

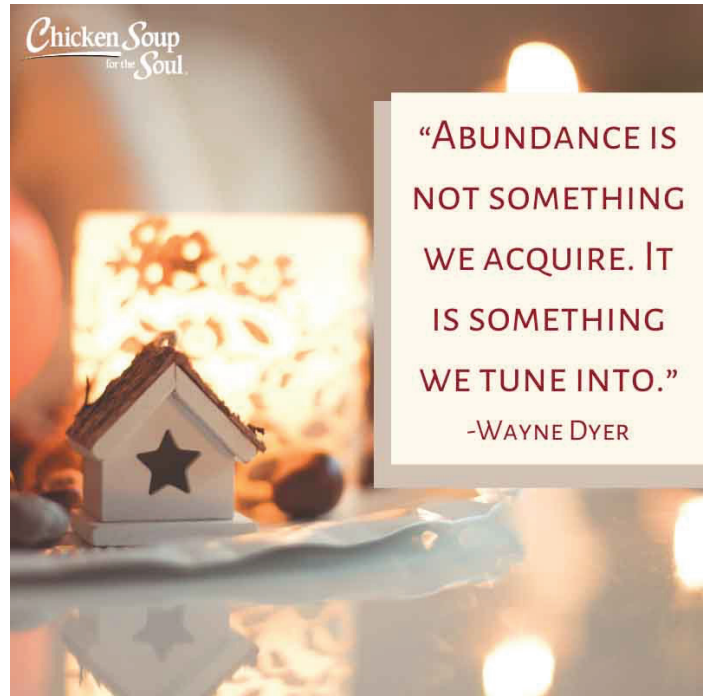
# Groton Daily Independent

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## 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

## School Help Wanted

The Groton Area School District is accepting applications for the position of Certified Sign Language Interpreter. Applicants should complete and submit the certified staff application form along with a current cover letter, resume, and three letters of recommendation. All materials should be submitted to Joe Schwan, Superintendent PO Box 410 Groton, SD 57445. EOE

## Service Notice: Wayne Cutler

Services for Wayne Cutler, 95, of Claremont will be 1:00 p.m., Monday, December 23, 2019 at Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton. Rev. Tom Summers will officiate. Burial with military honors will follow in Union Cemetery under the direction of Paetznick-Garness Funeral Chapel, Groton.

Visitation will be held for one hour prior to services.

Wayne passed away Thursday, December 19, 2019 at Avamtara Groton.

## 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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**Merry Christmas  
from the attorney  
that makes a  
difference!**

**Drew C. Johnson**  
Attorney at Law  
517 S. Lincoln St.  
Aberdeen  
(605) 225-5895  
drewjohnsonlaw@gmail.com



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To our patients, associates and friends, our best wishes for a happy and healthy holiday season, trimmed with the blessings of peace, love and joy.

We value your trust in us, and are proud to serve you all year long.

With Well Wishes from  
**Groton  
Chiropractic Clinic**

1205 North 1st Street  
Groton • 605-397-8204

God bless you during this wonderful season when we remember the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ. As the word says, "He is Lord."



**DQ**  
**Grill & Chill**

Merry Christmas from Dale, Joyce and the rest of the crew at the Groton Dairy Queen!

## Pheasants slip past Lady Tigers

The Lady Tigers lost a hard fought game Friday night in Redfield with the home town Pheasants getting a 33-28 win. The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Locke Electric. The game is archived at 397news.com.

Groton Area jumped out to an 8-1 lead early in the game and held an 11-7 first quarter advantage. The Tigers were four of eight in shooting while the Pheasants were one of 11. Groton Area had six turnovers and the Pheasants were four of six from the free throw off of Groton Area's seven team fouls.

Groton Area took a 15-9 lead in the second quarter, but then, the Pheasants scored 10 straight points to take a 19-15 lead at half time. In the second quarter, Groton Area was two of eight in shooting for 25 percent and Redfield was four of 13 for 31 percent. Groton Area had six turnovers and had five more team fouls as the Pheasants were three of nine from the line for 33 percent.

Redfield opened up a five-point lead in the third quarter and led, 29-26, going into the fourth quarter. In the third quarter, Groton Area was four of 11 in shooting for 36 percent and Redfield was five of nine for 55 percent. The Tigers had five turnovers and just two team fouls while the Pheasants had seven turnovers.

Only six total points were scored in the fourth quarter. Groton Area closed to within one, 29-28, and had chances to take the lead. Both teams were one of nine in shooting in the fourth quarter for 11 percent. The Tigers had four turnovers and Redfield had three.

Groton Area committed 21 team fouls with Allyssa Locke fouling out and Trista Keith and Alyssa Thaler each played with four fouls. Redfield made nine of 19 free throws for 47 percent. Groton Area was three for four from the line for 75 percent off of Redfield's 10 team fouls.

Gracie Traphagen led the Tigers with eight points and 11 rebounds. Alyssa Thaler had eight points and six rebounds. Kaycie Hawkins added six points and had six rebounds. Allyssa Locke had two points, one rebound, two assists and two steals. Tricia Keith had two points, five rebounds, two assists and two steals. Brooke Gengerke had two points, two rebounds, one assist and two steals.

The Tigers made eight of 23 two-pointers for 34 percent, was three of 17 in three-pointers for 18 percent, had 31 rebounds, 22 turnovers, five assists and six steals.

Leading the way for Redfield was Kailee Clausen with 11 points followed by Hannah Kuehn with 10, Georgia Kuehn had seven, Katelyn Nelson and Alison Larson each had two points and Faith Jandel added a free throw. For the game, the Pheasants made 26 percent of their field goals, making 11 of 42 shots.

Groton Area is now 1-2 on the season while Redfield is 1-1.

Redfield won the junior varsity game, 27-13. Brooke Gengerke had four points followed by Shallyn Foertsch with three and adding two points apiece were Marlee Tollifson, Trista Keith and Ashton Bahr.

Groton Area won the junior high combined game, 44-21.

## EXPANDING SOCIAL SECURITY FIELD OFFICE HOURS

Beginning on January 8, 2020, field offices will remain open until 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays, with typical field office hours from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can locate the closest field office to you using our field office locator.

In another move to improve service to the public, Commissioner Saul announced in his Open Letter to the Public at [www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/coss-message.html](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/agency/coss-message.html) that the agency is hiring 1,100 front line employees to provide service on the agency's National 800 Number and in its processing centers. The agency is currently bringing onboard 100 new processing center employees and approximately 500 new teleservice representatives for the 800 Number. An additional 500 hires for the 800 Number will occur later in 2020.

"Improving service is my top priority. Increasing full public service hours at our nationwide network of more than 1,200 field offices is the right thing to do and will provide additional access," Commissioner Saul said. The additional hiring of National 800 Number and processing center employees is an important step in the right direction to greatly improve the service we provide."

While we continue to improve both the access to and the experience with our services, it is important to note that most Social Security services do not require the public to take time to visit an office. People may create a my Social Security account, a personalized online service, at [www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount](http://www.socialsecurity.gov/myaccount).

Through their personal my Social Security account, people can check personal information and conduct business with Social Security. If they already receive Social Security benefits, they can start or change direct deposit online, and if they need proof of their benefits, they can print or download a current Benefit Verification Letter from their account.

People not yet receiving benefits can use their online account to get a personalized Social Security Statement, which provides earnings history information as well as estimates of future benefits. Currently, residents in 40 states and the District of Columbia may request a replacement Social Security card online if they meet certain requirements. The portal also includes a retirement calculator and links to information about other online services, such as applications for retirement, disability, and Medicare benefits.

Many Social Security services are also conveniently available by dialing our toll-free number, 1-800-772-1213. People who are deaf or hard of hearing may call our TTY number, 1-800-325-0778.

# **Groton Daily Independent**

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**AGENDA  
REGULAR MEETING  
BROWN COUNTY COMMISSION  
COMMISSIONER'S CHAMBERS, COURTHOUSE ANNEX  
25 MARKET STREET, ABERDEEN SD**

**TUESDAY  
December 24, 2019**

8:45 a.m. – 8:47 a.m. – 2nd reading Ordinance 152 (mini ag rezone) and 153 (lake front rezone) & possible adoption

8:47 a.m. – 8:50 a.m. – Public Hearing on Budget Supplements

8:50 a.m. – 8:55 a.m. – Troy McQuillen – County Seal Project

8:55 a.m. – 9:05 a.m. – Gene Loeschke, Director of Equalization – Preliminary 2020 Assessment Plan

9:00 a.m. – 9:05 a.m. – Patricia Kendall, DPM Director – Discuss the Granary

- Approve General Meeting Minutes from December 17, 2019
- Claims/Payroll
- HR Report
- Plats
- Centennial Village Contract
- Auditor's Report of Accounts
- Solid Waste Fees
- Lottery Application
- Set hearing date for Ord. 154 & Ord. 155 (Mini Ag Rezones)

Public comment and any other matters to come before the Commission for discussion

South Dakota

**GAME, FISH AND PARKS**



## **GFP COMMISSION PROPOSES CHANGE TO DUCK HUNTING START DATES; NO CHANGES TO EARLY GOOSE**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed to change the start date of the Low Plains Middle and Low Plains North duck hunting zones at their December meeting.

The proposed change would modify the start date of these two zones from the last Saturday of September to the Saturday closest to September 24.

The change would provide hunters an earlier start to the season in some years to take advantage of local breeding ducks.

The commission also proposed to decrease the daily limit of scaup from 3 to 1. This proposed change came from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The proposal would have the following season dates and daily limits:

Season Dates and Open Areas:

High Plains Zone: Oct. 10, 2020 – Jan. 14, 2021

Low Plains North & Low Plains Middle Zone: Sept. 26 – Dec. 8, 2020

Low Plains South Zone: Oct. 24, 2020 – Jan. 5, 2021

Daily Limits:

Ducks: 6

The duck limit may be comprised of no more than 5 mallards (which may include no more than 2 hens), 3 wood ducks, 2 redheads, 2 canvasbacks, 1 pintail and 1 scaup.

2 Bonus blue-winged teal (first 16 days of the season only)

Low Plains North & Low Plains Middle Zones: Sept. 26 – Oct. 11, 2020

Low Plains South Zone: Oct. 24 – Nov. 8, 2020

High Plains Zone: Oct. 10 – 25, 2020

Coots: 15

Mergansers: 5 (may include no more than 2 hooded mergansers)

The commission proposed no changes to the early fall goose season.

Possession Limits: Three times the daily bag limits

To comment in person, the public hearing will be held Jan. 16 at 2 p.m. CST at the Red Rossa Convention Center in Pierre. Individuals can comment online at [gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions](http://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions) or mail comments to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing).

###

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## **GFP COMMISSION OFFERS NO CHANGE TO SEVERAL WATERFOWL SEASONS**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission made no changes to several waterfowl seasons at their December meeting. These seasons had no proposed changes from 2019.

The following waterfowl seasons are finalized:

Early Fall Canada Goose Season

September 5 – 30 for Unit 1 only, with a daily limit of 8 Canada geese and a possession limit of 24.

Canada Goose Season

Unit 1: October 1 – December 20, 2020

Unit 2: November 2, 2020 – February 14, 2021

Unit 3: January 9-17, 2021

Light Goose Season

Sept 26, 2020 – Jan 8, 2021

White-Fronted Goose Season

Sept. 26 – Dec. 8, 2020

Daily Limits:

Canada geese

Unit 1: 8

Units 2 & 3: 4

Light geese: 50

White-fronted goose: 3

Possession Limits:

Light geese: Unlimited

All other geese: Three times the daily limit

Sandhill Cranes

Sept. 26 – Nov. 22, 2020 with a daily limit of 3 and possession limit of 9.

Snipe

Sept. 1 – Oct. 31, 2020 with a daily limit of 5 and a possession limit of 15.

Special Goose (Bennett County)

Oct. 19 – Dec. 22, 2020 with an 800 three-tag lottery draw.

August Management Take (Canada goose)

Aug. 15 – 31, 2020 with a 15 goose limit. A reminder to hunters, the August Management Take is for that portion of Pennington County west of the Cheyenne River only.

Spring Light Goose Conservation Order

Feb. 15 – May 15, 2021 with no daily limit.

###

## **GFP COMMISSION PROPOSES CHANGES TO TUNDRA SWAN, YOUTH WATERFOWL SEASONS**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission proposed changes to two waterfowl hunting seasons at their December meeting.

The commission proposed to reduce the number of available resident tundra swan hunting licenses from 1,425 to 1,100 and nonresident licenses from 250 to 200. This reduction in licenses comes from the recommendation of the Central Flyway Council and was adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

The commission also proposed to have the 2020 Youth Waterfowl Season to be held Sept. 12-13. The move would fall in line with the federal framework that allows the season to begin the Saturday 14 days



prior to the closest to September 24.

To comment in person, the public hearing will be held Jan. 16 at 2 p.m. CST at the Red Rossa Convention Center in Pierre. Individuals can comment online at [gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions](http://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions) or mail comments to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing).

###

## **GFP COMMISSION PROPOSES FLATHEAD CATFISH LENGTH LIMIT RESTRICTION**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) Commission modified a proposal to establish a length limit on flathead catfish during their December meeting.

The commission proposal would allow for one flathead catfish over 28 inches per day on inland waters. The original proposal included all waters in the state, including border waters, and originated from the public petition process.

John Lott, Fisheries Chief, informed the commission that a meeting will be taking place in February to work with Iowa and Nebraska to discuss catfish management, with the goal being development of common regulations for catfish on border waters.

To comment in person, the public hearing will be held Jan. 16 at 2 p.m. CST at the Red Rossa Convention Center in Pierre. Individuals can comment online at [gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions](http://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions) or mail comments to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing).

###

## **COMMISSION DEBATES THE USE OF RIFLES FOR WEST RIVER PRIVATE LAND SPRING TURKEY SEASON**

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks Commission continued to debate the use of rifles to hunt turkeys on private land during the West River spring turkey season.

The proposal came at the request of one of the commissioners.

To comment in person, the public hearing will be held Jan. 16 at 2 p.m. CST at the Red Rossa Convention Center in Pierre. Individuals can comment online at [gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions](http://gfp.sd.gov/forms/positions) or mail comments to 523 E. Capitol Ave., Pierre, SD 57501. To be included in the public record and to be considered by the commission, comments must include a full name and city of residence and meet the submission deadline of 72 hours before the public hearing (not including the day of the public hearing).

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Today is the Winter Solstice, the time of year with the shortest day due to the Earth's tilt relative to the sun's rays. This also means the amount of daylight will start to increase after today.

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Today

Tonight

Sunday

Sunday  
Night

Monday



Partly Sunny



Mostly Cloudy



Partly Sunny



Mostly Cloudy



Mostly Cloudy

High: 39 °F

Low: 19 °F

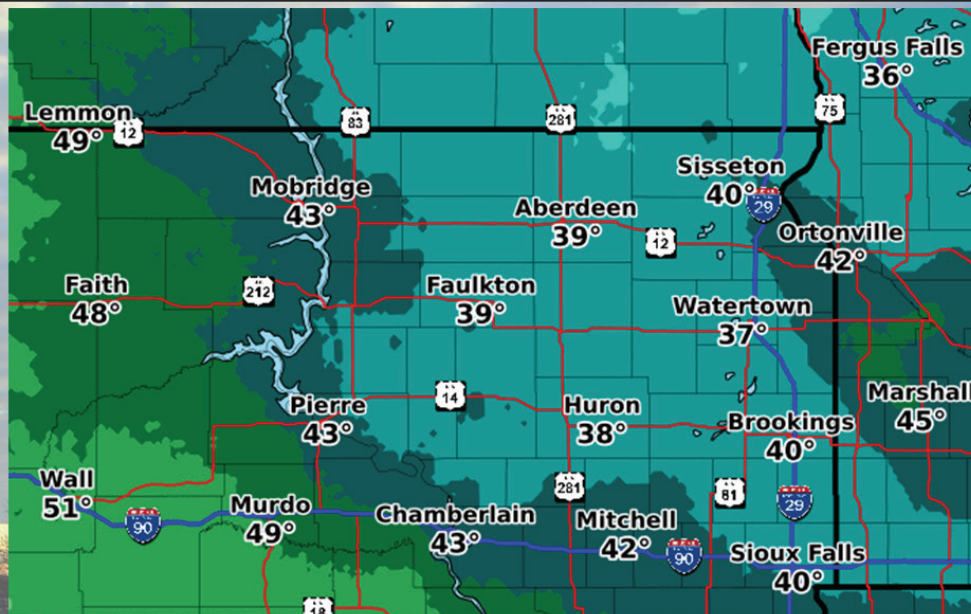
High: 38 °F

Low: 21 °F

High: 31 °F



## Mild Today – Sunday Too



NWS Aberdeen, SD

Updated: 12/21/2019 3:41 AM Central

Mild conditions are expected today and Sunday before readings return to closer to normal for next week.

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## Today in Weather History

December 21, 1968: A blizzard visited South Dakota and Minnesota on the 21st and 22nd. Snowfall during the storm was generally 1 to 2 inches in the western part of South Dakota, to 5 to 10 inches in Minnesota. More than 12 inches of snow was reported from Artichoke Lake in Big Stone County to the southeast in Minnesota and up to 18 inches in east-central and southeast South Dakota. The snowfall, on top of an already-existing deep snowpack, was whipped by 30-50 mph winds causing reduced visibility to near zero, created snowdrifts up to 10 feet or more. Almost all forms of traffic were blocked on highways for Sunday and blocked most of the secondary roads as well as some other roads for nearly a week.

Early blizzard warnings and the fact that the blizzard occurred late Saturday through Sunday, the highway patrol reported a minimum of accidents and stranded travelers. Most schools were closed, and other activities were curtailed. Many utility lines were down. Record December snowfall amounts were recorded for more than 40 locations in Minnesota. Artichoke Lake in Big Stone County received 16 inches of snow from this storm, by far its largest daily snowfall on record for any month of the year. Clear Lake, in Deuel County, measured 18 inches of snow, which also remains the most substantial daily snowfall on record for any month in that location. Watertown and Bryant received nine inches from this blizzard, while Castlewood reported seven inches.

1892 - Portland, OR, was buried under a record 27.5 inches of snow. (21st-24th) (The Weather Channel)

1929 - An exceptional storm produced snow from the Middle Rio Grande Valley of Texas to southern Arkansas. The storm produced 26 inches of snow at Hillsboro TX, 18 inches at El Dorado AR, and 14 inches at Bossier LA. (21st-22nd) (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1964 - A great warm surge from the Pacific Ocean across Oregon and northern California brought torrential rains on a deep snow cover resulting in record floods. (David Ludlum)

1967: An F4 tornado traveled 33 miles across Iron and Washington Counties in Missouri during an unusual time of day, 12:45 to 1:20 am. The tornado killed 3 and injured 52 others. Most of the intense damage occurred in the town of Potosi, about 55 miles southwest of St. Louis. The tornado swept through the business district, destroying City Hall, library, a large supermarket, and a shopping center complex. Northeast of town, two people were killed when their home was swept from its foundation. The Red Cross reported 24 homes and trailers, along with 14 businesses destroyed. 81 other houses and trailers were damaged.

