-tier: Biden, Buttigieg, Sanders and Warren. The three others on stage — Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, billionaire activist Tom Steyer and entrepreneur Andrew Yang — only narrowly hit the polling threshold needed to qualify and have an obvious incentive to make waves of their own as well.

Voters don’t want a public fight, even if they sense one is coming.

Steve Wehling, a 43-year-old University of Iowa employee, said he doesn’t like Democrats feuding with each other, but he won’t hold it against Warren or anyone else. He said he understands that, with the caucuses looming, “all of the campaigns are really starting to put the squeeze on.”

“Voters turn on the debates and still see 10 people on stage and I think a lot would of them would like to see the field narrowed down,” said Wehling, who plans to vote for Sanders and says Warren is his second choice. “The pressure is really on.”

Peoples reported in New York. Associated Press writer Hunter Woodall in Rochester, New Hampshire, contributed to this report.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, “Ground Game.”

Allen’s fourth-quarter TD clinches playoff spot for Bills

By DAN SCIFO Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — The Buffalo Bills didn’t have many playoff experiences during a recent two-decade stretch.

Bills coach Sean McDermott and his quarterback Josh Allen are helping to change the culture in Buffalo.

Allen threw a 14-yard touchdown pass to Tyler Kroft with 7:55 to play and the Bills clinched a playoff spot, beating the Pittsburgh Steelers 17-10 on Sunday night.

“(McDermott) preaches playoff caliber and that’s the standard we hold ourselves to,” Allen said. “The goal is to get yourself into the playoffs to have a shot at the Super Bowl.”

The Bills (10-4) have done that.

They secured their second playoff berth in three seasons under McDermott. Buffalo trailed 10-7, but scored on two possessions in the fourth quarter, as Allen rallied the Bills for a comeback win for the fifth time this season. Consecutive interceptions by Jordan Poyer and Levi Wallace on Pittsburgh’s last two possessions sealed the victory.

The surging Steelers (8-6) had an opportunity to leapfrog the Bills for the top AFC wildcard spot, but Buffalo snapped Pittsburgh’s three-game win streak. The Steelers remain the No. 6 seed in the AFC, but they have no room for error.

“We will learn from this and move forward to our next opportunity,” said Steelers coach Mike Tomlin, a college teammate with McDermott at William & Mary. “There is scarcity in this business. You only get so many opportunities to state a case for yourself.”

Buffalo won for the fourth time in five games and recorded its first 10-win season since 1999. The Bills also beat the Steelers for the second time ever in Pittsburgh, first since a 21-point win in the 1993 AFC Divisional playoff round.

The Bills, who improved to 6-1 on the road, made their first Sunday night appearance in 12 years when they were dismantled by the Patriots in a 46-point loss.

Not this group, led by a No. 3-ranked defense and an opportunistic offense.

The Bills no longer resemble the inept franchise with a revolving door of coaches, general managers and quarterbacks that struggled through a 17-year playoff drought before McDermott and general manager Brandon Beane arrived.

Allen completed 13 of 25 passes for 139 yards with a touchdown and an interception. Allen, who also rushed for a score, has only lost consecutive games once in his career. Kroft scored his first touchdown

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since 2017 when he played for Cincinnati. Devin Singletary rushed for 87 yards and John Brown caught seven passes for 99 yards. He became Buffalo's first 1,000-yard receiver since 2015.

The Steelers entered with wins in seven of their last eight games since a 1-4 start.

Devlin Hodges completed 23 of 38 passes for 202 yards with one touchdown and four interceptions. Hodges had a chance to become the first undrafted rookie in the Super Bowl era to win his first four starts.

James Conner played for the first time since missing five of the last six games with a shoulder injury. He finished with 42 yards rushing and caught a touchdown pass.

"After a loss like that, it's kind of quiet," Hodges said. "Everyone knows what's on everyone's mind. Not a whole lot of talking needs to be done."

Pittsburgh scored on the first drive of the second half to take a 10-7 lead.

Hodges opened the series with a 31-yard pass to Diontae Johnson and Conner broke off a 17-yard run, setting up his 11-yard touchdown reception two plays later. The 69-yard touchdown drive came after Pittsburgh totaled 64 yards in the first half.

Tre'Davious White returned his second interception of the game 49 yards to the Pittsburgh 18 late in the third quarter. The Bills couldn't capitalize with a touchdown and instead settled for a 36-yard field goal by Stephen Hauschka to tie it.

The Bills took the lead for good on their next possession.

Allen connected with Brown for a 40-yard gain one play after a Pittsburgh punt. Five plays later, Allen found Kroft at the front pylon for a 14-yard touchdown pass.

"We were on the same page," Kroft said. "I saw the coverage and I knew I had to get my head around fast. He threw a perfect strike and it made my job easy."

Allen's 1-yard touchdown run on the second play of the second quarter opened the scoring.

Allen's ninth score also established a new single-season franchise record for touchdowns rushing by a quarterback. Buffalo took advantage of a short field following a 22-yard punt and converted a fourth down during the 40-yard series.

Pittsburgh trailed 7-3 when Steven Nelson picked off Allen late in the second quarter. A facemask set Pittsburgh up with first-and-goal from the 10, but Johnson fumbled and the Bills recovered to preserve a four-point halftime lead.

The defense also helped lead the Bills back to the playoffs again.

"Before we got here, it was a 17-year drought," said White, the Bills' first round pick in 2017. "Since we've been here, we've been to the playoffs two out of the last three years. It's pretty special because these things don't come around often."

NOTES: Allen tied Doug Flutie for the most consecutive games accounting for a touchdown by a Bills quarterback with 20. ... T.J. Watt is the first player in Steelers history with multiple 13-sack seasons. ... Pittsburgh registered at least one sack in 55 straight games, the longest in regular-season franchise history. ... Chris Boswell kicked his 125th career field goal, fourth-most in Steelers history. ... The matchup featured the first trio of brothers – Pittsburgh's Trey and Terrell Edmunds and Buffalo's Tremaine Edmunds – to appear in the same game since 1927.

UP NEXT

Bills: Travel to New England on Saturday.

Steelers: Visit the New York Jets on Sunday.

AP Exclusive: Thousands of Ohio absentee applications denied

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Thousands of Ohio voters were held up or stymied in their efforts to get absentee ballots for last year's general election because of missing or mismatched signatures on their ballot applications, an Associated Press review has found.

The signature requirement on such applications is a largely overlooked and spottily tracked step in Ohio's voting process, which has shifted increasingly to mail-in ballots since early, no-fault absentee voting was

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instituted in 2005.

To supporters, the requirement is a useful form of protection against voter fraud and provides an extra layer of security necessary for absentee balloting.

To detractors, it's a recipe for disenfranchisement — a cumbersome addition to an already stringent voter identification system.

Susan Barnard, of Dayton in Montgomery County, said her 78-year-old husband, Leslie, who has cancer, missed a chance to vote last year because of a delay related to the signature requirement.

"We had planned a cruise last fall to give him something to look forward to," said Barnard, 73. "It fell at the time of the election, and we were going to vote the absentee ballot. We got right down to the wire and we didn't have one for him, and so he did not vote because of that."

She said he had hoped to vote in the election, which included races for governor, state Supreme Court and Congress. Barnard suspects her husband simply forgot to sign his ballot application.

Figures provided to the AP through public information requests to Ohio's 88 county boards of elections show 21 counties rejected more than 6,500 absentee ballot applications because a signature was either missing or didn't match what was on file. That requirement is not for the ballot itself, which faces a different battery of requirements, but merely for an application requesting one. Another five counties reported rejecting about 850 applications combined, for various reasons that the boards didn't specify.

The few counties that tracked what happened to applications after they were rejected said issues were largely addressed before or on Election Day.

Twelve responding counties recorded encountering no signature issues with the absentee applications. The remaining responding counties said they didn't track how many applications they rejected.

It's a statistic conspicuously absent from all the official data collected by the state, making it all but impossible to compare the issue across years or multiple states.

Signatures and other verification requirements are there to safeguard Ohio's elections, said state Rep. John Becker, a southwestern Ohio Republican. He said if a voter fails to sign the application form, "that's on them."

"I'm a big believer in personal responsibility," Becker said. "You've got the form in front of you. If you forget to sign it, there are consequences."

But Jen Miller, executive director of the League of Women Voters of Ohio, said the AP analysis highlights a largely unexamined step in a process her organization already views as inefficient and subject to uneven enforcement.

"So a person can register to vote online, but if you go online to request an absentee ballot, a form is mailed to you that you have to mail back," Miller said. Her organization supports allowing people to request absentee ballots online.

About 1.4 million of Ohio's roughly 8 million registered voters cast absentee ballots last year.

Republican Secretary of State Frank LaRose advocated as a state lawmaker for Ohio to allow voters to apply for absentee ballots online. A version of legislation he first proposed in 2013 is now before Ohio's Legislature.

"While Ohio has long been a national leader in early voting, there is certainly more that can be done to prevent issues like these from occurring," LaRose said. "Election integrity and voter access can certainly coexist, so let's work together to modernize the process so we can improve the antiquated system currently in place."