1987 - High winds continued along the eastern slopes of the Rockies. During the morning hours winds gusted to 64 mph at Cheyenne WY, and reached 97 mph near Boulder CO. Gale force winds prevailed across the Great Lakes Region. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Seven cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Charleston SC with a reading of 78 degrees. A storm in the northwestern U.S. produced 22 inches of snow at Idaho City ID in two days, and up to two feet of snow at Happy Camp CA. Ski resorts in Idaho reported three to six feet of snow on the ground. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Forty cities in the north central U.S., including thirteen in Iowa, reported record low temperatures for the date. Havre and Jordan, MT, tied for honors as the cold spot in the nation with morning lows of 43 degrees below zero, and the temperature remained close to 40 degrees below zero through the daylight hours. Dickinson ND reported a morning low of 33 degrees below zero and a wind chill reading of 86 degrees below zero. The high for the date of 16 degrees below zero at Sioux Falls SD was December record for that location. (The National Weather Summary)

1998 - Cold air spread into the southern San Joaquin Valley of California. For the next four nights, temperatures in the agricultural portions of Fresno, Tulare, and Kern counties dropped below 28 degrees for several hours at a time. In some locations, temperatures dipped into the teens. The California citrus industry suffered more than \$600 million in damages due to the extreme cold.

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

**High Temp:** 20 °F at 10:26 PM

**Low Temp:** 9 °F at 4:34 AM

**Wind:** 14 mph at 9:22 PM

**Day Rain:** 0.00

**Record High:** 50° in 1893, 1979

**Record Low:** -31° in 1916

**Average High:** 24°F

**Average Low:** 4°F

**Average Precip in Dec.:** 0.33

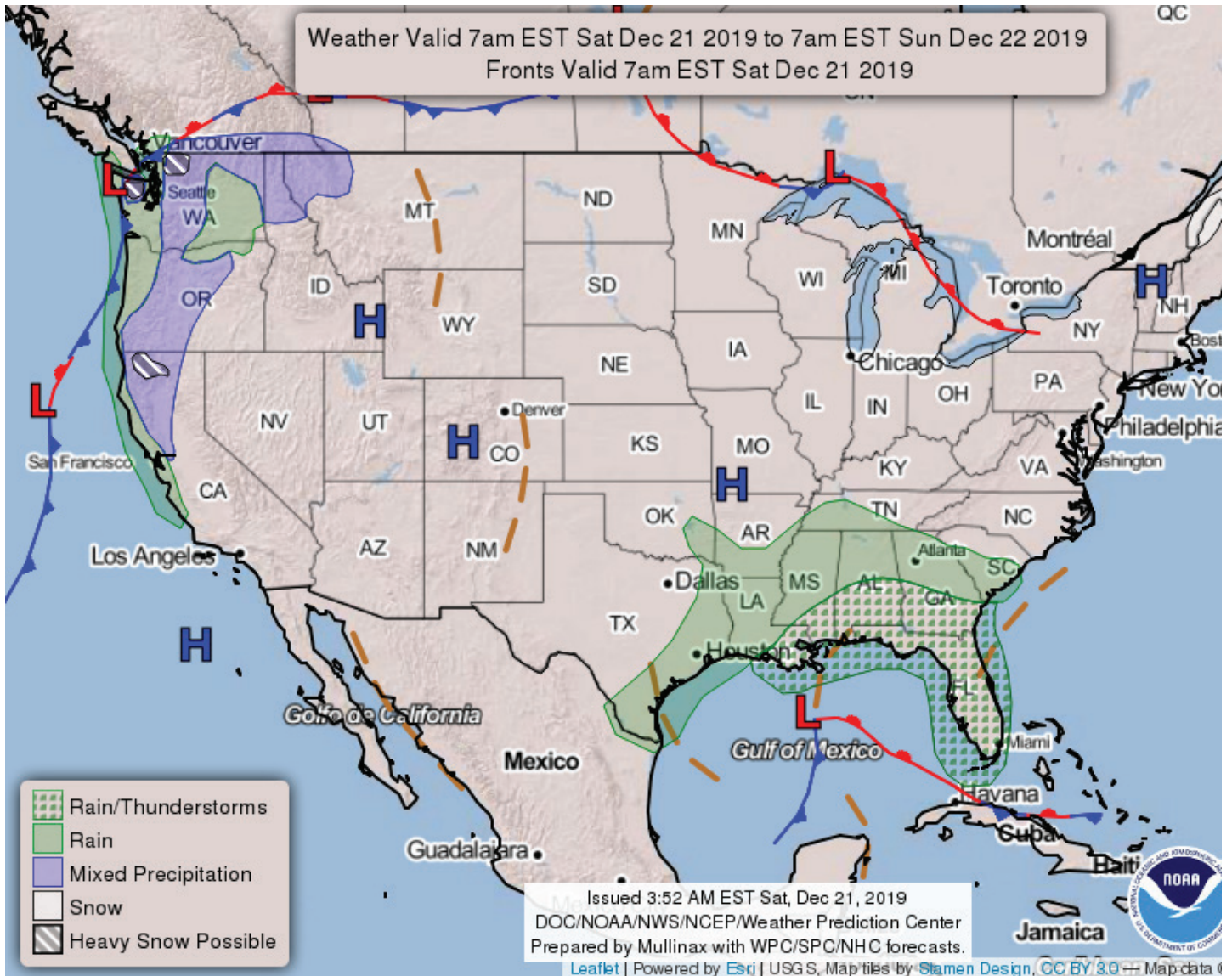
**Precip to date in Dec.:** 0.11

**Average Precip to date:** 21.53

**Precip Year to Date:** 28.06

**Sunset Tonight:** 4:53 p.m.

**Sunrise Tomorrow:** 8:11 a.m.



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## CHRIST'S DAY

On Mother's Day, we focus all of our attention on our Mothers, recalling and remembering how much they struggled to raise us. Lovingly we shower gifts on them, purchase cards that describe her many sacrifices for us, and the unending care she gave to us. She deserves all of the attention and recognition we can give her.

On Father's Day, we turn our thoughts to "Dad" – what he has done for us and then express our gratitude to him for the time he spent with us. We recall his efforts to teach us to throw a ball, catch a pass, cast a fishing line or attend a special event. He, too, deserves all the attention and recognition we can give him.

We also give recognition and attention to our Grandparents, to brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and friends and relatives on their special days.

But what will we do that is really special or unique to show our appreciation and gratitude for Jesus on His day this year?

Will there be an envelope under the tree with a special love-offering that recognizes His importance in our lives? Will it match the amount we gave others?

Will we sacrifice some of our time to show God's love by being with those who would otherwise be alone and lonely on His day?

Will we share a meal with someone who is hungry? Give some clothes to those who are cold and have little? Spend time reading His story to children?

"In as much as you have done it to the least of these, you have done it unto Me!"

Prayer: Take Your peace from us Father, until and unless we show others Your love on Your day. Why? "In as much as you have done to others, you did to Me." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Matthew 25:40 And the King will answer and say to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."

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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)

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## News from the Associated Press

### Survey of Plains, Western bankers shows waning rural economy

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — A new survey of bankers indicates a waning economy in rural parts of 10 Plains and Western states, and weak farm income is hurting producers' ability to borrow money from banks.

The Rural Mainstreet survey released Thursday shows its overall index fell to 50.2 this month from 54.2 in November. Any score above 50 suggests a growing economy, while a score below 50 indicates a shrinking economy.

Federal agriculture crop support payments and somewhat higher grain prices kept the overall index from falling into negative territory in December, said Creighton University economist Ernie Goss, who oversees the survey.

Goss also noted that one of every nine bank CEOs surveyed expects 2020 farm loan defaults to expand by 10% to 20%.

Bankers were also asked about their bank's response to weak farm income, Goss said. Almost two-thirds indicated their bank had increased collateral requirements, while more than a third reported they had rejected a higher number of farm loan applications.

The confidence index — a measure of economic optimism for the next six months — remained in negative territory at 45.8 in December, although it was higher than November's 44.4.

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

### Friday's Scores By The Associated Press

#### BOYS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 74, Spearfish 47  
Aberdeen Christian 79, Sunshine Bible Academy 49  
Arlington 54, Elkton-Lake Benton 45  
Bon Homme 61, Scotland 43  
Castlewood 82, Colman-Egan 74  
Chamberlain 68, Parkston 49  
Clark/Willow Lake 55, Britton-Hecla 39  
Dakota Valley 77, Canton 49  
DeSmet 53, Lake Preston 18  
Dell Rapids St. Mary 67, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 34  
Douglas 57, Pierre 53  
Estelline/Hendricks 60, Deubrook 58  
Faith 81, McIntosh 39  
Gayville-Volin 55, Alcester-Hudson 46  
Gordon/Rushville, Neb. 52, Bennett County 49  
Hankinson, N.D. 62, Wilmot 49  
Howard 55, McCook Central/Montrose 44  
Huron 68, Rapid City Stevens 52  
Jones County 53, Wall 50  
Kadoka Area 72, Dupree 34  
Lemmon 63, Grant County, N.D. 49  
Mobridge-Pollock 49, Sisseton 44, OT  
Morrill, Neb. 65, Edgemont 47



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Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 73, Freeman 35  
Newell 57, Tiospaye Topa 51  
Rapid City Central 68, Mitchell 51  
Sioux Falls Christian 75, Elk Point-Jefferson 41  
Sioux Falls Lincoln 59, Sioux Falls O'Gorman 45  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 65, Brookings 41  
Tea Area 64, Dell Rapids 62  
Tri-State, N.D. 60, Great Plains Lutheran 33  
Tri-Valley 36, Chester 28  
Viborg-Hurley 74, Irene-Wakonda 38  
Watertown 59, Harrisburg 45  
Waverly-South Shore 48, Waubay/Summit 43  
West Central 67, Wagner 46  
Winner 79, Miller 35  
Yankton 59, Brandon Valley 51  
Lakota Nation Invitational=  
Makosica Bracket=  
Consolation=  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 79, Omaha Nation, Neb. 70  
Pine Ridge 65, Todd County 61  
Semifinal=  
Tiospa Zina Tribal 56, Red Cloud 52  
White River 51, Crow Creek 44  
Paha Sapa Bracket=  
Consolation Semifinal=  
Little Wound 61, Lower Brule 57  
Marty Indian 80, Custer 77  
Consolation=  
Oelrichs 64, Santee, Neb. 45  
St. Francis Indian 60, Crazy Horse 53  
State Line Shootout=  
Belle Fourche 52, Newcastle, Wyo. 35  
Sundance, Wyo. 62, Lead-Deadwood 38

## **GIRLS BASKETBALL**

Aberdeen Central 53, Spearfish 37  
Aberdeen Christian 48, Sunshine Bible Academy 15  
Bridgewater-Emery 73, Canistota-Freeman 52  
Clark/Willow Lake 58, Britton-Hecla 27  
Dakota Valley 60, Canton 24  
Dupree 60, Kadoka Area 46  
Elk Point-Jefferson 33, Sioux Falls Christian 21  
Faith 62, Mott-Regent, N.D. 27  
Gayville-Volin 46, Alcester-Hudson 39  
Gordon/Rushville, Neb. 44, Bennett County 39  
Gregory 40, Platte-Geddes 26  
Hanson 51, Menno 44  
Irene-Wakonda 66, Viborg-Hurley 60, OT  
Langford 58, Ipswich 51  
Lyman 42, Rapid City Christian 37  
McCook Central/Montrose 59, Howard 39

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Mitchell 63, Rapid City Central 47  
Mobridge-Pollock 61, Sisseton 55  
Morrill, Neb. 46, Edgemont 34  
Newell 73, Tiospaye Topa 15  
Parkston 62, Chamberlain 35  
Pierre 55, Sturgis Brown 37  
Rapid City Stevens 58, Huron 52  
Redfield 33, Groton Area 28  
Sioux Falls Roosevelt 52, Brookings 31  
Tea Area 56, Dell Rapids 20  
Tri-Valley 47, Chester 35  
Wall 42, Jones County 35  
West Central 63, Wagner 27  
Yankton 40, Brandon Valley 28  
Lakota Nation Invitational=  
Makosica Bracket=  
Consolation=  
Cheyenne-Eagle Butte 51, Custer 48  
Little Wound 81, Todd County 57  
Semifinal=  
Crow Creek 51, Pine Ridge 35  
Red Cloud 59, White River 51  
Paha Sapa Bracket=  
Consolation Semifinal=  
Lower Brule 37, Oelrichs 31  
St. Francis Indian 64, Omaha Nation, Neb. 61  
Consolation=  
Santee, Neb. 61, Marty Indian 60  
Tiospa Zina Tribal 57, Crazy Horse 42  
State Line Shootout=  
Belle Fourche 41, Newcastle, Wyo. 31  
Lead-Deadwood 37, Sundance, Wyo. 25

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

## Radebaugh scores 1,000th point in Northern Colorado win

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Jonah Radebaugh made a career-high 10 assists and scored 24 points, including his 1,000th career point, and Northern Colorado beat South Dakota 87-68 on Friday night to with its fourth straight.

Radebaugh is the 22nd player in program history to score 1,000 points.

Sam Masten scored 19 points and Matt Johnson added 11 for the Bears (7-4), who made 10 of 24 3-pointers while the Coyotes went 0-8 from beyond the arc. Bodie Hume, Kai Edwards and Trent Harris scored 10 points apiece.

South Dakota totaled 28 points in the second half, a season low for the team.

Tyler Peterson and Stanley Umude scored 16 points each and Cody Kelley added 14 for South Dakota (9-4), which saw its three-game win streak end.

Northern Colorado opens Big Sky Conference play next Saturday at Portland State. South Dakota hosts Kansas City on Sunday.

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## US judge rejects bid to kill Keystone pipeline lawsuits

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Environmentalists and Native Americans can proceed with lawsuits challenging President Donald Trump's approval of the Keystone XL oil pipeline from Canada, a federal judge in Montana ruled Friday.

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris expressed skepticism over government arguments that Trump has unilateral authority to approve the \$8 billion pipeline. In a separate ruling, the judge said the Rosebud Sioux and Fort Belknap Indian tribes had valid claims that approval of the line violated their treaty rights.

But Morris denied a request from environmentalists to impose a court injunction blocking preliminary work on the pipeline, since no such work is planned until spring 2020.

Morris had blocked work on the line in 2018, prompting Trump to issue a new permit in March in an attempt to circumvent the courts.

The 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) pipeline would transport up to 830,000 barrels (35 million gallons) of crude daily from western Canada to terminals on the Gulf Coast.

Opponents worry burning the tar sands oil that will be carried by the line will make climate change worse, and that it could break and spill into water bodies such as Montana's Missouri River.

TC Energy of Canada first proposed the project more than a decade ago but has been unable to get past the numerous lawsuits against it. Trump has been a strong supporter and revived Keystone XL after it was rejected under President Barack Obama.

## South Dakota ballot will include medical marijuana measure

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota voters will decide on a measure to allow medicinal marijuana after a petition to put the issue on the November ballot was validated by the state.

Secretary of State Steve Barnett announced on Thursday that the petition had enough valid signatures to be put on the ballot for the General Election next year. The measure would allow patients with chronic or debilitating health conditions to use and possess up to three ounces of marijuana. They would need to get a registration card from the state's Department of Health.

Medical marijuana card holders could also grow cannabis plants, but the number of plants would be regulated by the state.

Previous efforts to get a vote on medical marijuana have failed. Ballot petitioners must gather 16,961 valid signatures in South Dakota to have their measure decided on at polling stations. The medical marijuana measure is the first petition to be certified for the election.

## Water permit hearing for Keystone XL extended into new year

By Stephen Groves

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota board deciding whether to grant water permits for the Keystone XL pipeline will extend its hearing into the new year after opponents repeatedly voiced concerns about the pipeline.

The state's Water Management Board met for four days this week as the hearing for a handful of permits stretched into its ninth day. The board also met in October and November. The board chairman said it will need more time to hear from everyone involved in the process. The South Dakota Department of Environment and Natural Resources has recommended the board grant the permits, but environmental groups and many Native Americans tribes are opposed.

Opponents raised concerns about leaks like the one that occurred in North Dakota in November, the rights of Indian tribes being violated and rises in crime, including human trafficking, around labor camps connected to pipeline construction. They are arguing that the board must also consider if granting the permits is in the public interest for the people of South Dakota.

Keystone XL is planned to carry up to 830,000 barrels of crude oil a day in a 1,184-mile line from Alberta, Canada, to Nebraska. In Nebraska, it would connect with other lines that go to Gulf Coast Refineries.

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TC Energy, the Canadian company building the pipeline, is applying for permits to tap the Cheyenne, White, and Bad rivers in South Dakota during construction. The water will be used for drilling to install pipe, build pump stations and control dust during construction. Two ranchers also applied for water permits to supply backup water to worker camps.

One of the most dramatic parts of the hearing came when one Native American witness from California described how she had been raped, trafficked and harassed by men who moved into her community to work in the cannabis industry. She attributed the attacks to a "ripple effect" of violence from a large influx of men.

Several activists pointed to studies that showed a rise in crime and human trafficking during the Bakken Oil Field boom in North Dakota and questioned TC Energy's witness on how crime will be mitigated.

Greg Tencer, an expert witness who is managing the pipeline construction, said the company works with law enforcement and hires additional security for the camps. He told the board there is a possibility with an increase in crime and said, "We're all human, so it's a factor."

The project will be setting up several camps capable of housing up to 1,200 workers.

Rosebud Sioux Tribal president Rodney Bordeaux testified at the hearing on Thursday and argued that the pipeline would violate treaties the tribe signed with the federal government at Fort Laramie in 1851 and 1868.

The pipeline avoids any current tribal land, but does cross rivers upstream of reservations.

Sara Rabern, a spokesperson for TC Energy, said, "We understand that water is a valuable resource and that South Dakota has the responsibility to oversee this natural resource."

Tencer said he plans to start construction in the summer.

## Arrests made in BB gun rampage in Aberdeen

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police in South Dakota have arrested four men in connection with a BB gun rampage that damaged more than 100 vehicles.

Authorities in the town of Aberdeen began receiving reports of windows being shot out shortly after midnight on Wednesday.

Police arrested four men this week and one of them is facing felony intentional damage, Aberdeen American News reported. Damaged vehicles were found throughout Aberdeen and Brown County.

Police said it appeared the men fired a BB gun from a moving vehicle.

## SD tribes seek repeal of law banning them from Minnesota

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Tribes in South Dakota are trying again to gain state legislative support to repeal an archaic law that bans them from Minnesota.

The State-Tribal Relations Committee voted this week to introduce a resolution during the 2020 legislative session requesting that Congress repeal the 1863 Dakota Removal Act.

The law forced Native Americans onto South Dakota reservations following the 1862 conflict that included the mass hanging of 38 Dakota men.

Minnesota passed a resolution supporting its repeal in 2009. The South Dakota Senate State Affairs Committee, without any discussion, failed to pass the same resolution during the 2019 session.

Sen. Troy Heinert, D-Mission, said it is not an attempt to change history, it's an attempt to right a wrong. "There's lots of things that have happened in the history of our country and the history of our state that we can address and we can address it in a proper fashion that isn't meant to poke anybody in the eye or cause controversy," he said.

Republican Rep. Tamara St. John, a historian for the Sisseton-Wahpeton Sioux Tribe, said she's concerned that repealing it could impact legal precedents based on the act, specifically a lawsuit involving Mdewakanton Sioux members in Minnesota that has not been resolved.

## Noem: South Dakota open to additional refugees in 2020

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem has notified the Trump administration that South Dakota will continue to accept refugees who are resettled in the United States next year.

President Donald Trump issued an executive order in September that allows states and local governments to opt out of the U.S. Refugee Resettlement Program. Before that, the federal government was only required to consult with states.