LaRose's predecessor mailed absentee ballot applications to 6.6 million of Ohio's 8 million registered voters in 2018. And state law actually says a request for an absentee ballot "need not be in any particular form" — meaning it could conceivably arrive on a cocktail napkin or the back of an envelope.

Still, the signature requirement is one of eight or nine pieces of information, depending on the type of election, that a successful request must contain.

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, three states — Oregon, Washington and Colorado — conduct all-mail elections, eliminating the ballot application process by automatically mailing

a ballot to every registered voter before Election Day.

Miller said Ohio has not shown the political will to move in this direction, but her organization is pushing establishment of a permanent absentee list for those voters who meet certain criteria that require help, such as illness, permanent disability or illiteracy. Seven states and the District of Columbia have just such a system.

A tattoo at a time, Afghan woman takes on society's taboos

By TAMEEM AKHGAR Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — A female tattoo artist, a rarity in ultra-conservative Afghanistan, is taking a big risk with every customer she takes on.

It's been 18 months since Suraya Shaheedi started her mobile tattoo shop in the capital, Kabul. She's received death threats for taking on the taboo of the ink-on-skin drawings she does — as well as being a single woman willing to work with men.

"I have struggled a lot, even been threatened with death, because people in Afghanistan think doing tattoos is haram," she said, using the Arabic word meaning prohibited by religion.

"Whether my customers are men or women doesn't matter to me. I do tattoos for both," says Shaheedi, a 26-year-old, divorced single mother.

In a black curtained room, surrounded by his friends, a young customer shrieks in pain as the needle pierces and inks his skin.

"I can't leave the profession I love," Shaheedi adds.

She easily gets customers, whether men or women, as social attitudes toward tattoos loosen up and more ink parlors open. It's the kind of small, but important change that Shaheedi feels a return of Taliban rule could threaten.

After decades of war, Afghans want peace. A big concern for many like Shaheedi is that U.S.-led peace talks with the Taliban will boost the militant group.

"I am happy if the Taliban return results in peace, but if they disagree with my work and impede the freedom and progress of women, then I will be the first to stand against them," she vowed.

Women like Shaheedi have carved out a space for themselves in a society where custom heavily restricts women's roles and education. Close to 40% of Afghanistan's eligible girls are not allowed by their families to go to school, and almost 20% are forced by their families to leave school after grade six, according to a survey by the Asia Foundation released this year.

In areas under the Taliban, who now control or hold sway over roughly half of the country, women are not allowed to leave their homes without a male escort. The insurgent group ruled Afghanistan with a harsh version of Islamic law from 1996 to 2001, when the U.S. invaded.

Shaheedi divorced her husband eight years ago while she was pregnant. She and her son now live with her parents. Her father supports her work, even though Afghanistan's patriarchal society often forbids a woman from touching a man to whom she is not related or married.

Her parents and elder brother persuaded her to become a tattoo artist, Shaheedi said, after she got her first tattoo while visiting Turkey — an arrow piercing the image of an eye on her right hand, which she says symbolizes overcoming adversity.

Shaheedi's father, Hussain, 58, believes the strict customs controlling women in Afghanistan need to change. "I support my daughter in every way, and she makes me proud the way she's stood against this taboo," he said.

Shaheedi uses Instagram and other social media to find and meet customers. She prefers not to keep a parlor with a fixed address out of concerns for her safety.

She also does manicures and makeup. When she met one customer recently at a hair salon, the customer's husband recognized her from her social media pages as being the tattoo artist "Aho," the nickname she uses online. The husband threatened to kill Shaheedi if she kept posting images of her tattoo work on social media.

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Tattoos were common in some of Afghanistan's rural areas, especially among Pashtun and Hazara women, but the ink piercings were used sparingly, often as only a few green dots on the face.

Tattoo artists say demand among the younger generation has risen for more flamboyant and personal designs, and with it, the number of ink parlors increased in the capital.

Omid Noori, 23, has 16 tattoos all over his body. He wants to add another on his left arm, showing the head of a lion with a crown and wreaths. But he only wants new designs on parts of his body that his clothing can hide, because he says he's tired of hearing people's negative comments about the ink piercings.

He also worries what would happen if Islamic militants caught him.

"I'm thinking that if the Taliban return, they'll cut off my hands and legs," he said.

He inked his last tattoos at a parlor belonging to a former Afghan army officer, Nazeer Mosawi.

Mosawi, 42, fought for seven years in Afghanistan's civil war with the Islamic insurgents. He says he is still fighting the war, but this time his battle is against society's conservatism, with his tattoo machine as his weapon.

Mosawi receives threatening phone and social media messages almost every day, demanding he close his tattoo business. "They even threaten to beat me, burn my shop," he said. "There is no alternative: I tell them, OK, I can't flee this country because of these threats. It's my homeland."

But for every threat he gets, Mousawi said he gets several messages with positive feedback or people curious to learn more.

Shaheedi said she is also working to put her 8-year-old son, now in second grade, through school. She is also studying business management at a university in Kabul.

"Being a woman in Afghanistan requires guts," she said. "I am proud of myself for having the guts."

In reversal, Hallmark will reinstate same-sex marriage ads

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The Hallmark Channel, reversing what it called a "wrong decision," said Sunday it will reinstate commercials featuring same-sex couples that it had pulled following a complaint from a conservative group.

The earlier decision by Crown Media, Hallmark's parent company, to pull several ads for the wedding planning site Zola featuring two brides kissing at the altar had launched a storm of protest. Celebrities like Ellen DeGeneres and William Shatner criticized the move and the hashtag #BoycottHallmarkChannel was trending on Twitter at one point.

"The Crown Media team has been agonizing over this decision as we've seen the hurt it has unintentionally caused," said a statement issued Sunday evening by Hallmark Cards CEO Mike Perry. "Said simply, they believe this was the wrong decision. ... We are truly sorry for the hurt and disappointment this has caused."

Zola, the wedding planning site that made the ads, said it was relieved that the decision to pull them had been reversed. In an email to The Associated Press, the company said it would be in touch with Hallmark "regarding a potential return to advertising."

"We are humbled by everyone who showed support not only for Zola, but for all LGBTQ couples and families who express their love on their wedding day, and every day," said a statement Sunday evening from the company's chief marketing officer, Mike Chi.

The LGBT advocacy group GLAAD also expressed relief at the reversal. Its president and CEO, Sarah Kate Ellis, said Hallmark's "decision to correct its mistake sends an important message to LGBTQ people and represents a major loss for fringe organizations like One Million Moms, whose sole purpose is to hurt families like mine."

It was a complaint by One Million Moms, part of the American Family Association, that had led to the initial decision to pull the the Zola ads. A post on the group's website Saturday said that Crown Media CEO Bill Abbott had spoken by telephone with the group and "reported the advertisement aired in error." It also said: "The call to our office gave us the opportunity to confirm the Hallmark Channel will continue to be a safe and family-friendly network." The group had not commented on the reversal as of late Sunday night.

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Zola had submitted six ads, with four including a lesbian couple. After Hallmark pulled those ads, but not two featuring only opposite-sex couples, Zola withdrew its remaining ads.

Molly Biber, senior vice president for public affairs at Hallmark, said in an interview Sunday night that from the time the initial decision had been made, "Crown Media had been in agony over the hurt that this had caused. Hallmark has an unwavering commitment to diversity and inclusion."

She added that the reversal, and not the original decision, "truly reflects who we are as a company. We celebrate all families."

Hallmark's statement said the network will be "working with GLAAD to better represent the LGBTQ community" and would be reaching out to Zola to reestablish its partnership.

"Across our brand, we will continue to look for ways to be more inclusive and celebrate our differences," Perry said.

In one of the pulled ads, two brides stand at the altar and wonder aloud whether their wedding would be going more smoothly if they had used a planning site like Zola. The lighthearted ad ends with the just-married couple sharing a quick kiss.

DeGeneres had quickly assailed the original decision, asking on Twitter: "Isn't it almost 2020?" Actress Sandra Bernhard, who played one of the first openly bisexual characters on network TV in "Roseanne," had also criticized the move.

"All the groovy gay ladies i know won't be watching your Christmas schlock," she wrote on Twitter.

The Hallmark decision was also mocked on "Saturday Night Live," and Netflix US tweeted stills from a TV show and movie that it labeled "Titles Featuring Lesbians Joyfully Existing And Also It's Christmas Can We Just Let People Love Who They Love."

Democrats seek Bolton, Mulvaney for impeachment trial

By LISA MASCARO and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senate Democrats are proposing a weeklong Senate impeachment trial seeking testimony from four new witnesses including John Bolton and Mick Mulvaney over President Donald Trump's actions toward Ukraine, according to a detailed outline released Sunday.

Minority Leader Chuck Schumer of New York proposed the structure for a "fair and honest" trial in a letter to Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, an attempt to launch negotiations ahead of House voting this week that is all but certain to result in the president being impeached.

Trump faces two charges — abuse of power and obstruction of Congress — over his efforts to pressure Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden while withholding military aid to the ally. The president faces likely impeachment in the House, where Democrats have control, but he is expected to be acquitted in a trial in the Senate, where Republicans have the majority. McConnell has signaled his preference for a speedy trial.

"This trial must be one that is fair, that considers all of the relevant facts, and that exercises the Senate's 'sole Power of Impeachment' under the Constitution with integrity and dignity," Schumer wrote. "The trial must be one that not only hears all of the evidence and adjudicates the case fairly; it must also pass the fairness test with the American people."

Trump has expressed interest in a robust trial that would not only clear him of the charges in the Senate but also vindicate him, but his desire for a lengthy proceeding is something Senate Republicans are hoping to avoid.

A spokesman for McConnell said Sunday the two leaders are expected to meet.

"Leader McConnell has made it clear he plans to meet with Leader Schumer to discuss the contours of a trial soon," McConnell spokesman Doug Andres said. "That timeline has not changed."

Schumer and McConnell are expected to discuss the contours of a Senate trial, much as the Democrats and Republicans did during Bill Clinton's impeachment two decades ago.

In the letter, Schumer proposes a detailed structure and timeline for a trial to begin Jan. 7, with the swearing in of Chief Justice John Roberts to oversee the proceedings and stretch for several weeks as

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Democrats subpoena witnesses and testimony, specifically around Trump's decision to withhold military aid from Ukraine. A day of what Schumer calls "pretrial housekeeping measures" would take place Jan. 6.

Democrats want to hear from Bolton, who was Trump's national security adviser at the time and labeled the alternative foreign policy being run by Trump lawyer Rudy Giuliani and others as a "drug deal" he wanted no part of. He left the White House in September.

They also want testimony from Mulvaney, the acting chief of staff at the White House, who has acknowledged the military aid to Ukraine was being held up, as well as two other White House officials: Robert Blair, a top Mulvaney aide, and Michael Duffey, a budget official who was tasked with handling the Ukraine issue.

As House Democrats decide who will prosecute the case in the Senate, a group of freshmen House lawmakers is urging leaders to make an unusual choice by naming Rep. Justin Amash of Michigan as an impeachment manager. Amash left the GOP to become an independent after calling for the president's impeachment. Rep. Dean Phillips, D-Minn., has been leading the effort and has talked with the congressman and party leaders, his spokesman Bryan Doyle said.

Schumer additionally sets out a specific schedule that would allow for 24 hours of opening arguments by the House Democrats' impeachment managers and then 24 hours for the White House lawyers to present their arguments, followed by days of witness testimony. He also sets time for questioning of House managers and Trump's counsel by senators; final arguments by House managers and Trump's counsel; and as many as 24 hours for deliberations by senators. All told Schumer suggests 126 hours of proceedings.

McConnell has indicated in recent days his preference for a swift trial without calling witnesses in what Republicans fear could become a spectacle. At the same time, the GOP leader has said he's taking his "cues" from the White House and will conduct the proceedings as Trump wants them.

One top Trump ally, Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina, said Sunday he too prefers a quick end to impeachment proceedings.

"I'd tell the president, if somebody is ready to acquit you, I'd sort of get out of the way," Graham said. He warned that calling witnesses could mean that Trump administration officials such as Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, blocked by the White House previously from appearing before investigators, could be forced to testify.

"I understand the president's frustration, but I think what's best for the country is to get this thing over with," Graham said. "I clearly made up my mind. I'm not trying to hide the fact that I have disdain for the accusations in the process. So I don't need any witnesses."

Trump is accused of abusing his presidential power by asking Ukraine to investigate Biden while holding American military aid as leverage, and obstructing Congress by blocking the House's efforts to investigate his actions.

Trump has lashed out repeatedly against impeachment and has told confidants that even if he is acquitted in the Senate as expected, it will be a stain on his legacy.

"The Impeachment Hoax is just a continuation of the Witch Hunt which has been going on for 3 years. We will win!" Trump tweeted Sunday.

But he also has said he believes impeachment could be a political winner, citing reelection campaign data that shows his fundraising, rally attendance and poll numbers in battleground states have all increased since the inquiry began.

The issue of whether or not to allow more witnesses will be key to the Senate negotiations ahead.

Despite Republican control in the Senate, McConnell faces limits on his ability to steer the impeachment proceedings because the GOP holds a slim 53-47 majority. It takes 51 votes to approve most motions in the proceedings, which means the leader can only afford to lose two Republican senators and still pass his preferred options.

Some Republicans may feel pressure from Democrats to call additional witnesses or expand the proceedings, especially those up for re-election next year in swing states where voters are split in their views of Trump.

At the same time, Democrats face political risks if Republicans decide to lean into Trump's demands for a showier trial, summoning Biden or his son, Hunter Biden, or others to appear.

Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, said Sunday that Trump should be able to call witnesses, including Hunter Biden and the whistleblower who reported Trump's July telephone conversation with Ukraine's president, which is at the heart of the impeachment investigation.

Hunter Biden was on the board of a Ukrainian energy company while his father was vice president, and Trump has alleged without evidence that Joe Biden got a Ukrainian prosecutor fired because the prosecutor was looking into the energy company. In fact, the U.S. and many other Western governments had pushed for the prosecutor's ouster, believing that he was soft on crime.

Other Republican senators have tried to move the White House away from the idea of calling witnesses. Cruz appeared on ABC's "This Week" while Graham was on CBS' "Face the Nation."

Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman contributed to this report.

Sackler-owned opioid maker pushes overdose treatment abroad

By **CLAIRE GALOFARO** and **KRISTEN GELINEAU** Associated Press

The gleaming white booth towered over the medical conference in Italy in October, advertising a new brand of antidote for opioid overdoses. "Be prepared. Get naloxone. Save a life," the slogan on its walls said.

Some conference attendees were stunned when they saw the company logo: Mundipharma, the international affiliate of Purdue Pharma — the maker of the blockbuster opioid, OxyContin, widely blamed for unleashing the American overdose epidemic.

Here they were cashing in on a cure.

"You're in the business of selling medicine that causes addiction and overdoses, and now you're in the business of selling medicine that treats addiction and overdoses?" asked Dr. Andrew Kolodny, an outspoken critic of Purdue who has testified against the company in court. "That's pretty clever, isn't it?"

As Purdue Pharma buckles under a mountain of litigation and public protest in the United States, its foreign affiliate, Mundipharma, has expanded abroad, using some of the same tactics to sell the addictive opioids that made its owners, the Sackler family, among the richest in the world. Mundipharma is also pushing another strategy globally: From Europe to Australia, it is working to dominate the market for opioid overdose treatment.

"The way that they've pushed their opioids initially and now coming up with the expensive kind of antidote -- it's something that just strikes me as deeply, deeply cynical," said Ross Bell, executive director of the New Zealand Drug Foundation and a longtime advocate of greater naloxone availability. "You've got families devastated by this, and a company who sees dollar signs flashing."

This story was produced with support from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting.

Mundipharma's antidote, a naloxone nasal spray called Nyxoid, was recently approved in New Zealand, Europe and Australia. Mundipharma defended it as a tool to help those whose lives are at risk, and even experts who criticize the company say that antidotes to opioid overdoses are badly needed. Patrice Grand, a spokesman for Mundipharma Europe, said in a statement that heroin is the leading cause of overdose death in European countries and nasal naloxone is an important treatment option.

Injectable naloxone has long been available; it is generic and cheap. But Mundipharma's Nyxoid is the first in many countries that comes pre-packaged as a nasal spray — an easier, less threatening way for those who witness an overdose to intervene. Nyxoid, which isn't sold in the U.S., is more expensive than injectable naloxone, running more than \$50 a dose in some European countries. A similar product manufactured by another pharmaceutical company has been available for years in the U.S. under the brand name Narcan.

Critics say Nyxoid's price is excessive, particularly when inexpensive naloxone products already exist.

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Grand declined to say how much Nyxoid costs Mundipharma to manufacture or how profitable it has been.

The Sackler family's pharmaceutical empire has long considered whether it might make money treating addiction, according to lawsuits filed against Purdue and the family. In the U.S., Purdue Pharma called its secret proposal Project Tango, the attorneys general of Massachusetts and New York have alleged, and discussed it in a September 2014 conference call that included family member Kathe Sackler.

In internal documents, the lawsuits allege, Purdue illustrated the connection they had publicly denied between opioids and addiction with a graphic of a blue funnel. The top end was labeled "Pain treatment." The bottom: "opioid addiction treatment." The slideshow said they had an opportunity to become an "end-to-end provider" — opioids on the front end, and addiction treatment on the back end.

"It is an attractive market," the staff wrote, according to the Massachusetts complaint. "Large unmet need for vulnerable, underserved and stigmatized patient population suffering from substance abuse, dependence and addiction."

In its response to the court, the family's lawyers wrote that the plan was put forward by a third-party private equity fund as a potential joint venture and "at the very most, Project Tango was mentioned in passing on a few occasions and the proposal was subsequently abandoned." A press release issued by the Sacklers said no member of the family or board had an active role in the presentations or supported the proposal, and called the lawsuits "sensationalized" and "misleading." Purdue declined to comment.