Noem's consent ends on Dec. 31, 2020, but she said she reserves the right to withdraw that consent. Local governments in the state can also opt out.

The resettlement program will handle a maximum of 18,000 refugees next year after the Trump administration reduced the current cap of 30,000.

South Dakota is among nearly two dozen other states that have consented to take refugees in 2020.

## Ambitious Texas law fails to make dent in jailhouse suicides

By RIIN ALJAS and RYAN E. LITTLE Capital News Service

In a county jail in central Texas, an inmate on suicide watch begins strangling himself with a phone cord. The guard watching him does not rush in because of security rules that prohibit him from going into a cell alone, leading to an agonizing 10-minute wait before another staffer arrives to provide backup.

Derrek Monroe, who died the next day in a hospital, was among the first of 48 jail suicides since the 2017 launch of a sweeping Texas law aimed at reducing such deaths through better screening and monitoring. That law hasn't made a dent in the number of suicides, and experts blame its failure to address one of the most significant factors: the lack of staff to watch troubled inmates.

"Jails are understaffed and often very understaffed," said Diana Claitor, executive director of the Texas Jail Project, which advocates for inmates and their families. "You know you have to check a suicidal inmate, but at the same time, another crisis or fight occurs down the hall, and you have to go there. If you don't have any extra personnel because someone is sick, you're doing everything alone."

In a joint reporting effort, The Associated Press and the University of Maryland's Capital News Service compiled a database of more than 400 lawsuits in the last five years alleging mistreatment of inmates in U.S. prisons and jails. Close to 40 percent involved suicides in local jails — 135 deaths and 30 attempts. All but eight involved allegations of neglect by the staff.

"It's not always maliciousness," Claitor added. "We're talking about people who are doing a very tough job."

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Part of the series Death Behind Bars, a joint reporting effort by The Associated Press and the University of Maryland's Capital News Service.

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Texas became a national flashpoint in the debate over jailhouse suicides and treatment of mentally ill inmates after the highly publicized 2015 case of Sandra Bland, a black activist who killed herself in a county jail three days after her arrest in a contentious traffic stop.

Her death led to protests, debate and ultimately an ambitious law in her name that sought to be a national model. It included policy changes that required mentally ill inmates to be diverted toward treatment, independent investigation of jail deaths, de-escalation training for police, and funding for electronic sensors or cameras for accurate and timely cell checks.

But critics note that the law had no requirement or money for additional guards, and jailhouse suicides remain a stubborn problem in Texas. The 22 suicides in the state's jails this year through November already surpass the 17 in all of last year, a nearly 30% increase.

Since the Sandra Bland Act went into effect in September 2017, state figures show staffing levels at Texas' 239 local jails have remained largely unchanged at around 25,000 jailers. Jails are still only required to meet state standards that mandate a minimum of one jailer for every 48 inmates in a single-story jail. In multistory jails, a guard is required for each floor with 10 or more inmates.

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At the time of Derrek Monroe's video-recorded suicide attempt on Oct. 1, 2017, the Coleman County Jail met state standards with a single guard overseeing nine inmates and two floors, even though Monroe was on a suicide watch because of another attempt the day before.

Details of Monroe's case have emerged as part of his family's lawsuit against the county. The guard and the sheriff acknowledged in a deposition last year that the guard could have stopped the 28-year-old Monroe, who was being held on unspecified drug or alcohol charges, if more than one guard had been working in the jail that day.

Brandon Wood, executive director of the Texas Commission on Jail Standards, said another staffing-related challenge for jails is failing to carry out face-to-face checks of suicidal inmates every 30 minutes — the standard set by Texas administrative code even before the Bland Act.

The commission regularly inspects the state's 239 jails for compliance with state inmate safety requirements and fails jails if there are one or more violations. The agency carried out 3,752 inspections since 2006 and jails failed one of every four inspections. When a jail fails, it is listed on the commission's web page until it passes re-inspection and ultimately could be shut down if it keeps failing.

Waller County Jail — where Bland died in 2015— appeared on the list last December for violating five standards, including the 30-minute check requirement. A month later, Evan Parker, 34, hanged himself there while in custody on murder charges.

Sheriff R. Glenn Smith said the 30-minute check violation was caused by an error in the software system the jail used to track jailer rounds and had no bearing on Parker's death.

Smith said the biggest issue in Waller County is keeping trained staff, noting that he often loses guards to larger jails in other counties where there are more opportunities for advancement. Other guards leave because they are burned out working hard hours for little pay.

"They're incarcerated every day along with the inmates," Smith said. "They just don't want to do that 20 years."

Texas State Rep. Garnet Coleman, a Democrat who introduced the Sandra Bland Act, explained that cameras and tracking equipment are one-time expenditures but staffing requires a sustained commitment that would be too costly for the state. He said local governments have primary responsibility for funding jails and the wherewithal to do so with their own tax revenues.

"Nothing forbids governments from increasing taxes to improve our jails," Coleman said. "But how can they convince people that it's necessary? That comes only with educating people and with the rise of awareness. It is happening, but not fast enough."

## With no choice but Trump, voter sues over Minnesota primary

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A Minnesota voter frustrated because President Donald Trump would be the only name on the state Republican primary ballot in March is challenging the move and muddying the launch of the state's first presidential primary in decades.

Jim Martin, of Lake Elmo, a small business operator and political independent, filed a lawsuit over the primary rules, the Star Tribune reported. Martin said he doesn't want to participate in a "Soviet-style" election in which the political parties dictate who the voters can elect.

"I want to be in an American election," Martin said. "It's something that sets us apart from the world."

State Republican Party Chairwoman Jennifer Carnahan had defended the move, arguing that it's her job as party leader to help re-elect the president. GOP officials have said they will allow write-in candidates.

The March 3 presidential primary will be the state's first since 1992, after a law passed three years ago did away with presidential straw polls formerly taken at precinct caucuses.

Martin's complaint questions state election laws that allow party chairs to determine the makeup of taxpayer-funded primary ballots. The ballot submitted by the Minnesota Republican Party excludes all GOP candidates but Trump.

Minnesota's Democratic-Farmer-Labor Party submitted a list of 15 Democrats who are still actively campaigning for the 2020 nomination, although three minor candidates who didn't file paperwork on time

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won't be on the ballot.

The Minnesota Supreme Court will hear arguments in the case on Jan. 9.

State officials warned the Supreme Court in papers filed this past week that unless the ballot question is settled "within the first few days of January," they may not have enough time to print and distribute ballots for the start of early voting on Jan. 17.

## French president says 33 jihadists killed in central Mali

By ALEXIS ADELE Associated Press

ABIDJAN, Ivory Coast (AP) — French forces killed 33 Islamic extremists in central Mali on Saturday, French President Emmanuel Macron said.

He made the announcement on the second day of a three-day trip to West Africa that has been dominated by the growing threat posed by jihadist groups.

Macron tweeted that he was "proud of our soldiers who protect us." Two Malian gendarmes also were rescued in the operation, he said.

In a speech to the French community living in Ivory Coast, Macron said French troops will continue fighting terrorism in the Sahel region.

"I want to reiterate my determination to continue this fight. We suffered losses; we also have victories," he said, stressing the "huge success" of Saturday's operation in the Mopti region of central Mali.

France has about 4,500 military personnel in West and Central Africa, much of which was ruled by France during the colonial era. The operation is France's largest overseas military mission.

The French led a military operation in 2013 to dislodge Islamic extremists who had seized control of major towns in the north and implemented a harsh version of Islamic law. In the ensuing years, the militants have regrouped and pushed further into central Mali, where Saturday morning's operation was carried out.

On Friday evening, Macron met with French military personnel stationed in Ivory Coast, which shares a long border with volatile Mali and Burkina Faso.

Later Saturday, Macron was to meet with Ivorian President Alassane Ouattara in Abidjan. Both men will highlight a new training effort being launched. The International Academy to Fight Terrorism will be in charge of "training in Ivory Coast some specialized forces from across Africa," Macron said Saturday. "Then we will collectively be better prepared for the fight against terrorism."

## Buttigieg playing catchup in reaching Nevada voters of color

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Democratic presidential candidate Pete Buttigieg is working to make inroads with Latino, black and Asian American voters in Las Vegas this weekend, outreach that the South Bend mayor has been slow to make compared with many of his rivals.

Buttigieg is appearing at a series of town halls and roundtables across Las Vegas, including a town hall with Asian American voters Friday night and a "Black empowerment conversation" at a soul food restaurant Saturday afternoon, followed by a Latino community leader roundtable.

It will be Buttigieg's first event with leaders of the Latino community in Nevada — a significant slice of the state's Democratic electorate.

Nevada, which votes third in the Democratic primary, offers the first test of a candidate's appeal to a diverse population. Presidential contenders are expected to build relationships in these communities early, typically making campaign stops much sooner than two months out from the caucuses.

Fernando Romero, president of the Las Vegas-based group Hispanics in Politics, said Buttigieg's campaign is "starting a little late in our community. But, nonetheless, they are starting."

Romero, who has been invited to Buttigieg's Latino roundtable on Saturday, said he told Buttigieg's team that he had been "somewhat taken aback that they had not done that prior."

"By this time, I think most Latinos are already basically siding with one individual or another," he said. "I think it might be just a little too late."

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Buttigieg only began ramping up his staff in Nevada in early fall, and the late start has been followed by a lag in state polls. Former Vice President Joe Biden has a slight lead, followed by Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, with Buttigieg trailing behind.

"The Buttigieg folks, I haven't really seen them around too much. They have a lot of catching up to do for sure," said Reuben D'Silva, the civic engagement chair of the Las Vegas Urban League Young Professionals.

D'Silva, who is also a faculty adviser for an influential Hispanic student union, said Buttigieg is an impressive candidate and still has room to build bridges.

"He still has time here in Nevada if he invests properly, if he has a renewed focus. Especially on the Hispanic voters," D'Silva said.

The South Bend mayor's slower start with Nevada's populations of color comes as he's been dogged by questions about his failure to catch on with many black voters in South Carolina, an issue he and his campaign have acknowledged they've been working on.

After meeting with Asian American and Pacific Islander community leaders in Las Vegas on Friday night, Buttigieg was asked by a reporter whether his planned meetings with other communities in Nevada was an attempt to catch up to other campaigns.

The mayor pointed out that he'd met with many of those same Asian American and Pacific Islander leaders on one of his early visits to the state in May.

"I think that the most important thing is for us to continue to have different styles, formats and audiences and that's been important to us from day one," he said.

In Nevada, Buttigieg's campaign notes people of color make up a majority of its 55-person paid team. His campaign said it now has organizers hosting house parties in Spanish and canvassing heavily Spanish-speaking neighborhoods.

Buttigieg this week started running radio and online ads in Nevada featuring him speaking in Spanish and released a Latino economic empowerment plan that aims to tackle issues such as safe drinking water, predatory lending, affordable housing and immigration. The plan also calls for expanding the representation of Latinos in the national parks and supports the establishment of a national museum of the American Latino.

"We're aiming for a broad-based coalition," Buttigieg senior campaign adviser Jess O'Connell said. "We are absolutely, obviously doing more work in communities of color and leaning in there."

In his efforts to reach out to Nevada's Latino community, Buttigieg risks being outshone by Sanders this weekend.

A few hours after Buttigieg's Latino roundtable on Saturday, the Vermont senator is set to hold a rally nearby in a heavily Latino neighborhood with Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Ocasio-Cortez, the freshman Democrat from New York who is a progressive star, is also scheduled to host a Spanish-only town hall on behalf of Sanders in Las Vegas on Sunday.

Ocasio-Cortez's events, Romero said, are "obviously one hell of an outreach to the Latino community."

## 30-plus years of 'Garfield' comic strips to sell at auction

By JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — Cartoonist Jim Davis is offering up more than 11,000 "Garfield" comic strips hand-drawn on paper in an auction that will stretch into the coming years, with at least a couple of strips featuring the always-hungry orange cat with a sardonic sense of humor available weekly.

"There are just so many, and it was such a daunting task to figure what to do with them so that they could be out there where people enjoy them too," said Davis, creator of the comic strip that appears in newspapers around the world and has spawned TV shows, movies and books.

Dallas-based Heritage Auctions began offering up the strips in August. The auction house is selling two daily strips each week, along with longer Sunday strips being offered during the large-scale auctions throughout the year.



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The strips span from the launch of "Garfield" in 1978 to 2011, when Davis began drawing the strip digitally. He says he still draws it by hand but now it's with a stylus on a tablet instead of on paper with a pencil, pen and brush.

Comic art collector Nagib Baltagi has purchased about 20 of the strips so far and plans to bid on more. The 36-year-old said the "Garfield" auction particularly resonated because he loved as a kid watching the cartoons and reading the books.

Baltagi, who lives in Miami, said he's drawn to the strips that feature several of the characters and have a storyline that strikes a chord, in addition to ones that ran on meaningful dates.

"I tend to go for the ones that kind of remind me where I was in my life," he said.

Indiana-based Davis says that over the years he gave some strips to family, friends and staff, while others are on displays at museums, including the Smithsonian Institution, and he even tried selling them on his website for a few years. But he kept most of them, he says, storing them in a fireproof, climate-controlled vault.

The auction, he said, "was just a logical thing to do with an awful lot of comic strips and an opportunity to allow not just collectors but a lot of the fans over the years to have access to the strips as well without me having to send them out one at a time."

Brian Wiedman, a comic grader at Heritage, says the daily strips are currently selling on average from around \$500 to \$700, and the longer Sunday strips are selling for \$1,500 to \$3,000.

He said the value is often determined by "who is doing what, when and where."

"So Garfield eating lasagna, which is a trademark for him, that would be considered kind of one of the more expensive ones," Wiedman said.

Also adding value, he said, is an appearance by the strip's other characters, which include Garfield's owner Jon Arbuckle and Odie, his dog.

Caitlin McGurk, associate curator and assistant professor for the Billy Ireland Cartoon Library & Museum at Ohio State University, said that Davis "struck gold" by creating a character people love.

"It's kind of a classic comic you could pick up any day and feel good about," she said.

McGurk, whose museum has about 20 "Garfield" strips, likes the idea of the auction and noted that that the number of paper strips he's auctioning would be a difficult for a library to store.

"I think it's great if he can get that in the hands of fans and people who will love it," McGurk said.

Baltagi said Garfield appeals to everyone. "Who doesn't love a grumpy cat?" Baltagi said.

Davis, who is 74, said he has no plans to retire from drawing the comic featuring the orange feline known for his dislike of Mondays and diets.

"It's fun. It's just fun," Davis said.

## The Jim Crow film that just won't die, "Song of the South"

By JAY REEVES Associated Press

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (AP) — Racially segregated movie theaters and whites-only water fountains disappeared decades ago after court rulings struck down the legal framework of Jim Crow America, but another element of the era just won't die: Walt Disney's 1946 movie "Song of the South."

With racist stereotypes and Old South tropes, the film isn't available to the millions of subscribers of the company's new Disney Plus streaming service, and it hasn't been released in theaters in decades. Yet the movie, still beloved by many, lives on.

"Song of the South" is easily viewed on the internet either in whole or in pieces, and numerous websites offer versions of the movie or memorabilia for sale. Animatronic characters and music from the movie are even featured in a ride at Disney World in Orlando, Florida, minus the racist context.

The movie — a mix of live action, cartoons and music featuring an old black plantation laborer named Uncle Remus who enchants a white city boy with fables of talking animals — is like a zombie that keeps popping up seven decades after it was first released. While many find it racist and offensive, others see it as endearing.

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"Yay! Have been looking for a good copy for years, kids really enjoyed it! Thank you," a reviewer wrote recently on the online marketplace Etsy, where multiple versions of the movie are for sale.

Groups including the NAACP protested the film's initial release, and arts professor Sheril Antonio said the continuing problem with "Song of the South" is that some just don't see anything wrong with it.

"Most of the harm of all of this is not acknowledging our shared history, all the good and bad of it. The harm comes from ignoring it and not talking about it truthfully and fully," Antonio, a senior associate dean of arts at New York University, said in an interview conducted by email.

Released the year after World War II ended, "Song of the South" premiered in Atlanta, where the Civil War epic "Gone With the Wind" made its debut a few years earlier. Set in post-Civil War Georgia, the Disney film featured stories that white newspaper writer Joel Chandler Harris heard from one-time slaves and published starting in 1876, according to The Wren's Nest, Harris' one-time home and now a museum in Atlanta.

Actor James Baskett was presented an honorary Academy Award for his portrayal of Uncle Remus, but the movie was perhaps best known for its Oscar-winning song "Zip-A-Dee-Do-Dah." The tune is part of the soundtrack at Disney World's Splash Mountain ride, which also features Remus characters including Br'er Rabbit.

Yet while Disney Plus added a disclaimer to "Peter Pan," "Dumbo" and other vintage movies because they depict racist stereotypes, the company kept "Song of the South" locked away in its vault.

Disney last screened the movie in 1986, its 40th anniversary, despite years of complaints that it showed blacks as subservient to whites, and it never released "Song of the South" for home video sales in the United States. Foreign versions of the movie are among the editions available for sale on the internet.

"To be honest, I've lost track of how many people sell DVD bootlegs now," said Christian Willis, who has run a website dedicated to the movie for about two decades.

Jason Sperb, who wrote a book about the movie and its legacy, said "Song of the South" received a lukewarm reception when it first opened but was a "huge hit" financially when it was released in the 1970s and '80s.

"Disney had become more of a cultural institution by then. All the old films, whether successful or not upon its original release, were now being rebranded as 'classics,'" said Sperb, author of "Disney's Most Notorious Film: Race, Convergence, and the Hidden Histories of Song of the South."

The continuing fascination that some have with the movie is likely more about the fact that Disney made it than its actual contents, he said in an email interview.

"I think if anyone else in Hollywood had made that movie it would have been almost completely forgotten about by today except for only the most hardcore animation history buffs who would note in passing its role in helping to shape the possibilities of hybrid animation," said Sperb.

Willis, who runs the "Song of the South" website, said he was enamored with the movie after seeing it as a child in 1986 at age 6. He hopes the movie is released to the public again someday, and in the meantime he plans to keep adding to his online repository about the film.

"I think burying history is the wrong approach," he said.

Some have reinterpreted old, racist films in a new way rather than simply screening them in their original format. Antonio, the NYU professor, cited DJ Spooky's remix of the 1915 movie "Birth of a Nation," which glorified the early Ku Klux Klan.

In "Rebirth of a Nation," DJ Spooky (whose birth name is Paul D. Miller) trimmed the original film and applied new graphics and music he composed. In a live performance during the 2016 presidential campaign, he spliced together the original film with scenes from the civil rights movement and post-9/11 wars.

Antonio said she was "forever changed" by watching "Rebirth."

"As you can see I am an educator, and in these cultural artifacts there is always value," she said.

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## House vote locks in impeachment as issue in '20 Hill races

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The day after nearly every House Democrat voted to impeach President Donald Trump, the chief of the House Republican campaign committee said the political fallout was clear.

"Last night their obsession with impeachment finally came to a head, and they basically ended their majority," Minnesota Rep. Tom Emmer said Thursday. "Max Rose is done," he continued, listing him among freshmen Democrats from districts Trump captured in 2016 who he said won't survive next November's elections.

The feisty Rose, a Brooklyn native and Afghanistan combat veteran with an advanced degree from the London School of Economics, sees things differently. "Mark my words, okay?" said Rose, whose Staten Island-centered district was the only one Trump won in New York City. "We are going to beat them by such a wide margin that next time around, they won't even talk like this again, okay?"