New York's lawsuit alleges that in 2015, Project Tango was presented to Purdue's board as a joint venture to sell the addiction medication suboxone that could become the "market lead in the addiction medicine space." The presentation highlighted the sales opportunity in opioid addiction: 40 to 60 percent who went through treatment would relapse and need it again.

Project Tango stalled. It was revised the next year with a new plan to sell naloxone, the lawsuits allege.

Publicly, Purdue was denying that its painkillers caused the addiction epidemic. But in internal communications, the company described naloxone as a "strategic fit" and a "complementary" product to the prescription opioids they were already selling, the Massachusetts attorney general said. Purdue calculated that the need for overdose reversal medication was increasing so rapidly, potential revenue could triple from 2016 to 2018.

The lawsuit alleges that Purdue identified its own painkiller patients as a target market for naloxone — and that it could use its sales force already visiting doctors to promote opioids to also promote overdose reversal medication. They saw potential profits in government efforts to expand access to naloxone to stem the tide of overdose deaths, a toll that has soared to 400,000 since the American epidemic began.

Project Tango fizzled in the U.S.; the family's press release said Purdue's board rejected it.

But half a world away, in Australia, Mundipharma embarked on an effort to promote naloxone that was sweeping and effective.

As part of an Australian coroner's investigation last year into six fatal opioid overdoses in New South Wales state, Mundipharma submitted a 15-page document touting the benefits of naloxone. If people around the overdose victims had had access to naloxone, the company wrote, many of those deaths may have been avoided. At the same time, Mundipharma was registering Nyxoid in Australia, a fact it acknowledged within its submission.

In the document, the company suggested that officials change the country's laws to allow for easier access to naloxone, get naloxone into needle exchange programs, detox centers and supervised injecting clinics, and establish a national, free take-home naloxone program.

"The Coroner should consider what is needed to realise the full public health benefits of this essential medicine," Mundipharma wrote.

During the coroner's inquest, Mundipharma sent a staffer to court to testify about the benefits of naloxone nasal spray. According to a transcript, Mundipharma's Medical Affairs Director, Brian Muller, came to court with samples of naloxone products, including Nyxoid.

Health and addiction experts also praised the drug's life-saving potential. In her written findings delivered in March, Coroner Harriet Grahame agreed that naloxone should be more widely distributed and Nyxoid

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given to the state's paramedics, police agencies, doctors and hospital emergency departments.

Mundipharma also paid for a drug policy institute's study on naloxone that the federal government ultimately used as a blueprint for a 10 million Australian dollar (\$6.8 million) pilot program to distribute naloxone, including Nyxoid. And in October, Australian Health Minister Greg Hunt announced that Australia's government would subsidize Nyxoid prescriptions, meaning it costs Australians as little as AU\$6.50 (\$4.50) per pack, versus around AU\$50 without the subsidy.

Asked in an interview whether the government had any concerns about following the recommendations of a Mundipharma-funded report that stood to benefit the company financially, Hunt replied: "All of the advice is that this is a product that will save lives and protect lives and our approach is to be fearless of the source of the product."

In a statement, Mundipharma Australia denied its Nyxoid push in the country had any connection to, or was influenced in any way, by Purdue's Project Tango.

"Mundipharma Australia and Purdue Pharma are independent companies," the Australian company wrote. "Mundipharma Australia introduced Nyxoid to help meet a clear clinical need."

Grand, the spokesman for Mundipharma Europe, also rejected any link between the company's Nyxoid strategy and Project Tango, saying that the European company and Purdue have separate managements, boards and strategies.

In some countries, including Norway, Nyxoid is the only nasal naloxone product approved, said Thomas Clausen, a professor at the University of Oslo in Norway who runs the nation's naloxone program. Clausen is happy that Nyxoid is available, but not that a company profiting from mass marketing opioids is now trying to profit again off opioid addiction.

"It's kind of a paradox," he said.

Clausen said he hopes other companies will enter the market, and that competition will drive down cost. In its basic, generic form, Clausen said, naloxone is so cheap that the United Nations launched a pilot program in central Asian countries providing injectable naloxone at a cost of around \$1 per kit.

Some critics argue that Mundipharma should be providing a cheaper — or even free — naloxone product, although Nyxoid's cost is not remarkable when compared to the exorbitant price of many prescription drugs in the U.S. The most common nasal antidote in the U.S. retails for more than \$100, double what most Europeans pay for Nyxoid.

Still, in some countries, Nyxoid's price could prove problematic.

Pernilla Isendahl runs a naloxone distribution program in a county in south Sweden that began in June 2018, when Nyxoid came onto the market. Each kit costs the government 450 Swedish Krona (\$47.)

The project is expected to run for at least three years, and she hopes after that the county will continue to pay for the medication, despite budget constraints.

"I can't really see how it would be financed by the people themselves, at the price it is now," she said.

In the United Kingdom, Nyxoid is being distributed by a handful of charities, said Peter Furlong, coordinator of British charity Change Grow Live's Nyxoid distribution pilot program in Manchester. Furlong is pleased more people now have access to the medicine, but it still costs more than injectable naloxone. Furlong said he asked Mundipharma if they could reduce the drug's price for the charity's pilot, which began in August, but Mundipharma told him it was too early to talk discounts.

Grand, the spokesman for Mundipharma Europe, said the company was working closely with charities and addiction organizations to identify the best ways to make the drug available to those who may benefit from it. Nyxoid's price reflects the company's investment, manufacturing cost and the value of the technology, while recognizing the "prevailing financial pressures that exist within care sectors," he said.

Stephen Wood, a fellow at the Harvard Medical School Center for Bioethics who studied how pharmaceutical companies in the U.S. raised prices on naloxone products as the addiction epidemic intensified, says that Sackler-owned companies manufacturing naloxone have an ethical duty to make it widely available.

"If they were trying to find a solution, they would just distribute naloxone for free," he said. "They could use all that money they made off opioids to help support a program where they are giving away this life-

saving medication.”

The Global Opioids project can be seen here: <https://www.apnews.com/GlobalOpioids>

Report: Boeing considers cutting production of 737 Max

SEATTLE (AP) — Boeing may cut production of the grounded 737 Max jet or temporarily stop making it after being told that its timetable for a return to the skies was not realistic, according to a published report Sunday.

The Wall Street Journal reported that Boeing’s board would consider the moves at a meeting that began Sunday and would run into Monday. The newspaper, citing people it did not identify, said management is increasingly seeing production cuts as a viable option.

Boeing wouldn’t comment to The Associated Press Sunday night, but the company repeated a previous statement that it continues to work with the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration and global regulators on the Max, which was grounded in March after deadly crashes in Indonesia and Ethiopia that killed a total of 346 people.

“We will continue to assess production decisions based on the timing and conditions of return to service, which will be based on regulatory approvals,” the statement said.

The report came just days after a senior FAA official told legislators that Boeing is pushing for an unrealistically quick return of the Max and that there is a perception the company is pressuring the regulator.

In an email Thursday to key congressional committees, Philip Newman, FAA assistant administrator for government and industry affairs, said Administrator Stephen Dickson “is concerned that Boeing continues to pursue a return-to-service schedule that is not realistic” because of various delays. Newman wrote that Dickson is clear that FAA and Boeing “must take the time to get this process right.”

The grounding of the Max is costing Boeing and airlines billions. Boeing has been eager to signal that the plane could soon fly again. Recently, the company said it expected the FAA to permit shipments of new Max jets in December and approval of a pilot-training program for airlines in January.

Boeing is waiting for the FAA and other regulators to sign off on changes to flight control software that was a major factor in the two crashes.

Boeing said in October that production cuts may be needed if a decision on letting the plane fly again is delayed into next year.

Production cuts could result in layoffs at the plant near Seattle that could help Boeing control its expenses as it waits for the FAA and other regulators to let the Max back into the air. Companies that supply parts to the plane also may have to cut production.

Protests turn violent for 2nd day in Lebanon’s capital

By HUSSEIN MALLA and DALAL MAWAD Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanese security forces fired tear gas, rubber bullets and water cannons Sunday to disperse hundreds of protesters for a second straight day, ending what started as a peaceful rally in defiance of the toughest crackdown on anti-government demonstrations in two months.

The violence comes on the eve of a meeting between the president and parliamentary blocs in which resigned Prime Minister Saad Hariri is widely expected to be renamed to the post. The tension also reflects deepening divisions in the country that is grappling with a severe liquidity and foreign currency crunch.

Hariri resigned Oct. 29 amid nationwide protests that have accused the entire political elite of corruption and mismanagement amid Lebanon’s worst economic crisis in decades. The protesters say they won’t accept Hariri as prime minister, demanding an independent head of government not affiliated with existing parties.

“Saad, Saad, Saad, don’t dream of it anymore,” protesters chanted Sunday.

After weeks of bickering, the political parties failed to put forward independent names, most of them

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insisting on keeping their political share in the government.

The protests Sunday were largely peaceful, but some demonstrators lobbed water bottles and firecrackers at security forces guarding parliament. After a couple of hours, security forces chased the the protesters away, using batons and tear gas. The protesters dispersed in central Beirut. At one point, someone set fire to two tents set up by protesters in Martyrs' Square, the epicenter for the anti-government protests for 60 days.

After hours of clashes, the army deployed around central Beirut, putting an end to the pitched street battles. The Lebanese Civil Defense said it transferred 20 injured to hospitals while it treated over 70 protesters on site. A news photographer was among the injured.

The army first deployed to separate protesters and rival supporters of political groups, according to reports on al-Jadeed. The local TV station filmed soldiers forcing protesters to retreat from central Beirut's squares.

Tension has surfaced between protesters and supporters of the Shiite groups Hezbollah and Amal, after the later rejected criticism of their leaders. Meanwhile, the protesters were angered by what they said was the security forces' harsh crackdown on their rallies while treading lightly when dealing with supporters of the powerful political groups.

Divisions also surfaced among the protesters who rallied in central Beirut. Some promoted confrontation with security forces to express anger at the crackdown and the government's "business as usual" approach. Many protesters came prepared with helmets and tear gas, and they used plant pots and bins to throw up a barricade in the street.

"We have reclaim our country from this occupation," one angry protester told LBC TV, referring to what he called a corrupt government in place for decades. Another told Al-Jadeed that on Sunday the protesters started the friction "as a reaction to unjust crackdown" the day before.

Thousands had gathered peacefully earlier Sunday dispersed by evening.

Security forces chased protesters in central Beirut, firing tear gas and rubber bullets. Some protesters hid in the commercial area surrounding the parliament and others in masks pelted officers with stones.

Demonstrators had chanted against the security crackdown. One raised a poster saying the tear gas won't keep them away. "We are crying already," it added, in a jab at the deep economic crisis Lebanese are facing.

The streets leading to parliament were filled with men, women and even children. Some huddled in smaller groups while others were lifted on shoulders chanting in megaphones.

"I came back today to pressure the parliament to make the right choice tomorrow and choose a prime minister from outside the political parties. If they don't choose someone acceptable, we will be back to the streets again and again," said Chakib Abillamah, a businessman who was demonstrating Saturday when violence broke out.

Another protester, Huda Kerbagi, said she expected violent protests for some more days, warning that violence will beget violence, particularly in a diverse society like Lebanon. "In other revolutions you have one bloc against one bloc and in this country we have many blocs."

One protester from southern Lebanon, who gave his name as Ali, said he came to the Beirut protest to change the rulers because "none of them feels their offenses or have any conscience. Not one of them offered an apology."

Saturday night into Sunday saw one of the most violent crackdowns on protesters since nationwide anti-government demonstrations began two months ago. The overnight confrontations in Beirut left more than 130 people injured, according to the Red Cross and the Lebanese Civil Defense. The Red Cross said none of the injured were in serious condition and most of them were treated on the spot.

Attackers in northern Lebanon also set fire to the offices of two major political parties early Sunday, the state-run National News Agency said.

In one attack, assailants broke the windows and set fire to the local office of Hariri's political party in the town of Kharibet al-Jundi in the northern Akkar district. Photos circulated on social media of shattered glass and the aftermath of the fire.

In a separate attack also in Akkar, assailants stormed the local office of the largest party in parliament,

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affiliated with President Michel Aoun and headed by Foreign Minister Gebran Bassil. The party said the contents of the office in the town of Jedidat al-Juma had been smashed and burned.

Interior Minister Raya al-Hassan on Sunday ordered an investigation into the Beirut overnight clashes, which she said injured both protesters and security forces. She said she watched the confrontations "with concern, sadness and shock."

Al-Hassan blamed "infiltrators" for instigating violence and called on the demonstrators to be wary of those who want to exploit their protests for political reasons. She didn't elaborate.

The head of the Internal Security Forces, Maj. Gen. Imad Osman, turned up at the protest rally Sunday. He told reporters on the scene that the right to protest was guaranteed by the law. "But calm down, no need for violence," he said, appealing to protesters.

Associated Press reporters AJ Naddaff, Andrea Rosa, Fadi al-Tawil and Sarah El Deeb contributed to this report.

Chinese TV pulls Arsenal game coverage after Ozil criticism

By ROB HARRIS AP Global Soccer Writer

LONDON (AP) — Chinese television pulled coverage of Arsenal's Premier League match against Manchester City on Sunday after Mesut Ozil, a forward for the London club, criticized Beijing's brutal mass crackdown on ethnic Muslims in the country.

China is the Premier League's most lucrative overseas broadcast market, with the rights sold for \$700 million in a three-year deal that runs through 2022.

But instead of the sports channel of Chinese state television showing Ozil featuring in Arsenal's 3-0 loss to City, it scheduled a delayed recording of Tottenham's 2-1 victory over Wolverhampton from earlier Sunday, according to information from the network.

Streaming service PPTV.com also canceled a feed of Arsenal's match which featured Ozil for almost an hour before he was substituted amid cheers and some jeers from his own fans. Ozil reacted by kicking his gloves on the touchline.

"How he reacts is up to him and I'll deal with it," interim Arsenal manager Freddie Ljungberg said. "We'll see what it means for the future but of course we want players to behave the right way."

Ljungberg would not discuss the specifics of Ozil's social media post from Friday which embroiled Arsenal in controversy in China.

"The China thing is political," Ljungberg said, "and I'll leave that to the club."

Arsenal used a post on Chinese social media network Weibo to dissociate itself from Ozil's action.

"The content he expressed is entirely Ozil's personal opinion," the north London club said. "As a football club, Arsenal always adheres to the principle of not being involved in politics."

Ozil added to condemnation of the detention of more than 1 million Uighurs and other minorities in so-called reeducation camps in China's northwestern region of Xinjiang, where they are subjected to political indoctrination, torture, beatings, and food deprivation, as well as denial of religious and linguistic freedom.

A social media post from Ozil on Friday denounced China for burning Qurans, closing mosques and the killing of religious scholars. The Arsenal player complained that "Muslims stay quiet."

The Chinese Football Association expressed "great indignation and disappointment" at Ozil's comments, according to the Global Times newspaper published by the ruling Communist Party.

China's government increasingly uses the threat of loss of access to the country's growing market as leverage to try to control what companies, universities and others say or do abroad about political issues.

Arsenal will be hoping to avoid the backlash faced by the Houston Rockets earlier this year after the NBA team's general manager, Daryl Morey, tweeted support for anti-government protesters in Hong Kong, angering fans and officials in China.

The tweet was deleted soon after it was posted, and Rockets owner and billionaire casino and restaurant owner Tilman Fertitta quickly rebuked his GM with a tweet saying that Morey does not speak for the team.

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The tweet caused some Chinese corporations to suspend relationships with the NBA.

There is a growing a backlash in China against Ozil, who is Muslim of Turkish descent.

"I think he is very wrong," lawyer Chen Wangshu said in Beijing. "As a sportsman, his most important responsibility is to do his job well, or to play good football."

In 2018, Ozil quit Germany's national team following criticism over his decision to pose for a picture with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan.

"He should be responsible for his career and refrain from making any comment raising and inciting anger in other nations," Chen said.

More AP soccer: <https://apnews.com/apf-Soccer> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Babe Ruth's 500th homer bat sells for more than \$1 million

LAGUNA NIGUEL, Calif. (AP) — Babe Ruth has hit another one out of the ballpark.

The bat used by the legendary baseball player to hit his 500th home run was auctioned on Saturday for more than \$1 million.

SCP Auctions didn't identify the buyer. The auction was held in Laguna Niguel, California.

Ruth hit his 500th homer on Aug. 11, 1929, in a game against the Cleveland Indians. According to SCP Auctions, the ball cleared the right field wall at League Park and rolled down Lexington Avenue.

Ruth was the first of just 27 Major League Baseball players to reach that mark.

He gave the autographed bat to his friend, former Suffern, New York, Mayor Jim Rice, in the 1940s. It's been in the family for nearly 75 years.

Another Ruth bat used to hit the first home run out of Yankee Stadium in 1923 sold for nearly \$1.3 million in 2004.

75 years on, Battle of the Bulge memories bond people

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

THIMISTER-CLERMONT, Belgium (AP) — As a schoolboy three quarters of a century ago, Marcel Schmetz would regularly see open trucks rumble past to a makeshift American cemetery — filled with bodies, some headless, some limbless, blood seeping from the vehicles onto the roads that the U.S. soldiers had given their lives to liberate.

Sometimes, Schmetz said, there were over 200bodies a day, casualties of one of the bloodiest and most important battles in World War II: The Battle of the Bulge which started 75 years ago on Monday and effectively sealed the defeat of Nazi Germany.

"It gave me nightmares," Schmetz said. It also gave the 11-year-old the resolve that, one day, he would give something back.

"I had to do something," he said.

M&M

Fast forward to 2019, when memories are fading and relations between Europe and the United States deteriorating.

There's a rambling house and converted warehouse in the bucolic, verdant hills that were once among the worst killing grounds of World War II. Zoom in to the living-room table, where Marcel, 86, sits with his wife, Mathilde, and one of the many World War II veterans that have shared coffee and cake — and often a nip of something stronger — with them, telling stories that span generations.