It's too early to say who will be proven correct as Republicans wage a challenging struggle to regain the House majority they lost last year. But less than 11 months from presidential and congressional elections, the near party-line House vote impeaching Trump locked in lawmakers' positions on the subject. Many moderate lawmakers from swing districts had spent months saying they were on the fence.

Now, voters will decide whether to reward or punish incumbents for their choices. And while Republicans and Democrats acknowledge that other issues like the economy and health care costs could overwhelm impeachment by next November, both sides — but especially the GOP — are already using the bitter impeachment fight as weapons.

"This is an attack on Democracy," blared one Trump campaign fundraising email that included a thank you from "Donald J. Trump, President of the United States." It added, "An attack on freedom. An attack on everything we hold dear in this country. And it's an attack on YOU."

Freshman Rep. Harley Rouda, who ousted a 30-year House GOP veteran from what was once a Republican stronghold in Southern California, was among Democrats issuing their own pleas for cash.

"Last night I cast my vote to defend our Constitution and impeach the President of the United States. A vote bigger than party, polling, and politics, & we've faced an onslaught of attacks since," Rouda beseeched supporters.

Republican organizations and conservative outside groups have outspent their Democratic rivals, \$11 million to \$5 million, on television ads mentioning impeachment in congressional races. The figures from Advertising Analytics, a firm in Alexandria, Virginia, that tracks advertising, exclude spending by candidates' campaigns.

So far, both sides have combined to spend at least \$500,000 in each of 15 House races from South Carolina to Nevada on impeachment spots, the data shows. Republican groups have spent that amount without any Democratic expenditures in three other districts in Utah, Minnesota and New York.

Underscoring how the GOP is using impeachment for offense while Democrats are in a more defensive crouch, all but one of the 18 districts that's seen that much money spent on the issue are held by Democrats. The lone Republican is Rep. John Katko, a three-term lawmaker whose upstate New York district is one of just three held by the GOP that were won by Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton.

Of the remaining 17 districts, all were carried by Trump and all but one are represented by Democratic freshmen, who are often less secure than congressional veterans.

"If you're a truth seeker or care about where the country is going, I think we cast the right vote," said Rep. Cheri Bustos, D-Ill., who heads House Democrats' campaign organization.

"We have to just keep focused on what matters to people. Health care is No. 1. Making Washington more functional is very important. That's a very hard thing to do, but we've got to keep working on it," Bustos said.

That's a formula that Rose, whose working-class district Trump carried by 10 percentage points, is following.

Asked how he would overcome GOP attacks over his vote to impeach Trump, Rose cited measures in-

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cluding one financing a sea wall for Staten Island's eastern shore and another buttressing a compensation fund for survivors of the 9/11 attacks.

"We are delivering for the district, plain and simple," he said. "Over and over and over again, we're putting government back on the side of people who've been working their hearts out and been ignored."

Democrats led by Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., control the House 232-198, plus one independent and four vacancies. That includes Thursday's party switch by New Jersey Rep. Jeff Van Drew, who joined the GOP after being one of only two Democrats who opposed impeachment.

Impeachment will reverberate as well in Senate races, where the GOP will be fighting to retain its 53-47 majority. That chamber is expected to begin its trial next month on whether to oust Trump from office and seems certain to acquit him.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has made clear he is cooperating with the White House and wants a swift trial with no witnesses.

That could limit the risks for GOP senators like Cory Gardner of Colorado, Martha McSally of Arizona and Susan Collins of Maine. They face competitive reelection races in swing states where Republicans adore Trump but independents are divided, and these senators could also be damaged by a trial that seems to veer out of control.

Democratic Sen. Doug Jones of Alabama faces risks of his own. His state overwhelmingly backed Trump in 2016, so Jones must chose between voting to remove Trump and infuriating most voters or acquitting him and angering loyal Democrats.

McConnell and Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y., have had unproductive talks so far on what the trial's rules will be.

Schumer has said he wants testimony from top White House officials, which McConnell seems certain to block. They could provide potentially damaging evidence on Trump's attempt to pressure Ukraine to announce investigations of Democrats like former Vice President Joseph Biden — the core of the impeachment charges.

## Second Amendment Sanctuary push aims to defy new gun laws

By DENISE LAVOIE AP Legal Affairs Writer

BUCKINGHAM, Va. (AP) — A standing-room only crowd of more than 400 packed the meeting room, filled the lobby and spilled into the parking lot recently in rural Buckingham County, Virginia. They had one thing on their minds: guns.

The vast majority favored a proposal to protect their right to carry firearms: declaring the county a Second Amendment Sanctuary.

Similar scenes have played out across Virginia over the last six weeks. Gun owners are descending on local offices to demand that their government leaders establish sanctuaries for gun rights.

The resolutions, promoted heavily by the gun rights group Virginia Citizens Defense League, vary from county to county, but most declare the intention of local officials to oppose any "unconstitutional restrictions" on the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. In the last two months, more than 100 counties, cities and towns in Virginia have approved such resolutions.

The current movement began last year in Illinois and quickly spread to numerous states, including California, Colorado, New Mexico and Florida.

In Virginia, home to the National Rifle Association's headquarters, lawmakers in both parties have traditionally supported gun rights. But in recent years, Democrats have backed tighter restrictions on guns.

The Second Amendment Sanctuary movement began after Democrats promising new gun control laws took over both chambers of the state legislature in the Nov. 5 election.

Gun control proposals gained momentum after a shooter killed 12 people and injured four others at a Virginia Beach municipal building in May. But a special legislative session called by Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam after the mass shooting failed to produce any new gun control bills when Republicans shut it down after just 90 minutes.

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Gun control advocates are now proposing an array of new restrictions, including universal background checks, assault weapon bans and red flag laws that would allow authorities to temporarily take guns away from people deemed dangerous to themselves or others.

One proposal by incoming Senate Majority Leader Dick Saslaw has enflamed gun rights advocates and helped fuel the Second Amendment Sanctuary movement. The bill, as initially proposed, would make it a felony to sell, manufacture, purchase or possess assault weapons and certain magazines. Saslaw has since said that allowing current owners to keep their weapons "makes sense," and he expects to amend the bill.

But many see Saslaw's bill as the first step down a slippery slope that will end with their guns being taken away.

"We have the right to defend our households and we have the right to defend ourselves — period," said Jake Eubanks, 35, of Buckingham County, about 75 miles west of Richmond, where officials approved a sanctuary resolution earlier this month.

Darrell Miller, co-director of the Duke Center for Firearms Law, said the sanctuary movement is largely a phenomenon in rural communities, where people have grown up hunting and treasure their guns.

"For whatever reasons, people, especially in these communities, have a deep-seated fear that universal firearm confiscation is just around the corner," Miller said.

David Campbell, vice chairman of the Effingham County Board in Illinois, said his county was one of the first in the nation to pass a Second Amendment Sanctuary resolution in April 2018. Campbell said he and a local prosecutor chose the word "sanctuary" as a swipe at Democratic leaders who used the word to describe their refusal to cooperate with federal immigration enforcement in the "sanctuary cities" movement.

"We thought, well, if they can do that, why can't we make Effingham County a sanctuary for legal, law-abiding gun owners?" Campbell said.

The movement caught fire, and today, 70 out of the 102 counties in Illinois have approved the resolutions, Campbell said.

"What it's designed to do is to send a message to our legislators letting them know we are not going to stand for unconstitutional laws being passed like they are trying to do," Campbell said.

The two sides differ on how effective such resolutions will be.

In an advisory opinion issued Friday, Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring called the resolutions "part of an effort by the gun lobby to stoke fear" and said the resolutions "have no legal effect."

U.S. Rep. Donald McEachin, D-Virginia, told the Washington Examiner that Northam could cut off state funds to counties that don't comply with new gun control laws and could even call in the National Guard to enforce the laws, if necessary.

Northam's spokeswoman, Alena Yarmosky, said the governor has "absolutely no plans to call in the National Guard."

Northam said he's not "looking for retaliation" against localities that pass the resolutions and is confident that local law enforcement agents "will continue to enforce constitutional laws." He said Virginians made it clear after the Virginia Beach shooting that they support new gun restrictions.

"Virginians spoke after that mass tragedy, they spoke on Nov. 5, and they basically said, 'enough is enough,'" Northam said.

But Philip Van Cleave, president of the Virginia Citizens Defense League, said the resolutions will have teeth if local sheriffs and prosecutors agree to refuse to arrest or prosecute people who break new laws they believe violate the Second Amendment.

"The counties are saying, this stuff is unconstitutional. We don't want it, we don't want to enforce it, and in most cases, we won't enforce it," he said.

One Virginia sheriff has vowed to deputize thousands of county residents "to protect their constitutional right to own firearms."

"Every Sheriff and Commonwealth Attorney in Virginia will see the consequences if our General Assembly passes further unnecessary gun restrictions," Culpeper County Sheriff Scott Jenkins wrote on Facebook.

At the Buckingham County meeting, local resident Marie Flowers was one of the few who opposed the sanctuary proposal. Flowers said she believes the NRA has sold the "'John Wayne syndrome" to gun

rights activists.

"Nobody's freedom is being taken away except for these people who are being murdered," she said.

## US heads to court to build Trump border wall in Texas

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — Three years into Donald Trump's presidency, the U.S. government is ramping up its efforts to seize private land in Texas to build a border wall.

Trump's signature campaign promise has consistently faced political, legal, and environmental obstacles in Texas, which has the largest section of the U.S.-Mexico border, most of it without fencing. And much of the land along the Rio Grande, the river that forms the border in Texas, is privately held and environmentally sensitive.

Almost no land has been taken so far. But Department of Justice lawyers have filed three lawsuits this month seeking to take property from landowners. On Tuesday, lawyers moved to seize land in one case immediately before a scheduled court hearing in February.

The agency says it's ready to file many more petitions to take private land in the coming weeks. While progress has lagged, the process of taking land under eminent domain is weighted heavily in the government's favor.

The U.S. government has built about 90 miles (145 kilometers) of walls since Trump took office, almost all of it replacing old fencing. Reaching Trump's oft-stated goal of 500 miles (800 kilometers) by the end of 2020 will almost certainly require stepping up progress in Texas.

Opponents have lobbied Congress to limit funding and prevent construction in areas like the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge, an important sanctuary for several endangered species of jaguars, birds, and other animals, as well as the nonprofit National Butterfly Center and a historic Catholic chapel. They have also filed several lawsuits. A federal judge this month prevented the government from building with money redirected to the wall under Trump's declaration of a national emergency earlier this year. Also, two judges recently ordered a private, pro-Trump fundraising group to stop building its own wall near the Rio Grande.

Even on land the government owns, construction has been held up. In another federal wildlife refuge, at a site known as La Parida Banco, work crews cleared brush this spring and the government announced in April that construction would soon begin. Eight months later, the site remains empty.

According to a U.S. official familiar with the project, work crews discovered that the land was too saturated. The planned metal bollards installed on top of concrete panels would have been unstable because of the water levels in the soil, said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity because the person did not have authorization to share the information publicly.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection declined to comment on the issue of saturation at La Parida Banco, saying construction there was "currently in the design phase."

In a statement, CBP says it continues to need a border wall for "the enduring capability it creates to impede and/or deny attempted illegal entries while creating additional time to carry out successful law enforcement resolutions." The agency says it plans by the end of 2020 to have 450 miles (724 kilometers) of walls built and another 59 miles (95 kilometers) under construction, "pending availability of real estate."

The Fifth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution requires the government pay "just compensation" to anyone whose land is taken for public use. But the government can deposit an amount it deems fair with the court, then seek to take the land immediately on the basis that a border wall is urgently needed. Even as border crossings have plummeted from record highs for families earlier this year, Justice Department attorneys argue the government needs to take land as quickly as possible.

"Time is of the essence," the lawyers wrote in Tuesday's motion.

In the case of the land targeted on Tuesday, the government has deposited \$93,449 with the court for 12.6 acres (5 hectares). U.S. District Judge Micaela Alvarez has not yet ruled on the motion.

Roy Brandys, an attorney for the landowners, said both sides were close to settling and allowing the government to take the land, potentially within a week.

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"When landowners disagree with the government over valuation, there is a transparent, court supervised process for determining just compensation," said Jeffrey Clark, an assistant attorney general, in a statement.

Ricky Garza is a lawyer with the Texas Civil Rights Project, which represents six landowners at various stages of the eminent domain process.

Some landowners support a border wall and have agreed to work with the government. Others worry about losing part of their property to a "no man's land" between the wall or the river. Several have vowed to fight as long as they can.

Garza pointed out that the Rio Grande Valley is one of the poorest regions of the United States.

"This is a severe use of government power against people who have very little," Garza said. "Our leaders say there's only so much money to go around. But then you see numbers in the billions appropriated for something that almost no one in the community wants."

## AP FACT CHECK: Trump's distorted letter to Dems and history

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The closing passage in President Donald Trump's impeachment-eve letter to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi had the ring of truth to it. He was writing his thoughts for history, he said. For 100 years from now, "when people look back at this affair."

He is right that this letter passes firmly into history, as indelible as the mark of impeachment he now wears. If those future generations rely on his letter to understand what happened, though, they will be sorely misled.

On matters central to the case against him, to his legacy and to his ego, Trump got much wrong. He did not win the presidency in a "landslide." He did not reinvent the Veterans Affairs Department. The Democrats did not shut him out of their impeachment process, but rather invited him in. His job-creation numbers are refuted by his own administration. And much more.

A look at the letter and other markers in a week also filled with a storm of tweets, his impeachment-night rally and a day-after Democratic presidential debate:

### 2016 ELECTION

TRUMP: "Your chosen candidate lost the election in 2016, in an Electoral College landslide (306-227)." — letter to Pelosi, D-Calif., on Tuesday.

THE FACTS: Far from true. Trump's 2016 victory bore no resemblance to a landslide. He won with about 57% of electoral votes, a comfortable margin but no better than average or below average. Barack Obama and Bill Clinton each won bigger victories twice and many other presidents outperformed Trump.

Here is what Electoral College landslides look like: Franklin Roosevelt, 98.5% in 1936, 88.9% in 1932; Ronald Reagan, 97.6% in 1984; 90.9% in 1980. Richard Nixon, Abraham Lincoln, Thomas Jefferson and Lyndon Johnson also topped 90% in an analysis of all elections by Jack Pitney, a professor of politics at Claremont McKenna College.

Moreover, Republican Trump lost the popular vote to Democrat Hillary Clinton, a rare occurrence for a winning candidate.

And Trump misstated the electoral count by which he won. The official count was 304-227, not 306-227, according to an Associated Press tally of the electoral votes in every state.

### IMPEACHMENT and UKRAINE

TRUMP: "More due process was afforded to those accused in the Salem Witch Trials." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: No. Nineteen people were executed after being falsely accused of witchcraft in trials in colonial Massachusetts. Trump, meanwhile, has lawyers, a Republican-controlled Senate, the power of the presidency, constitutional protections and money behind him.

The Salem trials were so unfair that they have become the metaphor of choice for Trump in complaining about the "witch hunt" against him. Salem Mayor Kim Driscoll urged Trump to "learn some history."

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TRUMP: "You know full well that Vice President Biden used his office and \$1 billion dollars of U.S. aid money to coerce Ukraine into firing the prosecutor who was digging into the company paying his son millions of dollars." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: He's incorrect to say that Biden, now a 2020 Democratic presidential candidate, pressed to have the prosecutor fired while the prosecutor was investigating Burisma, the energy company in Ukraine where Biden's son Hunter sat on the board of directors. In fact, by the time Biden came out against the prosecutor, the investigation into the company was dormant.

Biden, among other international officials, was pressing for a more aggressive investigation of corruption in Ukraine, not a softer one.

Trump's team cites a video of Joe Biden from 2018. Speaking on a public panel, Biden recounted threatening to withhold a loan guarantee from Ukraine's government unless it fired the prosecutor, who was widely considered ineffective if not corrupt himself.

What Trump doesn't say is that in February 2016, a few months after Biden threatened to hold back a \$1 billion loan guarantee, the International Monetary Fund threatened to delay \$40 billion in aid unless Ukraine took action to fight corruption.

An investigation into Burisma's owner for money laundering, tax evasion and other alleged misdeeds began in 2012 and pertained to the years before Hunter Biden joined the board.

TRUMP: "I have been denied the most fundamental rights afforded by the Constitution, including the right to present evidence, to have my own counsel present, to confront accusers, and to call and cross-examine witnesses." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: This is a distortion. In the House proceedings, Democrats on the House Judiciary Committee that drafted the articles of impeachment invited Trump and his lawyers to take part and ask for witnesses. The witnesses who did come forward were questioned by Republicans on the committee as well as by Democrats.

Earlier hearings by the House Intelligence Committee did not invite Trump or his team. Those hearings were like the investigative phase of criminal cases, conducted without the participation of the person under investigation. But lawmakers from both parties questioned the witnesses. Trump complained about being shut out of that but when the Judiciary Committee hearings were opened to his team and him, he declined.

TRUMP: "This is nothing more than an illegal, partisan attempted coup." — letter Tuesday to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: No illegal takeover is afoot.

The impeachment process is laid out in the Constitution, giving Congress the authority to impeach and try a president as part of its responsibilities as a coequal branch of government to provide a check on a president who commits treason, bribery, or "other high crimes and misdemeanors."

The standard of "high crimes and misdemeanors" is vague and open-ended to encompass abuses of power even if they aren't illegal.

Some Democrats also cried "coup" when the House impeached Bill Clinton in 1998 and it wasn't one then, either.

TRUMP, referring to "the so-called whistleblower who started this entire hoax with a false report of the phone call that bears no relationship to the actual phone call that was made." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: No, the whistleblower's accusations have not been shown to be incorrect. Key details have been corroborated.

For example, the White House account of Trump's July 25 phone call with Ukraine's new president showed that the whistleblower had accurately summarized the conversation, as relayed by unidentified U.S. officials, in the complaint sent to the acting director of national intelligence. Witnesses who heard the call testified to the accuracy of that account.

TRUMP: "Fortunately, there was a transcript of the conversation taken, and you know from the transcript



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(which was immediately made available)." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: Not that immediate. Trump made the call in question to Ukraine's president July 25. The White House released the rough transcript Sept. 25, only (but quickly) after Pelosi announced the impeachment inquiry.

TRUMP: "The Articles of Impeachment introduced by the House Judiciary Committee are not recognizable under any standard of Constitutional theory, interpretation, or jurisprudence. They include no crimes."

THE FACTS: This frequent defense by Trump and his Republican allies is misleading. The constitutional grounds for impeachment do not require a statutory crime to have been committed.

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

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

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

TRUMP: "Congressman Adam Schiff cheated and lied all the way up to the present day, even going so far as to fraudulently make up, out of thin air, my conversation with President Zelensky of Ukraine and read this fantasy language to Congress."

THE FACTS: He's overstating the exaggerated account by the House Intelligence Committee chairman, Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., of what Trump said in his July 25 phone call with Ukraine's leader, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. Most of Schiff's details were accurate and not made up "out of thin air" nor a "fantasy."

Schiff prefaced and concluded his account at a House Intelligence Committee hearing by saying he was giving the "essence" of what Trump said on the phone call, skipping the "rambling" parts. He invited people not to take him literally.

Trump routinely and coarsely mocks critics and invents dialogue that he attributes to them. He did so at an impeachment-night rally Wednesday in Michigan, when he put himself in the voice of Bill Clinton, as if advising Hillary Clinton to campaign in that state and Wisconsin on the eve of the 2016 election. "And he said, 'You horrible human being, you had better start listening to me because you are going to get your ass whipped,'" Trump said to laughs.

TRUMP: "Ambassador Sondland testified that I told him: 'No quid pro quo. I want nothing. I want nothing. I want President Zelensky to do the right thing, do what he ran on.'" — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: Trump is shading what Gordon Sondland, Trump's ambassador to the European Union, told House investigators.

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

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

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

Testimony from other officials shored up the picture of a president and his associates systematically trying to get Ukraine to do what Trump wanted during a period when the military assistance approved by Congress was put on hold without explanation.

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TRUMP, on his July call: "President Zelensky has repeatedly declared that I did nothing wrong, and that there was No Pressure." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: Trump misleads.

While Zelenskiy initially said there was no discussion of a quid pro quo, he told Time this month that Trump should not have blocked military aid to Ukraine. Zelenskiy also criticized Trump for casting the country as corrupt, saying it sends a concerning message to international allies.

On that call discussing military aid, Trump asked Zelenskiy to investigate Trump's political rivals in the U.S. "Look I never talked to the president from the position of a quid pro quo," Zelenskiy said. "But you have to understand. We're at war. If you're our strategic partner, then you can't go blocking anything for us. I think that's just about fairness."

It's true that in early October, Zelenskiy had told reporters "there was no pressure or blackmail from the U.S." But he did not state Trump had done "nothing" wrong.

In any event, Zelenskiy knew months before the call that much-needed U.S. military support might depend on whether he was willing to help Trump by investigating Democrats.

## RUSSIA INVESTIGATION

TRUMP: "You completely failed with the Mueller report because there was nothing to find." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: Not true. The inquiry by special counsel Robert Mueller uncovered criminal behavior, put some perpetrators in prison, traced a virulent effort by Russia to disrupt the U.S. election in 2016 and pointed to troubling behavior by Trump and his associates, leaving Congress to weigh it and decide whether to respond. Mueller's report did not establish a criminal conspiracy between Moscow and the Trump campaign.

Mueller's two-year investigation produced guilty pleas, convictions and criminal charges against Russian intelligence officers and others with ties to the Kremlin, as well as Trump associates. It certainly found something.

All told, Mueller charged 34 people, including the president's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort; his first national security adviser, Michael Flynn; and three Russian companies. Twenty-five Russians were indicted on charges related to election interference, accused either of hacking Democratic email accounts during the campaign or of orchestrating a social media campaign that spread disinformation on the internet.

Five Trump aides pleaded guilty and agreed to cooperate with Mueller. A sixth, longtime confidant Roger Stone, was convicted last month of lying to Congress and witness tampering.

Mueller's report concluded that Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election was "sweeping and systematic." Ultimately, Mueller did not find a criminal conspiracy. But the special counsel didn't render judgment on whether Trump obstructed justice partly because of a Justice Department legal opinion that said sitting presidents shouldn't be indicted.

## BIOGRAPHY

TRUMP: "I could be loved in Germany. They would love me — my father came from Germany." — Michigan rally Wednesday.

THE FACTS: His father came from the Bronx, in New York City.

Trump repeatedly describes his father as German-born. The president's grandfather came from Germany.

## TRUMP'S RECORD

TRUMP: "Your party simply cannot compete with our record: 7 million new jobs." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: He's overstating it. The U.S. has created 6.6 million jobs since Trump took office.

TRUMP: "Our record ... a colossal reduction in illegal border crossings." — letter to Pelosi.

THE FACTS: That depends on what you consider colossal. Border arrests are down about 27% from

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Obama's last month in office. December 2016 was a high number for Obama's presidency as people rushed to cross the border before Trump's inauguration.

Arrests and denials of entry along the Mexico border can vary widely from month to month, so at one point — comparing September to May — Trump could claim a 64% decline. The drop is less than half of that over the sweep of his presidency.

Border arrests are a flawed gauge of illegal immigration. It may be impossible to know how many people escaped capture, but the Border Patrol estimates 20% eluded arrest in 2018. Also, an estimated 40% of people in the country illegally arrived legally and overstayed their visas. Border arrests don't take them into account. So the letter rests on partial accounting and misleading figures.

**TRUMP:** "Our record ... a completely reformed VA with Choice and Accountability for our great veterans." — letter to Pelosi.

**THE FACTS:** Not exactly his record. Trump didn't enact Veterans Choice and a government watchdog found that the new accountability law had failed in its core mission of protecting whistleblowers who reported potential harm to veterans.

He refers to Choice, a program that allows veterans under some conditions to go outside the Veterans Affairs health care system and seek private care at public expense. Obama created the program. Trump routinely claims credit for it. But he only built on Obama's achievement.

On accountability, a report released last month by the VA inspector general found that the VA accountability office established under the 2017 law did not consistently conduct sound and unbiased investigations and may not have protected identities of whistleblowers reporting wrongdoing.

It said the office had "significant deficiencies," like poor leadership, shoddy training of investigators and a failure to push out underperforming senior leaders.

Just one senior manager out of the 8,000 employees fired by VA had been removed by an office created to help keep senior-level managers accountable, according to the findings by inspector general Michael Missal.

The VA acknowledged many of the findings and said it was working to make changes.

## DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

**BERNIE SANDERS,** on Biden's proposed health care plan: "Under Joe's plan we retain essentially the status quo."

**JOE BIDEN:** "That's not true."

**THE FACTS:** It's not as simple as their lively exchange implies, but Biden is correct that his plan would go far beyond the "status quo."

Sanders' name is practically synonymous with "Medicare for All," a tax-financed, government-run system that would cover all U.S. residents while doing away with private insurance.

Biden has proposed building on the Obama-era health law, adding a Medicare-like "public option" that any U.S. citizen or legal resident could opt for.

The U.S. has a hybrid health care system, balanced between private coverage through employers and government coverage through programs like Medicare and Medicaid. Biden would retain a mix of private and public coverage, so in a sense that's the "status quo."

But Biden's public option that anyone could join would be a momentous change to the system, helping to get millions more people insured and paying hospitals and doctors based on Medicare rates, which are lower than what private insurance pays.

It's a big enough change that the insurance industry is opposed, as are many other health industry players. So Biden's approach would not be the status quo.

**SANDERS:** "Today in America, we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major country on Earth." — debate Thursday.

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THE FACTS: The Vermont senator is exaggerating.

There are nearly 200 countries in the world, many with people living in extreme poverty that most Americans would struggle to fathom. Poverty is also a relative measure in which someone who is poor in one nation might look rather prosperous in another.

But the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development updated its child poverty report in 2018. The United States had an above-average level of child poverty, but it was not among the 42 nations listed in the report that had the highest levels. The United States still fared better than Russia, Chile, Spain, India, Turkey, Israel, Costa Rica, Brazil, South Africa and China.

Associated Press writers Lynn Berry, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar, Josh Boak and Colleen Long contributed to this report.

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

Find AP Fact Checks at <http://apne.ws/2kbx8bd>

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## Australia battles 'catastrophic' wildfires as PM rushes home

By TRISTAN LAVALETTE Associated Press

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Australia's most populous state was paralyzed by "catastrophic" fire conditions Saturday amid soaring temperatures, while one person died as wildfires ravaged the country's southeast, officials said.

"Catastrophic fire conditions are as bad as it gets," New South Wales Rural Fire Services Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons told reporters. "Given we have a landscape with so much active fire burning, you have a recipe for very serious concern and a very dangerous day."

Areas in western Sydney were forecast to hit 47 degrees Celsius (115 Fahrenheit). Cooler air was expected to move through New South Wales late Saturday, although authorities warned that strong winds could push fires in dangerous new directions.

New South Wales is in a seven-day state of emergency, with around 2,000 firefighters battling 100 wildfires.

Two firefighters died Thursday battling blazes southwest of Sydney. Geoffrey Keaton, 32, and Andrew O'Dwyer, 36, were in a truck convoy southwest of Sydney when a tree fell and caused their vehicle to roll off the road.

Authorities confirmed Saturday that one person died and 15 homes were destroyed in South Australia as a wildfire ravaged the Adelaide Hills on Friday, just 40 kilometers (25 miles) from the state capital of Adelaide. Another person was critically injured after fighting to save his home from the fires.

That follows the death of a 24-year-old man in a road crash in South Australia on Friday, which sparked a fire in the area of the Murraylands.

Authorities said 23 firefighters and several police have also suffered injuries, as more than 40,000 hectares (98,842 acres) burned across South Australia.

"It is going to be a real scene of devastation, especially for those people in the Adelaide Hills who have been most affected," South Australia Premier Steven Marshall said. "We know that in addition to the buildings and vehicles lost, there are very significant losses in terms of livestock, animals, crops, vineyards."

The annual Australian fire season, which peaks during the Southern Hemisphere summer, started early after an unusually warm and dry winter. Around 3 million hectares (7.4 million acres) of land has burned nationwide during a torrid past few months, with nine people killed and more than 800 homes destroyed.

The devastation has put pressure on Prime Minister Scott Morrison, who has received criticism for going on a family vacation in Hawaii during the wildfire crisis. He apologized on Friday for any offense "caused to any of the many Australians affected by the terrible bushfires by my taking leave with family at this time."

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Morrison cut short his vacation and returned home on Saturday night. He is due to visit the New South Wales Rural Fire Service headquarters on Sunday.

Debate has reignited on whether Morrison's conservative government has taken enough action on climate change. Australia is the world's largest exporter of coal and liquefied natural gas.

Fatih Birol, International Energy Agency executive director, believes Australia has missed opportunities to mitigate the impact of coal.

"I find the Australian energy debate far too emotional, far too nervous and far too hot. It is hotter than the climate change itself," he told The Sydney Morning Herald and The Age.

Protesters on Thursday camped outside Morrison's Sydney residence demanding urgent action on climate change.

Morrison, who critics have deemed a climate change skeptic, conceded earlier this month that "climate change along with many other factors" has contributed to the wildfires.

## Man who used narwhal tusk to subdue extremist identified

By GREGORY KATZ Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — A mysterious figure who used a rare narwhal tusk to help subdue a knife-wielding extremist on London Bridge last month has been identified as a civil servant in Britain's Justice Ministry.

Darryn Frost ended his silence Saturday, telling Britain's Press Association that he and others reacted instinctively when Usman Khan started stabbing people at a prison rehabilitation program at a hall next to the bridge on Nov. 29.

Frost used the rare narwhal tusk to help subdue Khan even though the attacker claimed to be about to detonate a suicide vest, which turned out to be a fake device with no explosives. The intervention of Frost and others helped keep the death count to two. He said another man used a chair as a weapon in the desperate struggle.

"When we heard the noise from the floor below, a few of us rushed to the scene," the 38-year-old said. "I took a narwhal tusk from the wall and used it to defend myself and others from the attacker. Another man was holding the attacker at bay with a wooden chair."

He said Khan had a large knife in each hand and pointed at his midriff.

"He turned and spoke to me, then indicated he had an explosive device around his waist," Frost said. "At this point, the man next to me threw his chair at the attacker, who then started running towards him with knives raised above his head."

The confrontation quickly moved onto London Bridge, where Frost and others — including one man who sprayed Khan with a fire extinguisher — managed to fight the attacker to the ground until police arrived.

The extremist, who had served prison time for earlier terrorism offenses, was shot dead by police moments later after he threatened again to detonate his vest.

Frost said he was withholding many details out of respect for the victims and their families and because of the ongoing investigation. He paid tribute to Saskia Jones and Jack Merritt, the two young people stabbed to death when the attack started.

"In reading about their lives and work I am convinced they represent all that is good in the world, and I will always feel the deep hurt of not being able to save them," he said.

Frost praised those wounded in the attack and said some had refused treatment until the more severely hurt were cared for.

"That consideration and kindness filled me with hope on that dark day," he said.

## Pope denounces 'rigidity' as he warns of Christian decline

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Francis warned Saturday that "rigidity" in living out the Christian faith is creating a "minefield" of hatred and misunderstanding in a world where Christianity is increasing irrelevant.

Francis called for Vatican bureaucrats to instead embrace change during his annual Christmas greetings

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to the cardinals, bishops and priests who work in the Holy See.

Francis' message appeared aimed at conservative and traditionalist Catholics, including within the Vatican Curia, who have voiced increasing opposition to his progressive-minded papacy. Their criticisms have accelerated over the past year, amid Vatican financial and sex abuse scandals that may have predated Francis' papacy but are nevertheless coming to light now.

Francis issued a stark reality check to the men in the Sala Clementina of the Apostolic Palace, acknowledging that Christianity no longer holds the commanding presence and influence in society that it once did.

He cited the late Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, a leader of the progressive wing of the Catholic Church, who in his final interview before dying in 2012 lamented that the church found itself "200 years behind" because of its inbred fear of change.

"Today we are no longer the only ones that produce culture, no longer the first nor the most listened to," Francis told the prelates. "The faith in Europe and in much of the West is no longer an obvious presumption but is often denied, derided, marginalized and ridiculed."

As a result, he urged the Catholic hierarchy to embrace the necessary pastoral reforms and outlook that will make the church attractive so that it can fulfill its mission to spread the faith.

"Here we have to beware of the temptation of assuming a rigid outlook," Francis said. "Rigidity that is born from fear of change and ends up disseminating stakes and obstacles in the ground of the common good, turning it into a minefield of misunderstanding and hatred."

He recalled, as he has in the past, that people who take rigid positions are usually using them to mask their own problems, scandals or "imbalances."

"Rigidity and imbalance fuel one another in a vicious circle," he said. "And these days, the temptation to rigidity has become so apparent."

Traditionalist Catholics have denounced Francis' emphasis on mercy and openness to doctrinal wiggle room on issues such as sacraments for divorced and civilly remarried Catholics. They also sharply criticized his recent synod on the Amazon, which called for the ordination of married men as priests, and what they considered pagan worship of an Amazonian statue of a pregnant woman that was featured during the meeting.

Francis has defended his outlook and priorities as a reflection of the Gospel, and the axiom that the true tradition of the church is one of a continuous, discerned path of change.

"Tradition is not static, it's dynamic," he said Saturday.

In a tangible sign of change, Francis issued a new decree Saturday limiting the term of the dean of the College of Cardinals, an influential job that had previously been held for life. Francis accepted the resignation of the current dean, Cardinal Angelo Sodano, and decreed that going forward, the future top cardinal would only have a five-year renewable term.

Sodano had been the powerful secretary of state under St. John Paul II, and was blamed in part for the Vatican's refusal to crack down on pedophile priests, including the notorious Rev. Marcial Maciel. Sodano, 92, continued to wield behind-the-scenes influence in the two papacies that followed, acting most recently as something of a beacon for conservative opposition to Francis.

As dean, he delivered his final Christmas greeting to Francis on Saturday.

## Space Force will start small but let Trump claim a big win

By **ROBERT BURNS** AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Friday celebrated the launch of Space Force, the first new military service in more than 70 years.

In signing the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act that includes Space Force, Trump claimed a victory for one of his top national security priorities just two days after being impeached by the House.

It is part of a \$1.4 trillion government spending package — including the Pentagon's budget — that provides a steady stream of financing for Trump's U.S.-Mexico border fence and reverses unpopular and unworkable automatic spending cuts to defense and domestic programs.

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"Space is the world's new war-fighting domain," Trump said Friday during a signing ceremony at Joint Base Andrews just outside Washington. "Among grave threats to our national security, American superiority in space is absolutely vital. And we're leading, but we're not leading by enough, and very shortly we'll be leading by a lot."

Later Friday, as he flew to his Florida resort aboard Air Force One, Trump signed legislation that will keep the entire government funded through Sept. 30.

Space Force has been a reliable applause line at Trump's political rallies, but for the military it's seen more soberly as an affirmation of the need to more effectively organize for the defense of U.S. interests in space — especially satellites used for navigation and communication. Space Force is not designed or intended to put combat troops in space.

Defense Secretary Mark Esper told reporters Friday, "Our reliance on space-based capabilities has grown dramatically, and today outer space has evolved into a warfighting domain of its own." Maintaining dominance in space, he said, will now be Space Force's mission.

Space has become increasingly important to the U.S. economy and to everyday life. The Global Positioning System, for example, provides navigation services to the military as well as civilians. Its constellation of about two dozen orbiting satellites is operated by the 50th Space Wing from an operations center at Schriever Air Force Base in Colorado.

In a report last February, the Pentagon asserted that China and Russia have embarked on major efforts to develop technologies that could allow them to disrupt or destroy American and allied satellites in a crisis or conflict.

"The United States faces serious and growing challenges to its freedom to operate in space," the report said.

When he publicly directed the Pentagon in June 2018 to begin working toward a Space Force, Trump spoke of the military space mission as part of a broader vision of achieving American dominance in space.

Trump got his Space Force, which many Democrats opposed. But it is not in the "separate but equal" design he wanted.

Instead of being its own military department, like the Navy, Army and Air Force, the Space Force will be administered by the Secretary of the Air Force. The law requires that the four-star general who will lead Space Force, with the title of Chief of Space Operations, will be a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, but not in Space Force's first year. Trump said its leader will be Air Force Gen. John W. Raymond, the commander of U.S. Space Command.

Space Force is the first new military service since the Air Force was spun off from the Army in 1947. Space Force will be the provider of forces to U.S. Space Command, a separate organization established earlier this year as the overseer of the military's space operations.

The division of responsibilities and assets between Space Force and Space Command has not been fully worked out.

Space Force will be tiny, compared to its sister services. It will initially have about 200 people and a first-year budget of \$40 million. The military's largest service, the Army, has about 480,000 active-duty soldiers and a budget of about \$181 billion. The Pentagon spends about \$14 billion a year on space operations, most of which is in the Air Force budget.

Kaitlyn Johnson, a space policy expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, sees the creation of Space Force as an important move but doubts it will prove as momentous as Trump administration officials suggest. Vice President Mike Pence has touted Space Force as "the next great chapter in the history of our armed forces." And Esper earlier this week called this an "epic moment" in recent American military history.

Johnson says Democrats' opposition to making Space Force a separate branch of the military means it could be curtailed or even dissolved if a Democrat wins the White House next November.

"I think that's a legitimate concern" for Space Force advocates, she said. "Just because it's written into law doesn't mean it can't be unwritten," she said, adding, "Because of the politics that have started to surround the Space Force, I worry that that could damage its impact before it even has time to sort itself

out" within the wider military bureaucracy.

Some in Congress had been advocating for a Space Force before Trump entered the White House, but his push for legislation gave the proposal greater momentum.

Trump's first defense secretary, Jim Mattis, was initially cool to the idea, arguing against adding new layers of potentially expensive bureaucracy. Mattis' successor, Esper, has been supportive of Space Force. In September he said it will "allow us to develop a cadre of warriors who are appropriately organized, trained and equipped to deter aggression and, if necessary, to fight and win in space." He added, "The next big fight may very well start in space, and the United States military must be ready."

## Plans for impeachment trial get foggy before holiday break

By ANDREW TAYLOR and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is in sunny Florida after his historic impeachment, while plans for his speedy trial back in Washington remained clouded. Senate leaders jockeying for leverage have failed to agree on procedures for the trial.

Trump is still expected to be acquitted of both charges in the Senate, where Republicans have the majority, in what will be only the third presidential impeachment trial in U.S. history. Proceedings are expected to begin in January.

But the impasse between Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic Leader Chuck Schumer over whether there will be new witnesses and testimony — along with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's refusal so far to send the articles of impeachment to the Senate — have left the situation unresolved.

"Nancy Pelosi is looking for a Quid Pro Quo with the Senate. Why aren't we Impeaching her?" Trump tweeted, mocking one of the accusations against him before heading out for a two-week stay at his Mar-a-Lago resort for the holidays.