"Well, I don't share them very often," said Arthur Jacobson, who was just 20 when he fought in the Battle of the Bulge. "Once in a while, somebody is interested and I tell them a little bit."

In Marcel and Mathilde's home, which also serves as the Remember Museum 39-45, "a little bit" doesn't count. Soon the former Bazooka operator was sharing stories of friends lost, ties gained, all between a chuckle and a moist eye.

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For M&M, as the couple is known to fans from across the United States, remembering has become a mission in life, since memory brings understanding and friendship. They are not alone. From the shores of Normandy, where the allies first landed on D-Day, to the forests deep in the Belgian Ardennes, there remains a deep appreciation for what the soldiers did.

Yet, those people live on the scar tissue of war, where battlefields, memorials and cemeteries lie just a few miles away. That memory fades quickly the more one moves from the old front lines to European cities, where peace and prosperity has reigned for the best part of a century. The voices of the last witnesses of the war's fighting, mostly in their 90s now, are also becoming frailer by the day.

And with the growing questioning of trans-Atlantic ties and trust, the challenge to keep those bonds across the ocean intact has increased.

It makes Marcel and Mathilde's mission to connect all the more vital.

"Whoever is your president, whoever runs the show, the boys who were on the front lines, who still go out and fight for our freedoms, they need to know we appreciate them," Mathilde said.

IT GIVES ME GOOSEBUMPS

Lt. Col. Jim Moretti of the 171st Air Refueling Wing knows it well, and whenever he is in Germany on a mission he always makes the pilgrimage to Marcel and Mathilde just across the border.

The first time he thought to spend perhaps half an hour in their small museum. Then he found out that the hardware sinks into insignificance compared to the software of the place — the stories which are linked to every item on show.

"We ended up being there for 3, 4, 5 hours," he said.

Mathilde connects a face in a photograph to a veteran she met years ago and still remembers the story that makes it all relevant to the families of the fallen.

"It gives me goosebumps. It's sobering, humbling," Moretti said.

It became even better when he was able to be part of such a story himself.

THE SMALLEST OF THINGS

Soft-spoken local policeman Serge Fafchamps had something troubling him for a while. Through his family, he obtained a fist-sized Bible that had been left behind by Pvt. Millard Weekley in a local hotel during the war, likely in the rush to reach the front line.

Like so many locals, Fafchamps is strongly aware of the sacrifices U.S. soldiers made during World War II and wanted to make a gesture, however small, to show that in the 21st century it was not forgotten.

"It was, I think, the smallest of things, it was a friendly act that I hoped would deliver some happiness to the family," he said.

Even though he got close to finding the family, there was still a missing link, and he long thought he had reached a dead end. Then, by chance, he learned of Marcel and Mathilde. Soon, they were on the case.

"I began to make these searches with the help of American friends," Mathilde said. "Then, finally, someone found the daughter," Paula Ferrell.

But they still needed someone to deliver the Bible, in person. So in walked Lt. Col Moretti, who saw, as luck would have it, that Ferrell lived close to his airbase in Coraopolis, Pa.

"Of all the places in the U.S., this could not be true," Moretti said.

And one Sunday on the airbase, Ferrell and her family were handed the Bible.

"It was an amazing idea. I am so thankful for that," Ferrell said of Fafchamps' kindness. Now the Bible sits on a night table next to her bed, the handwriting on the opening page a palpable memory of a father who was always taciturn when it came to war stories and memories.

"He never talked about it. He was a man of few words," she said.

A new bond had been forged across the ocean. "If he was here, I'd give him a hug," she said of Fafchamps.

The policeman himself said it gave him "a sense of mission accomplished."

IT IS NOT TO FORGET THEM

The mission though, is getting tougher by the day.

Perhaps the best part of the museum is a "Red Ball Express" army supply truck, on which countless veterans have written their names. Ever more though, the owners of the white-painted signatures are

dying off. Just this week, Mathilde opened a letter informing her of yet another death.

Marcel, ever the optimist, is looking to a new generation of U.S. troops, soldiers like Moretti, to carry on the torch.

"When I look at the young soldiers who are on U.S. bases in Germany," he said, "it always reminds me of the arrival of the Americans in 1944," who had come to liberate him and his family.

"It is not to forget them. It is not to forget them, no?"

AP photojournalist Virginia Mayo and videojournalist Mark Carlson contributed to this report.

Comey: 'Real sloppiness' in Russia probe but no misconduct

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former FBI Director James Comey acknowledged Sunday that a Justice Department inspector general report identified "real sloppiness" in the surveillance of a former Trump campaign aide and said he was wrong to have been "overconfident" about how the Russia investigation was handled.

But Comey also insisted he was right to feel some measure of vindication because the report did not find evidence for the most sensational of President Donald Trump's claims, including that he had been wiretapped and illegally spied on and that the FBI had committed treason in investigating ties between Russia and his 2016 campaign.

"Remember how we got here," Comey said in an interview on "Fox News Sunday." "The FBI was accused of criminal misconduct. Remember, I was going to jail, and lots of other people were going to jail."

The inspector general, he added, "did not find misconduct by FBI personnel, did not find political bias, did not find illegal conduct." The significant mistakes the inspector general identified are "not something to sneeze at" but also not evidence of intentional misconduct, Comey said.

In a tweet Sunday, Trump called for an apology from Comey, now that he "got caught red handed."

"So now Comey's admitting he was wrong," Trump wrote. "So what are the consequences for his unlawful conduct. Could it be years in jail? Where are the apologies to me and others, Jim?"

The report by Inspector General Michael Horowitz concluded that the FBI opened the Russia investigation for a legitimate reason and was not motivated by partisan bias when it did so. But Horowitz also found major errors and omissions in applications the FBI submitted to eavesdrop on former Trump campaign aide Carter Page. Those problems include the omission of key information about the reliability of a source whose information had been relied on for the warrant, and the altering of an email by an FBI lawyer.

Comey said in retrospect that he was wrong when he told an interviewer last year that the applications to the secretive Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court were handled in a "thoughtful, responsible way."

"I was overconfident in the procedures that the FBI and Justice had built over 20 years. I thought they were robust enough. It's incredibly hard to get a FISA. I was overconfident in those," Comey said Sunday.

"Because he's right," Comey added, referring to Horowitz. "There was real sloppiness, 17 things that either should've been in the applications or at least discussed and characterized differently. It was not acceptable and so he's right. I was wrong."

Current FBI Director Christopher Wray told The Associated Press last week that the report identified problems that the report found problems that are "unacceptable and unrepresentative of who we are as an institution." The FBI is taking more than 40 steps to fix those problems, he said.

Horowitz told the Senate Judiciary Committee on Wednesday that no one who was involved in the warrant application process should feel vindicated, rejecting claims of vindication that Comey had made in an opinion piece earlier in the week. Comey said Sunday that he simply meant that the report had debunked some of the gravest allegations that Trump and his supporters had made.

"All of that was nonsense. I think it's really important that the inspector general looked at that and that the American people, your viewers and all viewers, understand that's true," Comey said.

He also criticized Attorney General William Barr for saying in a separate interview last week that the many errors by the FBI left open the possibility that agents may have acted in bad faith.

"The facts just aren't there, full stop," Comey said, when asked whether Barr has a valid point. "That doesn't make it any less consequential, any less important, but that's an irresponsible statement."

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

Mighty Bernie at bat? Sanders makes pitch for minor leagues

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

BURLINGTON, Iowa (AP) — Take Bernie out to the ball game?

Bernie Sanders, the Vermont senator and Democratic presidential candidate, is aggressively opposing a Major League Baseball plan to cut 42 minor league teams across the country after 2020. Among the targeted are the Vermont Lake Monsters, the Single-A affiliate of the Oakland Athletics in his hometown, Burlington.

Defending low-profile ball clubs in far-flung places more fervently than anyone in the crowded Democratic presidential field allows Sanders to potentially win over a largely untapped 2020 constituency: baseball fans.

Sanders briefly took batting practice Sunday on an indoor turf field as representatives from three small-town Iowa teams looked on: the Quad City River Bandits, the Clinton LumberKings and the Burlington Bees, the local club in this town on the Mississippi River. In August, Sanders played softball with reporters on the state's corn field-ringed "Field of Dreams," the set of the Hollywood hit of the same name. And he has tapped a former Harvard second baseman, Faiz Shakir, to run his campaign.

Sanders shed his signature suit jacket to take swings in a sweater over a dress shirt. With a staff member slow-pitching, the senator dribbled a few grounders to his left, then lifted a ball in the air in the same direction, before joking that he was aiming another grounder off his bat at CNN reporter who should have dived to stop it. After about six hits, he dropped the bat and said "OK, that's it."

"For all the major league scouts, if I don't make it to the presidency, I'm available," Sanders joked.

Taking the diamond demonstrated physical stamina for a 78-year-old who recently had a heart attack, while also letting Sanders press a larger political point about rich owners putting profits ahead of the national pastime. But it also shows off a softer side of someone most known to supporters and detractors alike for being a democratic socialist and backing progressive policy proposals such as "Medicare for All."