McConnell, Trump's most powerful GOP ally in the Senate, welcomed the president's emerging defense team Friday for a walk-through of the Senate chamber. White House counsel Pat Cipollone and legislative affairs director Eric Ueland came to Capitol Hill to assess logistics.

A six-term veteran of the Senate, McConnell is acting very much though he has the votes to ensure a trial uncluttered by witnesses — despite the protests of top Democrats Pelosi and Schumer.

"We have this fascinating situation where, following House Democrats' rush to impeachment, following weeks of pronouncements about the urgency of this situation, the prosecutors have now developed cold feet," McConnell, R-Ky., said late Thursday as senators left town for the year.

"We'll continue to see how this develops, and whether the House Democrats ever work up the courage to take their accusations to trial."

McConnell has all but promised an easy acquittal of the president. He appears to have united Republicans behind an approach that would begin the trial with presentations and arguments, lasting perhaps two weeks, before he tries drawing the proceedings to a close. The Senate will reconvene Jan. 3.

That has sparked a fight with Pelosi and Schumer, who are demanding trial witnesses who refused to appear during House committee hearings, including acting White House Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney and former national security adviser John Bolton.

"They should have witnesses and documentation," Pelosi told The Associated Press. "This could be something very beneficial to the country, if the facts are there."

Schumer's leverage is limited, though his party can force votes on witnesses once a trial begins. He appears to be counting on public opinion, and political pressure on vulnerable Republican incumbents like Susan Collins of Maine, to give Democrats the 51 votes they need.

"You wouldn't get them to say, 'I'm going to vote to kick President Trump out of office,'" Schumer said in an interview. "But you might get them to vote for witnesses, you might get them to vote for documents, and we'll see where it falls from there."

McConnell isn't budging. After a 20-minute meeting with Schumer on Thursday, he declared the talks at an impasse and instructed senators to return on Jan. 6 ready to vote.



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McConnell appears ready to impose a framework drawn from the 1999 trial of Bill Clinton, who was acquitted of two articles of impeachment. That trial featured a 100-0 vote on arrangements that established two weeks of presentations and argument before a partisan tally in which Republicans called a limited number of witnesses, including Monica Lewinsky for a videotaped deposition.

McConnell said Thursday: "I continue to believe that the unanimous bipartisan precedent that was good enough for President Clinton ought to be good enough for this president, too. Fair is fair."

There's a risk that Schumer's protests — which started Sunday with a letter to McConnell requesting four witnesses — could cement GOP unity. Endangered Republican senators including Cory Gardner of Colorado and Martha McSally of Arizona need strong turnout by the GOP base to win, and will be hard-pressed to take Schumer's side.

Trump, meanwhile, has been hoping the trial will serve as an opportunity for vindication. He continues to talk about parading his own witnesses to the chamber, including former Vice President and 2020 Democratic candidate Joe Biden and House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who led the fact-finding phase of the impeachment investigation.

There is little appetite for witnesses among McConnell and other key Senate GOP allies, however.

## Trump escapes chill of Washington for Florida holiday

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump has escaped the chill of Washington and his impeachment to celebrate Christmas and New Year's in sunny Florida with family and friends.

One thing he isn't celebrating is the delay in his Senate impeachment trial.

It's got him "mad as hell," according to one ally.

The Senate adjourned until January with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Democratic leader Chuck Schumer unable to agree on trial procedure. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi has said she wants to know how the trial will be handled before she sends two House-passed articles of impeachment against Trump to the Senate.

Trump, who flew to his private Palm Beach resort late Friday, has been looking forward to a trial in the friendlier Republican-controlled Senate and is riled up about the delay, according to Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., who is close to the president.

"He's mad as hell that they would do this to him and now deny him his day in court," Graham said in an interview on Fox News Channel after meeting with Trump at the White House on Thursday night.

A likely avenue for Trump to vent his frustration over being impeached — though he has said he doesn't feel like he has been — will be his scheduled address Saturday to conservative student activists attending the Turning Point USA conference in West Palm Beach.

The House voted Wednesday to impeach Trump for withholding military aid while pressuring Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden and his son, Hunter, who served on the board of a gas company there while the elder Biden was vice president.

The House also said Trump sought to obstruct its investigation.

## Klobuchar steps up hits on Buttigieg with Iowa vote looming

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

CENTERVILLE, Iowa (AP) — Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar has argued for weeks that Pete Buttigieg, the mayor of a small Indiana city, doesn't have enough experience to be a serious contender for the Democratic nomination for president. As she heads into a 27-county tour of Iowa, the lead-off caucus state, she's seeing some payoff for bringing those frustrations fully into public view.

As Klobuchar started her four-day Iowa tour in Centerville, she announced Friday night that she'd raised \$1 million since the previous night's debate, where she referred to Buttigieg as a "local official" and reminded voters he lost his only attempt at winning statewide office, for Indiana treasurer in 2010.

She saw a burst of enthusiasm across Iowa, turning out at least three dozen people at a small burger shop

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in the tiny town of Bloomfield, a crowd Davis County Democratic Chair Cheryll Jones said was "stunning."

"Here, this crowd is a big deal," she said. "She's already won support tonight."

Klobuchar has been frustrated by Buttigieg's improbable rise in Iowa, where the two are fighting for the same moderate slice of the electorate by showcasing their Midwestern roots. Klobuchar, 59, has been elected to the U.S. Senate three times from Minnesota, Iowa's northern neighbor; Buttigieg, 37, has served two terms as mayor of South Bend, Indiana, a city of about 100,000 people.

Buttigieg referred to the "friendly fire" Friday night as he campaigned in Nevada. He was asked by a voter at a town hall about what advice he'd give for staying inspired while in public service.

"You go on Twitter and you go on the news and it feels like getting punched in the face all the time. Especially when you actually run," he said, getting laughs from crowd.

He also lamented "the absurdity that I feel like we're getting from the other side to the friendly fire that I get from my own competitors where we more or less have the same values."

Klobuchar has picked up steam in Iowa in recent weeks, using a combination of humor and the argument that she has a record of getting things done. She's also cited her electoral track record in Minnesota, where she's won in Republican areas, and argued she'd run big enough margins to help Democrats win seats down the ticket.

But Buttigieg has reached top-tier status in the state, which votes on Feb. 3. He'll head there for campaign events Saturday. He's frequently made the argument that mayors have a better track record of tackling real issues than politicians in Washington.

Asked by The Associated Press why she focused on Buttigieg during Thursday debate, Klobuchar said the race "goes beyond who gives the best speech or who has the best talking points."

"People have to really look at what the person is going to do when they get in office, what's their track record. They mostly have to look at...who can win," she said. She said she has a track record of winning and bringing in suburban and rural voters, Republicans and Democrats, and Buttigieg "doesn't have that track record."

The night before, Klobuchar said the combined experience of the senators on stage was not to be belittled. She noted former Vice President Joe Biden, who previously served in the Senate, has fought to cure cancer, Sen. Elizabeth Warren helped establish an agency dedicated to protecting consumers from predatory practices and authored provisions in major farm bills, and Sen. Bernie Sanders worked on a veterans bill. Her hits on Buttigieg were her most aggressive yet.

"I think experience matters," she said Friday.

Voter Chuck Kantor, a 76-year-old retired computer consultant who attended the senator's Friday night event, said Klobuchar wasn't even in his top three before her performance Thursday night — but now she's top of his list.

"She showed the most leadership on the stage, by breaking up those arguments in a successful, quiet manner. And she made sense," he said.

Buttigieg didn't let the attacks slide in the debate, noting he has different experience of serving in the U.S. Navy Reserve. On his electoral record, he said it was no small feat to win elected office as "a gay dude in Mike Pence's Indiana," a reference to the conservative vice president who was previously the state's governor.

On Friday night in Las Vegas, Buttigieg interlaced his policy prescriptions with stories about problems he confronted as mayor, noting that his city is "just big enough that we have every problem but we're small."

He also pointed to local governments as a source of more action and inspiration than Congress, noting a host of legislation Nevada's Democratically-controlled state government passed this year. He said watching impeachment play out in Washington feels like a foregone conclusion in the Republican-controlled Senate, which "may deepen our sense of frustration and that nothing seems to make a difference."

"And yet, I've seen the power, especially at the local level, and the state level," Buttigieg said. "We can watch what happens on the floor of the Senate and we can feel kind of powerless but 2020 is where we get to decide and we can send a message—in local, in state and certainly the national election."

Price reported from Las Vegas. Associated Press writer Kathleen Ronayne in South Gate, California contributed to this report.

## Son of Russian spies relieved to keep Canadian citizenship

By ROB GILLIES Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — The son of a Russian spy couple who lived clandestine lives in Canada and the United States said Friday that he wants a future in Canada after the country's Supreme Court ruled he can keep his Canadian citizenship.

Alexander Vavilov was born in Toronto, which would typically qualify him for Canadian citizenship. But authorities had ruled that Vavilov didn't qualify because his parents were part of a Russian spy ring in North America that was broken up by the FBI in 2010.

The high court rejected that finding on Thursday, meaning Vavilov can reside permanently in the country where his parents once lived clandestine lives as deeply embedded spies who were the models for the TV show "The Americans."

"It's a huge relief," Vavilov said at a news conference after flying to Toronto from Russia. "I am happy to be back in Canada, to be here without this constant doubt in my head, with the ability to finally put down roots and build a life for myself. It's going to take time. But I'm happy I can move forward with my life and put these problems behind me."

Vavilov, 25, said he works in finance but said it's been difficult to find work. He said people trust him but companies don't want to be associated with his espionage story. "It's been difficult, a lot of anguish and stress," he said.

He said he's been bouncing around countries in the Middle East and Asia. He said it's "hard to say" where he now resides but said he flew in from Russia. He declined to comment on life in Russia under Vladimir Putin.

The Canadian government argued he wasn't entitled to citizenship and appealed to the Supreme Court to annul the passport granted to him by a lower court. The top court upheld that ruling.

Vavilov's supporters said a son shouldn't pay for the sins of his parents, while critics contend his claim to be a Canadian by birth was based on fraud since he and his parents lived under stolen identities in the Toronto area and later Massachusetts as they collected intelligence for Moscow.

He said he has mended his relationship with his parents. He said it's OK now after initial difficulties after they were arrested.

"I understand their decisions now. They did what they did for patriotic reasons. They wanted to help their country to fight for peace and better understanding between the countries," he said. "Although I suffered through the result of all this but I have a understanding of why they did what they did. In their position maybe they shouldn't have had children, but that's not say I'm not happy to be alive and be here."

Canada, like the U.S., grants citizenship to anyone born within its territory with limited exceptions, such as the children of diplomats. The government argued that Vavilov's parents were employees or representatives of a foreign government and thus ineligible. Vavilov's lawyer argued that they were not official representatives and that all that matters in this case is their physical birthplace.

The parents came to Toronto in the 1980s and took the names Donald Heathfield and Tracey Ann Foley. They then gave birth to two sons — Timothy in 1990 and Alexander in 1994 — before moving to Paris in 1995 and then Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1999.

In 2010, the FBI arrested a ring of sleeper agents for Russia that it had been following for years in the United States. All 10, including the now well-known Anna Chapman, pleaded guilty and were returned to Russia in a swap.

He said he had no idea his parents were spies and that he'd had never been to Russia. "I thought the FBI had the wrong house," he said. "I did not believe it."

The family's story became the inspiration for "The Americans." He said he and his parents have watched

the show.

"My parents said they enjoyed watching it because it at least portrayed the sense of patriotism and the sense of connection. It's a good show," he said.

The FBI agent who oversaw the arrests said in 2010 that Timothy Vavilov may have found out about his parents' secret life before they were arrested.

Alex called it nonsense and said his parents would have never have put them in jeopardy by telling them that. The brothers weren't charged. "He's over the moon," he said of his brother.

Their lawyer said no evidence had ever surfaced suggesting the sons knew their parents were Russians or were spies.

Alexander Vavilov wanted to return to Canada for university but was denied. The government ruled Canada would no longer recognize him as Canadian because his parents were "employees or representatives of a foreign government."

After losing in a lower court, Vavilov won support from the Federal Court of Appeal, which ruled in 2017 that the law applies only to foreign government employees who benefit from diplomatic immunities or privileges. Vavilov was given his citizenship back.

In its decision, the Supreme Court said the citizenship registrar's decision was unreasonable. Although the registrar knew her interpretation of the provision was novel, she failed to provide a proper rationale, the court said.

Although it involves the same central issue, Timothy Vavilov's case proceeded separately through the courts and was not directly before the Supreme Court. However, in a decision last year, the Federal Court of Appeal said its 2017 ruling on Alexander Vavilov equally applied to his brother, making him a citizen.

Former FBI agent Richard DesLauriers, who oversaw the arrest of the couple, Andrey Bezrukov and Elena Vavilova, and the other eight sleeper agents criticized the high court's decision on Thursday. DesLauriers called it ridiculous.

## Trump adviser: Expect more aggressive poll watching in 2020

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — One of President Donald Trump's top reelection advisers told influential Republicans in swing state Wisconsin that the party has "traditionally" relied on voter suppression to compete in battleground states, according to an audio recording of a private event obtained by The Associated Press. The adviser said later that his remarks referred to frequent and false accusations that Republicans employ such tactics.

Justin Clark, a senior political adviser and senior counsel to Trump's reelection campaign, made the remarks on Nov. 21 as part of a wide-ranging discussion about strategies in the 2020 campaign, including more aggressive use of Election Day monitoring of polling places.

"Traditionally it's always been Republicans suppressing votes in places," Clark said at the event. "Let's start protecting our voters. We know where they are. ... Let's start playing offense a little bit. That's what you're going to see in 2020. It's going to be a much bigger program, a much more aggressive program, a much better-funded program."

Asked about the remarks by AP, Clark said he was referring to false accusations that the GOP engages in voter suppression.

"As should be clear from the context of my remarks, my point was that Republicans historically have been falsely accused of voter suppression and that it is time we stood up to defend our own voters," Clark said. "Neither I nor anyone I know or work with would condone anyone's vote being threatened or diluted and our efforts will be focused on preventing just that."

Clark made the comments Nov. 21 in a meeting of the Republican National Lawyers Association's Wisconsin chapter. Attendees included the state Senate's top Republican, Scott Fitzgerald, along with the executive director of the Wisconsin Republican Party.

Audio of the event at a country club in Madison obtained by the liberal group American Bridge was

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provided to AP by One Wisconsin Now, a Madison-based liberal advocacy group.

The roughly 20-minute audio offers an insider's glimpse of Trump's reelection strategy, showing the campaign focusing on voting locations in Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania, which form the the so-called "blue wall" of traditional Democratic strength that Trump broke through to win in 2016. Both parties are pouring millions of dollars into the states, anticipating they'll be just as critical in the 2020 presidential contest.

Republican officials publicly signaled plans to step up their Election Day monitoring after a judge in 2018 lifted a consent decree in place since 1982 that barred the Republican National Committee from voter verification and other "ballot security" efforts. Critics have argued the tactics amount to voter intimidation.

The consent decree was put in place after the Democratic National Committee sued its Republican counterpart, alleging the RNC helped intimidate black voters in New Jersey's election for governor. The federal lawsuit claimed the RNC and the state GOP had off-duty police stand at polling places in urban areas wearing armbands that read "National Ballot Security Task Force," with guns visible on some.

Without acknowledging any wrongdoing, the RNC agreed to the consent decree, which restricted its ability to engage in activities related to ballot security. Lifting of the consent decree allows the RNC to "play by the same rules" as Democrats, said RNC communications director Michael Ahrens.

"Now the RNC can work more closely with state parties and campaigns to do what we do best, ensure that more people vote through our unmatched field program," Ahrens said.

Although the consent decree forced the Trump campaign to conduct its own poll monitoring in 2016, the new rules will allow the RNC to use its multi-million dollar budget to handle those tasks and coordinate with other Republican groups on Election Day, Clark said. State directors of election day operations will be in place in Wisconsin and every battleground state by early 2020, he said.

In 2016, Wisconsin had 62 paid Trump staff working to get out the vote; in 2020, it will increase to around 100, Clark said.

Trump supports the effort, he said in the audio recording.

"We've all seen the tweets about voter fraud, blah, blah, blah," Clark said. "Every time we're in with him, he asks what are we doing about voter fraud? What are we doing about voter fraud?" The point is he's committed to this, he believes in it and he will do whatever it takes to make sure it's successful."

Clark said Trump's campaign plans to focus on rural areas around mid-size cities like Eau Claire and Green Bay, areas he says where Democrats "cheat." He did not explain what he meant by cheating and did not provide any examples.

"Cheating doesn't just happen when you lose a county," Clark said. "Cheating happens at the margin overall. What we're going to be able to do, if we can recruit the bodies to do it, is focus on these places. That's where our voters are."

There is no evidence of widespread voter fraud in Wisconsin.

"If there's bad behavior on the part of one side or the other to prevent people from voting, this is bad for our democracy," Wisconsin Democratic Gov. Tony Evers said in reaction to Clark's comments. "And frankly, I think will whoever does that, it will work to their disadvantage. It will make them look, frankly, stupid."

Wisconsin's attorney general, Democrat Josh Kaul, represented the Democratic National Committee in a 2016 New Jersey lawsuit that argued the GOP was coordinating with Trump to intimidate voters. Kaul argued then that Trump's campaign "repeatedly encouraged his supporters to engage in vigilante efforts" in the guise of ferreting out potential voter fraud. The Republican Party disputed any coordination.

"It is vital that Wisconsinites have free and fair access to the polls, and that we protect the security and integrity of our elections," Kaul said in a statement in reaction to Clark's comments. "The Wisconsin Department of Justice has been and will continue working with other agencies to protect our democratic process."

Mike Browne, deputy director of One Wisconsin Now, said Clark's comments suggest the Trump campaign plans to engage in "underhanded tactics" to win the election.

"The strategy to rig the rules in elections and give themselves an unfair partisan advantage goes to

Donald Trump, the highest levels of his campaign and the top Republican leadership," Browne said. "It's clear there's no law Donald Trump and his right-wing machine won't bend, break or ignore to try to win the presidency."

Follow Scott Bauer on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sbauerAP>

## Man who kidnapped Wisconsin teen: She was 'terrified of me'

By AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A man convicted of kidnapping a Wisconsin girl and killing her parents told police after his arrest that he never thought Jayme Closs would escape because she was petrified, and that after holding her captive for two weeks, he believed he'd get away with his crimes, according to a transcript of a police interview.

"I know that she was just (expletive) terrified of me," Jake Patterson said following his arrest in January.

The transcript of Patterson's interview with authorities was among hundreds of pages of investigative documents released Friday by the Wisconsin Department of Justice. The files include details about tips authorities received as they were searching for Jayme, as well as evidence collected after her escape. Some of the files are redacted.

Patterson, 22, is serving a life sentence after pleading guilty in March to two counts of intentional homicide and one count of kidnapping. He admitted he broke into Jayme's home on Oct. 15, 2018, gunned down her parents, James and Denise Closs, dragged her away and held her under a bed in his remote cabin for 88 days before she made a daring escape. She was 13 at the time.

The transcript of Patterson's interview paints a picture of a man who acted on impulse and controlled Jayme's movements around the cabin where she was held. Patterson believed he had restrained Jayme with fear, telling police he never put extra locks on the doors or windows, because he thought she'd never leave.

"I just trusted her and that, she wouldn't try to get out," he said.