"The guys who own the teams are billionaires," Sanders said told The Associated Press interview earlier this week, adding that baseball "is not an institution that is hurting financially. And you can see that by, just in the last few weeks, seeing major league teams signing star baseball players for as much (as) \$324 million."

That refers to the New York Yankees recently signing free-agent pitcher Gerrit Cole to a reported 9-year, \$324 million contract.

MLB is negotiating a new agreement with the National Association of Professional Baseball Leagues, the governing body of the minors. The initial contraction proposal primarily would impact lower-level teams in short-season leagues. Sanders met last month with Commissioner Rob Manfred to decry the plan and the senator sent him a letter Saturday, arguing that baseball "has to be considered more than just the bottom line."

"Baseball is not just another business," Sanders said during the interview. "There's a reason the president of the United States throws out the first pitch of the season, why baseball is considered a national pastime."

After the initial Sanders-Manfred meeting, MLB issued a statement saying it "understands that we have an obligation to local communities to ensure that public money spent on minor league stadiums is done so prudently and for the benefit of all citizens."

But it added: "MLB also must ensure that minor league players have safe playing facilities suitable for the development of professional baseball players, are not subjected to unreasonable travel demands, are provided with compensation and working conditions appropriate for elite athletes, and have a realistic opportunity of making it to the major leagues."

Some minor league players have filed a federal class-action suit charging that many players earn less

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than \$7,500 per year, violating minimum wage laws.

More than 100 members of Congress from both parties have signed a separate letter to Manfred opposing shutting down minor league teams. So far, though, Sanders is alone among the Democratic presidential hopefuls loudly opposing the idea.

"He's the only one I hear talking about it," said J.D. Scholten, who pitched professionally in Canada and for Iowa's independent Sioux City Explorers. Scholten challenged longtime Republican Rep. Steve King in 2018 and is trying again to unseat him.

"I think it kind of fits into his overall message of, right now, a lot of the way our lives are being shaped by wealthy people who are dictating a lot of these things at the top, and the people at the bottom are being left behind," said Scholten, who also played basketball this past week with another White House hopeful, businessman Andrew Yang.

Sanders said before Sunday's batting practice that Congress could intervene if baseball goes through with its contraction plan. He noted the sport's antitrust exemption and the public dollars some teams have received to build stadiums, and cited lucrative television contracts that he said are "sometimes designed in unusual ways."

"So I think there is a lot Congress can do to protect baseball for ordinary Americans and I think that is what you're going to see being done in a bipartisan matter," Sanders said. "I hope it doesn't have to come to that."

Scholten said he tells crowds at town halls while campaigning that he'll answer questions about anything, including baseball.

"My baseball background gets talked about quite a lot. I'm actually kind of surprised. I haven't played in 10 years, was a paralegal for a decade and nobody talks about that," Scholten joked.

Sanders' baseball ties predate his 2020 campaign. He visited with the Los Angeles Dodgers during spring training in 2018 and, as he was recovering at home following his Oct. 1 heart attack, Sanders' campaign released video of the candidate batting balls around his backyard.

The senator grew up loving the Brooklyn Dodgers until they moved to Los Angeles when he was 16. He now roots for the Boston Red Sox, like a lot of New Englanders.

While running for the first elected office he won, mayor of Burlington in 1981, Sanders says he thinks he remembers campaigning on landing a minor league team. He says "we worked extremely hard" to accomplish just that - bringing a Cincinnati Reds affiliate to town three years later.

"Everybody found it amusing because the name was the Vermont Reds," Sanders, noting his proud leftist streak, chuckled.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly "Ground Game" politics podcast

This story has been corrected to reflect that Sanders' campaign manager, Faiz Shakir, played baseball at Harvard, not Yale.

Anna Karina, the icon of French New Wave cinema, dies at 79

PARIS (AP) — Anna Karina, the French New Wave actress who became an icon of the cinema in the 1960s and was the muse of Jean-Luc Godard, has died. She was 79.

The French culture minister announced her death on Twitter on Sunday. French media said that the Danish-born Karina had cancer and died Saturday.

"Her look was the look of the New Wave. It will remain so forever," Culture Minister Franck Riester tweeted.

"Anna Karina radiated. She magnetized the entire world," Riester said, adding that "French cinema has lost one of its legends."

Karina made seven films with Godard, her partner at the time, including the 1961 "Une Femme Est Une Femme" (A Woman is a Woman), in which she played a femme fatale. For that, she received the best actress award at the Berlin Film Festival. Other cult Godard movies starring Karina included the 1962 "Vivre Sa Vie" (Live Your Life) and the 1965 "Pierrot Le Fou."

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Karina captured film-goers with her large blue doe eyes and acting and singing talents.

The French New Wave broke with traditional cinematic conventions to create a fresh approach to making movies, in keeping with the free-spirited times.

Godard wasn't the only director with whom Karina worked. Jacques Rivette's 1966 film "La Religieuse" (The Nun), adapted from the 18th-century French novel by Diderot, was initially banned. The story of a young woman forced into the convent by her mother, who had given birth out of wedlock, was revived in a restored version and presented at the 2018 Cannes film festival.

Born Hanne Karin Blarke Bayer in Denmark, she initially modeled and sang in cabarets before coming to France. She was reportedly discovered, and renamed, by Coco Chanel, then discovered by Godard.

Karina also worked, among other illustrious directors, with Luchino Visconti.

In a bold undertaking at the time, the actress later got behind the camera to make her own movie in 1973, "Vivre Ensemble" (Living Together).

Films that Karina has appeared in will be shown on the silver screen again with a retrospective of Godard starting next month at the Cinemateque, a noted film institution in France which she had frequented.

This story has been corrected to show that the name of a film is "Pierrot Le Fou," not "Pierre Le Fou."

Disappointment as marathon climate talks end with slim deal

By FRANK JORDANS and ARITZ PARRA Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — Marathon U.N. climate talks ended Sunday with a slim compromise that sparked widespread disappointment, after major polluters resisted calls for ramping up efforts to keep global warming at bay and negotiators postponed debate about rules for international carbon markets for another year.

Organizers kept delegates from almost 200 nations in Madrid far beyond Friday's scheduled close of the two-week talks. In the end, negotiators endorsed a general call for greater efforts to tackle climate change and several measures to help poor countries respond and adapt to its impacts.

U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres said he was "disappointed" by the meeting's outcome.

"The international community lost an important opportunity to show increased ambition on mitigation, adaptation and finance to tackle the climate crisis," he said. "We must not give up and I will not give up."

The final declaration cited an "urgent need" to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases in line with the goals of the landmark 2015 Paris climate change accord. But it fell far short of explicitly demanding that countries submit bolder emissions proposals next year, which developing countries and environmentalists had demanded.

The Paris accord established a common goal of keeping temperature increases below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit), ideally 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) by the end of the century. So far, the world is on course for a 3- to 4-degree Celsius rise, with potentially dramatic consequences for many countries, including rising sea levels and fiercer storms.

After two nights of fractious negotiations, delegates in Madrid decided to defer some of the thorniest issues to the next U.N. climate summit in Glasgow in November.

Chile's Environment Minister Carolina Schmidt, who chaired the meeting, said she was "sad" no deal had been reached on the rules for international trading in carbon emissions permits.

"We were on the verge," she said, adding that the goal was to establish markets that are "robust and environmentally sustainable."

Economists say putting a price on carbon dioxide, the main greenhouse gas, and allowing countries or companies to trade emissions permits, will encourage the shift to away from fossil fuels toward renewable energy.

Some observers welcomed the failure of a deal on carbon markets, though, and the European Union and developing countries had said beforehand that no deal was better than a bad one.

"Thankfully, the weak rules on a market-based mechanism, promoted by Brazil and Australia, that would have undermined efforts to reduce emissions, have been shelved," said Mohamed Adow, director of Nairobi-

based campaign group Power Shift Africa.

Helen Mountford, from the environmental think-tank World Resources Institute, said that "given the high risks of loopholes discussed in Madrid, it was better to delay than accept rules that would have compromised the integrity of the Paris Agreement."

The talks in Spain took place against a backdrop of growing worldwide concern about climate change. The past year saw large protests in hundreds of cities around the globe and climate activists staged several rallies inside and outside the conference venue to express their frustration at the slow pace of the talks.

The meeting was moved from Chile's capital Santiago to Madrid at a month's due to violent protests against the Chilean government, which was under pressure to deliver a positive result.

Delegates made some progress on financial aid for poor countries affected by climate change, despite strong resistance from the United States to any clause holding big polluters liable for the damage caused by their emissions. Countries agreed four years ago to funnel \$100 billion per year by 2020 to assist developing nations, but so far nowhere near that amount has been raised.

Under the Paris accord, countries are supposed to regularly review their national emissions reduction targets and increase them if necessary. Last week, the European Union agreed a goal of becoming carbon neutral by mid-century, but the move did little to sway discussions in Madrid about setting more ambitious targets in the medium term, an issue that will be on the agenda again in Glasgow.

The United States will be excluded from much of those talks after President Donald Trump announced the country's withdrawal from the Paris accord, a process that comes into force Nov. 4, 2020.

Scientists said the longer countries wait to cut emissions, the harder it will be to meet the Paris temperature target.

"The global emissions' curve needs to bend in 2020," said Johan Rockström, director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research near Berlin.

"Emissions need to be cut half by 2030, and net zero emissions need to be a reality by 2050," he said. "Achieving this is possible — with existing technologies and within our current economy. The window of opportunity is open, but barely."

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

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AP EXPLAINS: How Madrid talks fell short on climate ambition

By ARITZ PARRA and FRANK JORDANS Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — This year's U.N. climate negotiations in Madrid, the longest in 25 nearly annual such gatherings, ended Sunday with major polluters resisting calls to ramp up efforts to keep global warming at bay.

Faced with the tough task of reconciling the demands of scientists, protesters on the streets and governments back home, the negotiators ended up disappointing many and leaving for next year's talks in Glasgow, Scotland, key issues such as the regulation of global carbon markets.

Here is a look at the main issues resolved, and the sticking points for future negotiations.

ARE BOLDER TARGETS NEEDED?

While it wasn't officially on the agenda, most participants and observers agreed that the U.N. talks needed to send a strong signal that countries were willing to set bolder targets for cutting greenhouse gas emissions.

That was far more ambitious than the goal ultimately set by the so-called "Chile-Madrid Time for Action" declaration, which merely calls for the "urgent need" to cut planet-heating greenhouse gases in line with the goals of the landmark 2015 Paris climate accord.

Scientists say global emissions of carbon dioxide and other pollutants have to start falling rapidly as

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soon as possible to meet the Paris goal of keeping global warming by the end of the century well below 2 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit), and ideally 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 F).

That accord allowed countries to set their own emissions-reduction targets — known as nationally determined contributions, or NDCs — which would be regularly reviewed and increased if necessary. With current emissions targets putting the world on course for a 3- to 4-degree Celsius temperature rise by 2100, scientists say sharper cuts are necessary and should be announced in advance of next year's climate conference in Glasgow.

"The global emissions' curve needs to bend in 2020, emissions need to be cut in half by 2030, and net zero emissions need to be a reality by 2050," said Johan Rockstrom, head of the Postdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

"Achieving this is possible — with existing technologies and within our current economy," said the revered climate scientist. "The window of opportunity is open, but barely."

HOW TO REGULATE GLOBAL CARBON MARKETS?

Economists say market mechanisms can speed up the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy sources. One way to do this is by putting a price on carbon dioxide, the most abundant man-made greenhouse gas, and gradually reducing the amount countries and companies are allowed to emit.

The European Union and some other jurisdictions around the world already have limited emissions trading systems for buying and selling carbon credits.

The Paris accord was meant to establish the rules for carbon trading on a global scale.

But setting the rules for a robust and environmentally sound market and linking up existing systems is difficult. So, too, is the question of allocating a percentage of the revenue to help countries adapt to the effects of warming temperatures.

The main point of resistance lies in the existence of old carbon credits left over from a now-discredited system established under the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. Developing countries such as Brazil insisted during the past two weeks in Madrid on keeping those emissions credits, while also resisting strict accounting of future trades.

The argument that carbon markets that are not transparent enough and leave loopholes for double counting can undermine efforts to reduce emissions won at the end, postponing the decision on the issue for Glasgow.

AID FOR THE POOR

In summit lingo the issue is known as "loss and damage." In essence, it was recognized several years ago that developing nations are much more vulnerable to the negative effects of climate change, even though they contribute least to the problem.

A tentative agreement was reached in 2013 that rich countries would help them foot the bill.

But attributing specific weather disasters such as hurricanes and floods, or slow but irreversible changes like sea level rise and desertification, to climate change remains a delicate issue given the potential costs involved.

The United States, in particular, had opposed any references to possible liability in the summit's conclusions, and scored a victory when a decision on it was also postponed for another year.

Developing countries also demand that compensation be kept a separate issue from funds to help the countries adapt and mitigate the effects of a warming planet. The Green Climate Fund, which was established to that end, is currently far from reaching the target of \$100 billion a year in contributions.

HEAT ON THE STREET

Chile, which chaired the conference, chose to give it the slogan "Time for Action."

That echoed the blunt demands from protesters, who have been staging mass rallies around the world for the past year demanding leaders take what they call the "climate emergency" seriously.

European Union countries responded to public pressure this week by agreeing to a long-term goal of cutting the bloc's greenhouse gas emissions to net zero, meaning any that remain will be offset with carbon reduction measures.

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Some observers and EU ministers had hoped this signal from Brussels would boost the talks in Madrid. If anything, it revealed the vast gap between what countries can agree at the regional level and what the U.N. process is capable of.

Follow AP's climate coverage at <https://www.apnews.com/Climate>

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Monday, Dec. 16, the 350th day of 2019. There are 15 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 16, 1773, the Boston Tea Party took place as American colonists boarded a British ship and dumped more than 300 chests of tea into Boston Harbor to protest tea taxes.

On this date:

In 1653, Oliver Cromwell became lord protector of England, Scotland and Ireland.

In 1859, Wilhelm Grimm, the younger of the story-writing Brothers Grimm, died in Berlin at age 73.

In 1905, the entertainment trade publication Variety came out with its first weekly issue.

In 1907, 16 U.S. Navy battleships, which came to be known as the "Great White Fleet," set sail on a 14-month round-the-world voyage to demonstrate American sea power.

In 1944, the World War II Battle of the Bulge began as German forces launched a surprise attack against Allied forces through the Ardennes Forest in Belgium and Luxembourg (the Allies were eventually able to turn the Germans back).

In 1950, President Harry S. Truman proclaimed a national state of emergency in order to fight "world conquest by Communist imperialism."

In 1960, 134 people were killed when a United Air Lines DC-8 and a TWA Super Constellation collided over New York City.

In 1982, Environmental Protection Agency head Anne M. Gorsuch became the first Cabinet-level officer to be cited for contempt of Congress for refusing to submit documents requested by a congressional committee.

In 1985, at services in Fort Campbell, Kentucky, President Ronald Reagan and his wife, Nancy, offered condolences to families of 248 soldiers killed in the crash of a chartered plane in Newfoundland.

In 1991, the U.N. General Assembly rescinded its 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism by a vote of 111-25.

In 2000, President-elect George W. Bush selected Colin Powell to become the first African-American secretary of state.

In 2001, after nine weeks of fighting, Afghan militia leaders claimed control of the last mountain bastion of Osama bin Laden's al-Qaida fighters, but bin Laden himself was nowhere to be seen.

Ten years ago: Two hundred Mexican Marines raided an upscale apartment complex and killed drug cartel chief Arturo Beltran Leyva in a two-hour gunbattle. Iran test-fired a missile capable of hitting Israel and parts of Europe. Police fired pepper spray and beat protesters with batons outside the U.N. climate conference in Copenhagen. Tiger Woods was voted Athlete of the Decade by members of The Associated Press. Yegor Gaidar, 53, who oversaw Russia's painful transition from communism to a free market economy, died in Moscow. Roy E. Disney, 79, the son and nephew of the Walt Disney Co. founders, died in Newport Beach, California.

Five years ago: Taliban gunmen stormed a military-run school in the northwestern Pakistan city of Peshawar, killing at least 148 people, mostly children. Nick Bjugstad scored the game-winning goal in the longest shootout in NHL history to lift the Florida Panthers over the Washington Capitals 2-1.

One year ago: With the threat of a partial government shutdown looming, the White House dug in on its demand for \$5 billion to build a border wall as congressional Democrats stood firm against it. As a

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number of probes moved closer to the Oval Office, President Donald Trump and his attorney unleashed a fresh series of attacks on special counsel Robert Mueller and federal prosecutors in New York, while categorically ruling out a presidential interview with Mueller.

Today's Birthdays: Civil rights attorney Morris Dees is 83. Actress Joyce Bulifant is 82. Actress Liv Ullmann is 81. CBS news correspondent Lesley Stahl is 78. Pop musician Tony Hicks (The Hollies) is 74. Pop singer Benny Andersson (ABBA) is 73. Actor Ben Cross is 72. Rock singer-musician Billy Gibbons (ZZ Top) is 70. Rock musician Bill Bateman (The Blasters) is 68. Actor Xander Berkeley is 64. Actress Alison LaPlaca is 60. Actor Sam Robards is 58. Actor Jon Tenney is 58. Actor Benjamin Bratt is 56. Country singer-songwriter Jeff Carson is 56. Actor-comedian JB Smoove is 54. Actress Miranda Otto is 52. Actor Daniel Cosgrove is 49. Rhythm-and-blues singer Michael McCary is 48. Actor Jonathan Scarfe is 44. Actress Krysten Ritter is 38. Actress Zoe Jarman is 37. Country musician Chris Scruggs is 37. Actor Theo James is 35. Actress Amanda Setton is 34. Rock musician Dave Rublin (American Authors) is 33. Actress Hallee Hirsh is 32. Actress Anna Popplewell is 31. Actor Stephan James is 26.

Thought for Today: "It's discouraging to think how many people are shocked by honesty and how few by deceit." — Sir Noel Coward, English actor, playwright, composer (born this date, 1899; died in 1973).

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