Patterson told police he initially threatened to kill Jayme if she made noise or moved. He said that once they arrived at his cabin, he burned her clothes and dressed her in his clothes, then laid her on the bed. He said she fell asleep, and he felt sick about what he had done and slept on the couch.

He said that he gave her food and water, but she wouldn't eat at first. And, he said, she "learned quickly" that he would get angry over nothing, so she was nice to him so he wouldn't hurt her. He said he initially thought he'd get caught, but as time went by, he believed he'd get away with it and didn't feel as bad.

According to the transcript, he was counting on "mind things" to keep Jayme from running. He also forced her to be quiet when his father or others came over. "Like at first I would say that, you know you have it really good here, I'm treating you good, and she'd be like yeah okay. ... I was like you could have it a lot worse here," he said.

At one point, he said, he was drunk and feeling guilty so he let Jayme write a letter to her aunt, to let her family know she was alive. He said he planned to drop that letter off, but told police that it was still in the cabin when he was arrested.

Patterson said Jayme walked around with him in the yard at times, but never left the property. Authorities asked Patterson if he ever tried to change Jayme's appearance, and he said he tried to cut her hair once, but she cried and said didn't want him to, so he didn't.

While Patterson took measures to conceal his identity when he broke into the Closs home, it was clear he didn't think ahead to what he would do in the long term. He said he acted "pretty impulsive-ish" saying he thought he'd get a job, rent and apartment, and that he didn't think about her leaving.

"I, I'm really good at just not thinking about stuff," he said.

He also talked about the killings, saying that he was telling himself "it's them or me," and that he planned to shoot anyone in his way once he decided he wanted to take Jayme. He said that before he shot Denise Closs, he pointed the gun at her and "just shot it like right in the head. I didn't even look when I did it.

I looked away.”

During Patterson’s sentencing, a family attorney read a statement from Jayme. “He thought that he could own me but he was wrong. I was smarter,” the statement said. “I was brave and he was not. ... He thought he could make me like him, but he was wrong.”

One year after her abduction, Jayme released another statement, saying she is feeling stronger and getting back to activities she enjoys and hanging out with friends. Family attorney Christ Gramstrup said Jayme is “moving forward courageously and reclaiming her life. Her incredible spirit and strength continues to inspire everyone around her.”

The documents released Friday included a report by the Douglas County sheriff’s deputy who took Jayme to safety after she escaped. That deputy said that when they were riding in the squad car, she learned of Patterson’s arrest and told Jayme he was in custody.

“Jayme showed me a small smile and we continued,” the deputy wrote.

Associated Press writer Doug Glass contributed to this report.

## **NBA sends teams proposal for 78-game season, other changes**

**By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer**

MIAMI (AP) — The NBA has sent a proposal to teams calling for a 78-game regular season, along with an in-season tournament for all teams and a reseeding of the playoffs when the field is cut to the final four clubs.

A copy of the proposal was obtained by The Associated Press on Friday. The plan laid out for teams calls for a play-in tournament to decide the seventh and eighth seeds in both conferences — the top 10 finishers in both the East and West would therefore have a chance at the playoffs — as well as a \$1 million per player prize for the in-season tournament.

The league would make the changes for the 2021-22 season on a trial basis, with an option to continue the next season. The league’s board of governors is expected to discuss and likely decide whether to go forward or not with the plan in April.

The notion of adding a in-season tournament has been something Commissioner Adam Silver has talked about since at least 2016, drawing the parallel to how such events are customary in European soccer.

“It would need to be negotiated with the Players Association,” Silver said earlier this year. “I’ve had very general discussions with (union executive director) Michele Roberts about the notion that these are the kinds of things we’re looking at. I think she, of course, is supportive of looking at any ideas we have to build the business over time.”

ESPN and The Athletic first reported on the contents of the proposal.

The NBA told teams that a study it commissioned through a third-party company earlier this year showed that 60% of NBA fans want a shorter regular season, that 68% of fans said they are interested in an in-season tournament and 75% were interested in a play-in tournament to decide the playoff field.

The same study, the NBA said, found fans liked the idea of reseeding the final four playoff teams — even though that would open the door to the potential of the NBA Finals going on between two teams from the same conference.

The NBA told teams that “fans feel it would make the final two rounds more desirable to watch.”

A breakdown of the changes:

### **IN-SEASON TOURNAMENT**

The proposal calls for teams to play eight divisional games in the group stage of the event, which would begin Nov. 24, 2021 and continue through Dec. 11. (The NBA said the dates are tentative.) The group stage games — four home, four away — would count toward a team’s regular-season total.

The six division winners and two wild cards would qualify for the quarterfinals on Dec. 13 and 14, 2021. Semifinals would be played as a doubleheader on Dec. 16 and the title game would be played two days later — with the semis and finals at a neutral site like Las Vegas. Players on the winning team would split

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\$15 million; the winning coaching staff would split \$1.5 million.

The NBA said that there is the potential for "additional prizing for players on the remaining final four teams" and that other incentives for teams and fans were "to be determined."

## PLAY-IN TOURNAMENT

The regular season would end on a Saturday, one week before the start of the playoffs — as opposed to ending on Wednesday, as has been the case for years.

The top six teams in each conference would be in the playoffs.

The teams in seventh through 10th place in the regular-season standings would play off as follows: The seventh- and eighth-place teams would play with the winner clinching the No. 7 playoff seed. The teams holding the ninth- and 10th-place regular season spots would also play, and the winner of that game would play the loser of the 7-8 game to determine the No. 8 playoff seed.

From there, the first two rounds would be played as usual. Once the playoff field is down to four teams, those clubs would be reseeded based on regular-season record.

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

## Twitter, Facebook ban fake users; some had AI-created photos

By MAE ANDERSON AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Twitter has identified and removed nearly 6,000 accounts that it said were part of a coordinated effort by Saudi government agencies and individuals to advance the country's geopolitical interests.

Separately, Facebook said it removed hundreds of Facebook accounts, groups and pages linked to inauthentic behavior from two separate groups, one originating in the country of Georgia and one in Vietnam, which targeted people both in Vietnam and in the U.S.

Facebook said some of the accounts used profile photos generated by artificial intelligence and masqueraded as Americans. It is one of the first such misinformation efforts to use material generated by AI.

Tech companies have stepped up efforts to tackle misinformation on their services ahead of next year's U.S. presidential elections. The efforts followed revelations that Russians bankrolled thousands of fake political ads during the 2016 elections to sow dissent among Americans.

Twitter's and Facebook's announcements underscore the fact that misinformation concerns aren't limited to the U.S. and Russia.

In a blog post Friday, Twitter said the removed Saudi accounts were amplifying messages favorable to Saudi authorities, mainly through "aggressive liking, retweeting and replying." While the majority of the content was in Arabic, Twitter said the tweets also amplified discussions about sanctions in Iran and appearances by Saudi government officials in Western media.

"Governments have started to launch influence campaigns the same ways commercial enterprises launch campaigns to sell detergent or cars," said James Ludes, a national defense expert who teaches international relations and public policy at Salve Regina University in Rhode Island.

He said the Russian efforts in 2016 showed it was possible to "actually change public attitudes through the targeted use of social media."

While the attempts to root out the campaigns may seem like a game of whack-a-mole, he said companies have at least shown progress in taking steps to identify and root out manipulation campaigns run by foreign powers.

Twitter began archiving tweets and media it deems to be associated with known state-backed information operations in 2018. It shut 200,000 Chinese accounts that targeted Hong Kong protests in August.

The 5,929 accounts removed and added to the archives are part of a larger group of 88,000 accounts engaged in "spammy behavior" across a wide range of topics. But Twitter isn't disclosing all of them because some might be legitimate accounts taken over through hacking.

The Twitter accounts were linked to a social media marketing firm in Saudi Arabia called Smaat that



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managed many government departments in Saudi Arabia. The accounts used third-party automated tools to amplify non-political content at high volumes. Twitter said that activity was used to mask the political maneuverings of the same accounts.

Samuel Woolley, a professor at the University of Texas at Austin who studies disinformation, said that while the Saudi campaign used basic manipulation techniques, including the use of likes and retweets to give the illusion of popularity, the campaign's size and scale were unusual. The existence of a thousands-strong army of Saudi accounts also show that social media companies still don't have a good solution, he said, despite the progress they have made at identifying state-backed accounts.

"It's really clear we have to do something about it," he said. "It can't just be after the fact. We have to get better about detecting in real time."

Messages left with Saudi officials in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, and the country's embassy in Washington were not immediately returned.

The Saudi government has used different tactics to control speech and keep reformers and others from organizing, including employing troll armies to harass and intimidate users online. It has also arrested and imprisoned Twitter users.

In September, Twitter suspended the account of the crown prince's former top adviser, Saud al-Qahtani, who also served as director of the cyber security federation. As with Friday's announcement, Twitter said that account had violated the company's platform manipulation policy.

Last month, two former Twitter employees were charged with acting as agents of Saudi Arabia without registering with the U.S. government. The complaint details a coordinated effort by Saudi government officials to recruit employees at the social media giant to look up the private data of Twitter accounts, including email addresses linked to the accounts and internet protocol addresses that can give up a user's location.

In terms of Facebook's actions, Facebook said the Georgia group targeted domestic audiences and the Vietnam group focused mainly in the U.S., as well as Vietnamese-, Spanish- and Chinese-speaking audiences around the world.

The company said they created networks of accounts to mislead others about who they were and what they were doing. To evade detection, they used a combination of fake and real accounts of people in the U.S. to manage pages and groups, the company said.

"We are making progress rooting out this abuse, but as we've said before, it's an ongoing challenge," Nathaniel Gleicher, Facebook's head of security policy, said in a blog post.

AP writers David Klepper in Providence, Rhode Island, and Aya Batrawy in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, contributed to this report.

## India bans citizenship law protests as death toll hits 14

By ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — Police banned public gatherings in parts of the Indian capital and other cities for a third day Friday and cut internet services to counter growing protests against a new law that critics say marginalizes Muslims. Fourteen people have died so far and more than 4,000 have been detained, officials said.

Thousands of protesters stood inside and on the steps of New Delhi's Jama Masjid, one of India's largest mosques, after Friday afternoon prayers. They waved Indian flags and shouted slogans against the government and the citizenship law, which opponents contend threatens India's secular democracy in favor of a Hindu state.

Police banned a proposed march from the mosque to an area near Parliament and sprayed protesters with water cannon blasts to prevent them from meeting up with more demonstrators about 4 kilometers (2 1/2 miles) away in central Delhi.

Much of the violence was in the northern state of Uttar Pradesh, where protesters set fire to police

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posts and vehicles and hurled rocks at security forces. The death toll rose to 14 after Avani Awasthi, a spokesman for Uttar Pradesh, said late Friday that six people had died during clashes between demonstrators and police.

Most of the detentions also were in Uttar Pradesh, where more than 100 have been arrested and 3,305 detained since Thursday, said state police chief O.P. Singh.

Many of the protesters are angered by a new law that allows Hindus, Christians and other religious minorities who are in India illegally to become citizens if they can show they were persecuted because of their religion in Muslim-majority Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan. The law does not apply to Muslims.

Critics have slammed it as a violation of the country's secular constitution and label it the latest effort by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu nationalist-led government to marginalize India's 200 million Muslims. Modi has defended the law as a humanitarian gesture.

In New Delhi, about 10,000 demonstrators outside Jamia Millia Islamia University collected signatures for a petition demanding the new citizenship law be scrapped. The university was the site of last weekend clashes in which students accused police of using excessive force.

The violence wasn't limited to the streets. Surveillance video seen by The Associated Press shows police entering Highland Hospital in the southern city of Mangalore on Thursday night and using batons to disperse protesters who had taken shelter inside.

The video shows two policemen trying to kick open a hospital ward door and masked people running down a corridor. It also shows protesters throwing rocks at police and then barging into the hospital.

Employee Mohammad Abdullah said by phone that police entered the hospital and fired tear gas shells.

The protests began last week in the northeastern border state of Assam, the seat of a decades-old movement against migrants, and at predominantly Muslim universities and communities in New Delhi. But they have since grown to include a broad section of the Indian public.

A British colonial-era law banning the assembly of more than four people was in place in parts of the capital as well as in several cities in Assam and Uttar Pradesh.

Fears of an increase in immigration also are fueling the protests, and the law's opponents include some Hindu conservatives in Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, who worry about more migrants in a country where public services for its 1.3 billion people are already highly strained.

"Some of the BJP's own rank and file, the very people the party has sought to help, have come out against the law," said Michael Kugelman, deputy director of the Asia Program at the U.S.-based Wilson Center.

Kugelman said the government's failure to respond to the demonstrations, except to accuse political opponents of orchestrating them, is "likely to galvanize the protesters even more."

The protests come amid an ongoing crackdown in Muslim-majority Kashmir, the restive Himalayan region stripped of its semi-autonomous status and demoted from a state into a federal territory last summer.

They also follow a contentious process in Assam meant to weed out foreigners living in the country illegally. Nearly 2 million people were excluded from an official list of citizens, about half Hindu and half Muslim, and have been asked to prove their citizenship or else be considered foreign.

India is also building a detention center for some of the tens of thousands of people the courts are expected to ultimately determine have entered illegally. Modi's interior minister, Amit Shah, has pledged to roll out the process nationwide.

Critics have said the process is a thinly veiled plot to deport millions of Muslims.

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Associated Press writer Sheikh Saaliq contributed to this report.

## Junior Johnson, "The Last American Hero," dies at 88

JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

Robert Glenn "Junior" Johnson, the moonshine runner turned NASCAR driver described as "The Last American Hero" by author Tom Wolfe in a 1965 article for Esquire, died Friday. He was 88.

NASCAR announced the death of Johnson, the winner of 50 races as a driver and 132 as an owner. He

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was a member of the inaugural class inducted into the NASCAR Hall of Fame in 2010.

"From his early days running moonshine through the end of his life, Junior wholly embodied the NASCAR spirit," NASCAR Chairman Jim France said in a statement. "He was an inaugural NASCAR Hall of Famer, a nod to an extraordinary career as both a driver and team owner. Between his on-track accomplishments and his introduction of (sponsor) Winston to the sport, few have contributed to the success of NASCAR as Junior has.

"The entire NASCAR family is saddened by the loss of a true giant of our sport, and we offer our deepest condolences to Junior's family and friends during this difficult time."

From North Wilkesboro, North Carolina, Johnson was named one of NASCAR's greatest drivers in 1998 after a 14-year career that ended in 1966 and included a win in the 1960 Daytona 500. He honed his driving skills running moonshine through the North Carolina hills, a crime for which he received a federal conviction in 1956 and a full presidential pardon in 1986 from President Ronald Reagan.

His was first immortalized by Wolfe in 1965 and later in a 1973 movie adaptation starring Jeff Bridges.

As a car owner for drivers that included Darrell Waltrip, Cale Yarborough, Bill Elliott and Terry Labonte, Johnson claimed six Cup championships. His last race win as an owner was the 1994 Southern 500 with Elliott.

Waltrip said he grew up only dreaming of one day meeting Johnson, but surpassed that by getting to drive for his hero.

"He became my boss and made me a champion, I loved that man, God Bless Jr and his family. You were the greatest!" Waltrip said on Twitter.

Johnson also is credited with bringing the R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company to NASCAR, which then led to Winston sponsoring its premier series from 1971-2003.

"The Last American Hero is gone and so leaves a huge dent in NASCAR racing. Junior Johnson was one of American sports' great characters and one of the best racer and car owners ever. His mountain man drawl and tricks were legendary," former race promoter Humpy Wheeler said. "He'll go down as one of racing's great ticket sellers."

Johnson is credited with discovering drafting — using the slipstream of the car in front of you on the track to keep up or slingshot past. Using that maneuver, he won the 1960 Daytona 500, outrunning several cars that were about 10 mph faster.

As a young man, Johnson built a reputation as a moonshiner who could outrun the law on the mountain roads like no one else. He's credited with inventing the Bootleg Turn, a maneuver that spins the car into a quick 180-degree turn and sends it speeding off in the opposite direction.

Johnson began driving at age 8, long before he had a license.

"I didn't need one anyway," he often said with a laugh. "They weren't going to catch me."

At 24, Johnson turned that talent to racing and became a superstar in NASCAR in the 1950s and 1960s. He walked away from the sport in 1996 to concentrate on his other businesses, including a line of fried pork skins and country ham.

"I had done just about everything in racing that I wanted to do," Johnson said in an interview with The Associated Press before driving the pace car for the start of the 2008 Daytona 500, the 50th running of that event. "I do miss being in the garage sometimes, but I just wasn't excited about going racing anymore."

Johnson was never caught on the roads during his moonshining days, but he was arrested by federal authorities in 1956 when he was caught working at his father's still. He was sentenced to 20 months but was released after 11 months in federal prison in Chillicothe, Ohio.

Although a lifelong Democrat, Johnson was pardoned by Reagan. In his later years, Johnson often said that the pardon in December 1986 was "the greatest thing in my life."

Johnson is survived by wife Lisa, daughter Meredith and son Robert Glenn Johnson III.

## Buzzkill: Oregon bans cannabis-infused alcoholic beverages

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Oregon is renowned for its craft beer and increasingly for its high-grade marijuana, but the state is keeping the two apart — for now.

In a new ruling, the Oregon Liquor Control Commission, which regulates both alcoholic products and recreational marijuana, says beer and other alcoholic drinks as of Jan. 1 may not contain either THC, the psychoactive component of cannabis, or CBD, the non-psychoactive part that is said to relieve stress and pain.

Mark Pettinger, spokesman for the agency, cited concerns raised by the U.S. Food and Drug of potential liver damage from CBD, also known as cannabidiol.

"We've wanted to address the issue of CBD getting into alcohol and because there are a lot of unknown unknowns about the effect of taking CBDs," Pettinger said Friday. "There's very little scientific evidence. People are using them for wellness, but how they interact with other substances, not a lot is known."

One prominent CBD-infused beer, Two Flowers IPA, was popular in The EastBurn, a Portland pub, according to Michael Fritz, one of the owners.

"We were the first bar to put it on tap," Fritz said. "It was a nice IPA."

The website of the brewery that made the beer, Coalition Brewing of Portland, said the CBD's "bitter grassiness augments the hop bitterness, while the citrusy terpenes in the CBD mirror the aromatics and hop flavors."

For his part, Fritz said he didn't notice any additional effect from the beer besides the alcohol.

"If you have three beers, you're going to feel like you had three beers," Fritz said. "You're going to feel relaxed."

Coalition Brewing recently went out of business, Fritz said, adding that his own customers drained the last of the CBD-infused beer 10 days ago.

"It was a really good seller for us," Fritz said.

Pettinger said he didn't know of any other Oregon brewery that makes CBD-infused beer.

He said that until federal agencies establish regulations surrounding CBD, that his agency felt it needed to step in and impose the ban. The Oregon agency will next work on banning a bar from mixing a non-alcoholic CBD beverage on the premises with an alcoholic beverage to create a CBD cocktail.

Oregon has been at the forefront in efforts to legalize marijuana. It was the first state to decriminalize personal possession, in 1973; legalized medical marijuana in 1998 and recreational use in 2014. But Oregon is in a bind because federal regulations surrounding CBD, which is derived from hemp, have not caught up with the legalization of hemp on the national level.

Oregon's two senators, Democrats Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, worked with Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky, to legalize industrial hemp in 2018.

Merkley told reporters Thursday he is seeking an additional \$2 million in the nation's spending bill to assist the FDA in developing regulations for CBD oil.

Pettinger noted that the U.S. Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, or TTB, which approves the formula for any kind of alcoholic beverage, has not approved the use of CBD in any drinks.

The TTB last year ordered Black Hammer Brewing of San Francisco to stop producing beer containing CBD, including one called Toke Back Mountain.

Long Trail Brewing, in Vermont, was told by the federal agency to stop producing its CBD-infused beer, called Medicator, last year.

"We're kind of treating it that we'll kind of have to lay low and not produce it for a while," brewery spokesman Drew Vetere told the Burlington Free Press.

## MS-13 arrests deal blow to gang leadership on Long Island

By JIM MUSTIAN and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Authorities said Friday they have dealt an unprecedented blow to the violent MS-13 street gang, announcing charges against nearly 100 of the group's members and associates on Long Island.

Suffolk County District Attorney Timothy Sini revealed a sweeping indictment that he said "decimated" the gang's leadership and drug suppliers on Long Island. He described the case as the largest of its kind against MS-13 in New York, where the gang has been blamed for dozens of killings since 2016.

The two-year investigation by state and federal authorities thwarted more than a half-dozen murder plots, Sini said, and also provided authorities insights into the gang's structure and recruiting patterns. The investigation was bolstered by an expansive wire tap in which the authorities monitored calls from more than 200 phone numbers.

Gang members on Long Island conspired with colleagues from as far away as Europe and Oklahoma, collecting cash from drug sales and sending that money to the organization's leaders in El Salvador, according to the 77-count indictment handed up Monday.

The gang feuded against rivals and would even kill its own members who showed signs of disloyalty or failed to perform "required tasks" such as paying dues or trafficking drugs and weapons, the indictment says.

"MS-13 is a ruthless, savage gang," Sini said at a news conference, pointing to a machete recovered by law enforcement, the gang's signature weapon. "They will attempt to recalibrate and send individuals to take up leadership roles in Suffolk County. That's why we have to stay vigilant."

Authorities said they seized more than 10 kilograms of cocaine, hundreds of fentanyl pills, drug ledgers, long guns and other firearms, and more than \$200,000 cash. Those taken into custody included the leaders of nine so-called "cliques" — factions of MS-13.

"What you're hearing from us today is that we're more committed than every to eradicate this gang," Sini said. "Is the battle over? Absolutely not."

MS-13, also known as Mara Salvatrucha, is considered one of the top transnational organized crime threats in the United States. Violence committed by the gang, including the 2016 slayings of two teenage girls, helped spark an aggressive effort by the FBI and the U.S. Justice Department to dismantle the gang.

President Donald Trump, who visited Long Island in July 2017 to address the gang problem, has blamed the violence and gang growth on lax immigration policies.

Investigators have made dozens of arrests of suspected gang members in recent years as part of a crackdown on MS-13. In 2017, police arrested 15 MS-13 members on murder and other charges following a spate of bloodshed that included the massacre of four young men in a Long Island park and the killing of a suspected gang rival inside a deli.

"Their rules are violence, fear and control of their territory," said Ray Donovan, special agent in charge of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration in New York. "We will continue to push them back."

MS-13 recruits young teenagers from El Salvador and Honduras, though many gang members were born in the U.S. Long Island has a large population of unaccompanied minors from Central America, including many who were fleeing the violence in their home nations.

MS-13 is believed to have been founded as a neighborhood street gang in Los Angeles in the mid-1980s by immigrants fleeing a civil war in El Salvador. El Salvador's Supreme Court defined the gang as a terrorist group in 2015, allowing courts there to give tougher sentences to its members. \_\_\_ Michael Balsamo reported from Washington.

## Trump blasts Christian magazine that called for his removal

By ELANA SCHOR and JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump blasted a prominent Christian magazine on Friday, a day after it published an editorial arguing that he should be removed from office because of his “blackened moral record.”

Trump tweeted that Christianity Today, an evangelical magazine founded by the late Rev. Billy Graham, “would rather have a Radical Left nonbeliever, who wants to take your religion & your guns, than Donald Trump as your President.”

The magazine “has been doing poorly and hasn’t been involved with the Billy Graham family for many years,” Trump wrote. He questioned whether the magazine would prefer a Democratic president “to guard their religion.”

Some of his strongest evangelical supporters, including Graham’s son, rallied to his side and against the publication. Their pushback underscored Trump’s hold on the evangelical voting bloc that helped propel him into office and suggested the editorial would likely do little to shake that group’s loyalty.

Rev. Franklin Graham, who now leads the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association and prayed at Trump’s inauguration, tweeted Friday that his father would be “disappointed” in the magazine. Graham added that he “felt it necessary” following the editorial to share that his father, who died last year after counseling several past presidents, voted for Trump. The president thanked Graham for the disclosure.

Christianity Today “represents what I would call the leftist elite within the evangelical community. They certainly don’t represent the Bible-believing segment of the evangelical community,” Graham told The Associated Press in an interview. He wrote on Facebook: “Is President Trump guilty of sin? Of course he is, as were all past presidents and as each one of us are, including myself.”

In a statement issued by the Trump reelection campaign, Cissie Graham Lynch, an advisory board member of Women for Trump and Franklin Graham’s daughter, said she was “outraged” to see the publication invoke her grandfather’s “name to support their personal political agenda.”

The magazine’s circulation is estimated at 130,000. In the editorial titled “Trump Should Be Removed from Office,” Editor-in-Chief Mark Galli wrote that Democrats “have had it out for” the president since he took office.

But Galli asserted that the facts “are unambiguous” when it comes to the acts that led to the president’s impeachment this week by the Democratic-controlled House of Representatives.

Trump “attempted to use his political power to coerce a foreign leader to harass and discredit one of the president’s political opponents,” Galli wrote, referring to former Vice President Joe Biden. “That is not only a violation of the Constitution; more importantly, it is profoundly immoral.”

The schism among Christians about Trump dates back to before his election. Prominent Southern Baptist Russell Moore warned that Trump “incites division” in a 2015 op-ed. The essay cited the Bible in asking fellow Christians to “count the cost of following” him. It later earned a tweeted lashing from then-candidate Trump.

After Trump defended a 2017 white nationalist rally that turned violent in Charlottesville, Virginia, one member of his evangelical advisory board stepped down, citing “a deepening conflict in values between myself and the administration.”

But no such break has occurred between the president and the core of his evangelical base. Trump is deeply popular among white evangelical Protestants, with roughly 8 in 10 saying they approve of the way he is handling his job, according to a December poll from The AP-NORC Center.

Many prominent evangelicals have only intensified their support for Trump as Democrats moved to impeach him, circling the wagons despite Trump’s personal history, which includes multiple allegations of sexual misconduct, deeply divisive policies and profanity laced comments.

At the heart of that backing is what pro-Trump evangelicals view as the president’s significant record of achievement on their highest priorities, such as his successful installation of more than 150 conservative federal judges and his support for anti-abortion policies.

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"No President has done more for the Evangelical community, and it's not even close," Trump said in his tweets. He declared that he "won't be reading ET again!" using the wrong initials to describe the Christian publication.

Johnnie Moore, a member of Trump's evangelical advisory board, tweeted that during the "hyperventilating" over the "inconsequential" editorial, he was at Vice President Mike Pence's residence, "where dozens of evangelicals who actually lead MILLIONS were celebrating Christmas undistracted by impeachment & grateful" for the administration's policies.

Adding that Christianity Today "only represents a certain segment of evangelicals," Moore tweeted that "this is not a game changing moment or hardly a surprise."

Another Trump evangelical adviser, Southern Baptist megachurch pastor Robert Jeffress, tweeted that the magazine is "dying" and "going against 99% of evangelical Republicans who oppose impeachment."

The editorial did not take a position on whether Trump should be removed by the Senate or by popular vote in the 2020 election, calling it "a matter of prudential judgment." But Galli wrote that the need for Trump's removal "is not a matter of partisan loyalties but loyalty to the Creator of the Ten Commandments."

The editorial came one day after Trump became the third president in American history to be impeached. The House charged him with abuse of power in pressuring Ukraine to announce investigations of Biden, and with obstructing Congress in the ensuing probe.

Asked Friday in an interview with CNN about Trump's critical tweets, Galli said the president's characterization of the magazine as far left was "far from accurate." But Galli, who is set to retire from his post next month, also said he is realistic about the impact of his words.

"I don't have any imagination that my editorial is going to shift their views on this matter," Galli said of the president's supporters. "The fact of the matter is Christianity Today is not read by the people — Christians on the far right, by evangelicals on the far right — so they're going to be as dismissive of the magazine as President Trump has shown to be."

Amid the furor over the editorial, the Trump campaign announced plans for a Jan. 3 event in Miami called "Evangelicals for Trump."

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Schor reported from New York.

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

## Judge revokes grazing permit for ranchers pardoned by Trump

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — A judge on Friday revoked the grazing permit of two ranchers who were pardoned last year by President Donald Trump on an arson conviction for setting fire to federal lands.

U.S. District Judge Michael Simon ruled in the long-running case after hearing arguments from the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, which granted a 10-year grazing permit to Dwight and Steven Hammond after Trump's July 2018 pardon. The renewal prompted a coalition of environmental groups to sue.

Simon in July limited where the Hammonds could graze their cattle, but let them continue to use other portions of the public allotments for their ranching operation in remote southeastern Oregon while the environmental groups continued with their legal challenge.

In his ruling Simon said then-Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke's decision to restore the Hammonds' permits was "arbitrary and capricious, an abuse of discretion, not rationally connected to the facts."

The Hammonds, a father and son who raise cattle near Diamond, Oregon, were convicted of arson in 2012 for setting a fire on federal land that burned about 140 acres. They were initially sentenced to minimal terms and released. But the Hammonds were sent back to prison in 2016 after the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that they complete the federal mandatory minimum sentence of five years for arson.

Their rearrest sparked a protest that developed into a 41-day armed occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in Oregon in 2016, led by two sons of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy. The standoff got in-

ternational attention and ended shortly after authorities fatally shot the protesters' spokesman as a small group of the occupiers drove to a meeting.

The Western Watersheds Project, the Center for Biological Diversity and Wildearth Guardians filed a motion earlier this year to revoke the Hammonds' grazing permits. They said that former Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke should not have granted the permits because of the Hammonds' conviction.

"When ranchers break the law and abuse public lands, they should lose their grazing permit every time," Erik Molvar, executive director of Western Watersheds Project, said in a statement.

During their 2012 arson trial, the Hammonds said they burned the federal lands to destroy invasive weeds. Prosecutors said they burned the land to cover up the fact that they had illegally killed a herd of deer.

## 'Vast majority' of vaping illnesses blamed on vitamin E

By CARLA K. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

Health officials now blame vitamin E acetate for the "vast majority" of cases in the U.S. outbreak of vaping illnesses and they say doctors should monitor patients more closely after they go home from the hospital.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced the updated advice Friday.

And, in a related move Friday, authorities investigating how patients obtained possibly tainted vape products said they have shut down 44 websites advertising the sale of illicit vaping cartridges containing THC.

The new medical advice is based on a close look at about 3% of vaping illness patients who returned to the hospital after discharge and seven who died after hospital discharge.

The study suggests that vaping illnesses can get worse, even deadly, after patients leave the hospital and doctors should check on patients within two days of sending them home.

The two-day followup after hospital discharge is shorter than the previous recommendation of one to two weeks.

Compared to other vaping illness patients, those who went back to the hospital were more likely to have chronic conditions such as diabetes, heart disease or other breathing problems such as sleep apnea. Those who died after hospital discharge were more likely to be 50 or older.

The CDC also released new information that continues to point to a culprit: vitamin E acetate, a thickening agent that's been added to illicit THC vaping liquids. THC is the chemical in marijuana that makes users feel high.

A report published in the New England Journal of Medicine identified the substance in the lung fluid of 48 out of 51 vaping illness patients and did not find it in the lung fluid of healthy people. Vitamin E acetate also has been found in vaping product samples.

In the strongest language yet about what's caused the outbreak, Dr. Anne Schuchat of the CDC told reporters during a telephone briefing Friday that it is her "conclusion" that vitamin E acetate caused the illness in "the vast majority of patients."

The nation's outbreak of vaping-related lung injuries continues, but new cases are on the decline. More than 2,500 cases of vaping illness have been reported by all 50 states. There have been 54 deaths and more deaths are under investigation.

Interviews with patients and families led investigators to some of the websites that were shut down by the Food and Drug Administration and the Drug Enforcement Administration. The agencies did not announce any criminal charges.

The 44 website domains — with names including Stoners Marketplace and Anonymous Meds — now direct visitors to a message in red letters that says "This Site Has Been Seized."

Investigators have said they are not interested in taking action against individuals who use vaping products, and are focused instead on suppliers.

Some of the websites shut down were scam sites intended to collect money without ever mailing consumers any products, authorities said.



Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Boeing capsule launches to wrong orbit, skips space station

By **MARCIA DUNN AP Aeospace Writer**

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — Boeing's new Starliner capsule ended up in the wrong orbit after lifting off on its first test flight Friday, a blow to the company's effort to launch astronauts for NASA next year.

As the company scrambled to understand what happened, NASA canceled the Starliner's docking with the International Space Station, instead focusing on a hastier than planned return to Earth. The Starliner will parachute into its landing site in the New Mexico desert on Sunday.

Officials stressed the capsule was stable and safe, and that had astronauts been aboard, they would have been in no danger. A crew may have been able to take over control and salvage the mission. The problem was with the Starliner's mission clock: It was off-kilter, which delayed timed-commands to put the capsule in the right orbit. Engineers worried the problem could resurface during descent.

It was a major setback for Boeing, which had been hoping to catch up with SpaceX, NASA's other commercial crew provider that successfully completed a similar demonstration last March. SpaceX has one last hurdle — a launch abort test — before carrying two NASA astronauts in its Dragon capsule, possibly by spring.

NASA officials did not think Friday's problem would hold up SpaceX, but said they would need to make sure nothing was in common between the two companies' on-board mission timers. Ground controllers were puzzled over why the Starliner's timer was not working properly when the capsule separated from the rocket and began flying freely.

NASA Administrator Jim Bridenstine said it was too soon to know whether Boeing would need to conduct another orbital test flight without a crew, before flying astronauts. The company had been shooting for its first crew launch by the middle of next year. An additional test flight would almost certainly push the first astronaut flight back.

Boeing's Jim Chilton, a senior vice president, stopped by the Starliner's manufacturing plant at Kennedy Space Center to address employees on his way to a somber news conference.

"These are passionate people who are committing a big chunk of their lives to put Americans back in space from our soil, so it's disappointing for us," Chilton told reporters.

It's been nearly nine years since NASA astronauts have launched from the U.S. The last time was July 8, 2011, when Atlantis — now on display at Kennedy Space Center — made the final space shuttle flight.

Since then, NASA astronauts have traveled to and from the space station via Kazakhstan, courtesy of the Russian Space Agency. The Soyuz rides have cost NASA up to \$86 million apiece.

The space agency handed over station deliveries to private businesses, first cargo and then crews, in order to focus on getting astronauts back to the moon and on to Mars.

Commercial cargo ships took flight in 2012. Crew capsules were more complicated to design and build, and parachute and other technical problems caused repeated delays. Target launch dates starting with 2017 came and went. Last April, a SpaceX crew capsule — the same one that flew to the space station a month earlier — exploded during a ground test.

The U.S. needs companies competing like this, Bridenstine said Thursday, to drive down launch costs, boost innovation and open space up to more people. He stressed the need for more than one company in case of problems that kept one grounded.

Friday's blastoff from Cape Canaveral Air Force Station started flawlessly as the Atlas V rocket lifted off with the Starliner just before sunrise. But a half-hour into the flight, the trouble became apparent.

Ground controllers tried to send up commands to get the spacecraft in its proper orbit, but the signals did not get there and by then it was too late. The capsule tried to fix its position, burning too much fuel for the spacecraft to safely make it to the space station on Saturday for a weeklong stay.

All three astronauts assigned to the first Starliner crew were at control centers for the launch: Mike Fincke and Nicole Mann, both with NASA, and Boeing's Chris Ferguson, who commanded the last shuttle mission.

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He's now a test pilot astronaut for Boeing and one of the Starliner's key developers.

"This is why we flight test, right? We're trying to get all of the bugs, if you will, out of the system," said Fincke at the briefing. "There's always something."

Built to accommodate seven, the white capsule with black and blue trim will typically carry four or five people. It's 16.5 feet (5 meters) tall with its attached service module and 15 feet (4.5 meters) in diameter.

For the test flight, the Starliner carried Christmas treats and presents for the six space station residents, the original air travel ID card belonging to Boeing's founder and a mannequin, named Rosie after the bicep-flexing riveter of World War II.

The flight was designed to test all systems, from the vibrations and stresses of liftoff to the touchdown at the Army's White Sands Missile Range in New Mexico, with parachutes and air bags to soften the landing.

Boeing, a longtime partner in NASA's human spacecraft program, had hoped to close out the year with a success. The company's troubled 737 Max airliners remain grounded, and earlier this week, officials said production would be halted in January.

"Space system malfunctions happen all the time, so it's tough to draw a broader conclusion, other than bad end to a bad year," said Richard Aboulafia, an aircraft industry analyst at the Teal Group.

Boeing got more than \$4 billion in 2014 to develop and fly the Starliner, while SpaceX got \$2.6 billion for a crew-version of its Dragon cargo ship.

On the eve of the launch, Bridenstine said NASA wants to make sure every reasonable precaution is taken with the capsules, designed to be safer than the shuttles.

"We're talking about human spaceflight," he cautioned. "It's not for the faint of heart. It never has been, and it's never going to be."

Business writer Cathy Bussewitz in New York contributed to this report.

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

## **Pelosi invites Trump to deliver State of Union on Feb. 4**

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump will deliver the State of the Union to a joint session of Congress on Feb. 4.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi sent a letter to the president on Friday formally inviting him to deliver the address at the U.S. Capitol.

"In the spirit of respecting our Constitution, I invite you to deliver your State of the Union address before a Joint Session of Congress," Pelosi wrote.

Trump has accepted the invitation, said White House spokesman Hogan Gidley.

Pelosi extended the invitation to Trump to make the annual address just two days after the House adopted two articles of impeachment against Trump.

A date for the Senate impeachment trial has not yet been set.

## **Navy, Army probes find no racism intent in hand gestures**

**By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hand gestures flashed by West Point cadets and Naval Academy midshipmen during the televised Army-Navy football game were not racist signals, military investigations have concluded.

A Navy probe of the event found that the students were participating in a "sophomoric game" on Saturday and had no racist intent. An Army statement Friday also rejected any racist overtones, saying the hand gestures were "not associated with ideologies or movements that are contrary to the Army values."

The Navy said officials are, however, disappointed in the immature behavior of the students and "their actions will be appropriately addressed." There were no details about their exact punishment, but a Navy

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report on the investigation said the two midshipmen should face "administrative action" for "failure to use good judgment."

Clips of the hand gestures by the students went viral on social media and immediately raised questions about whether they were using a "white power" sign. But others suggested it was part of what's called the "circle game," in which someone flashes an upside-down OK sign below the waist and punches anyone who looks at it.

The Navy said that reviews of the footage, more than two dozen interviews and background checks by the Naval Criminal Investigative Service and the FBI determined that the two freshmen midshipmen were participating in the "circle game" with West Point cadets.

The investigation added that the two naval academy students "exhibited genuine shock" and said they were not aware of the racist connotation of the hand gestures. It said interviews with friends, roommates and other commanders also found no links to the white power movement.

Navy Adm. Mike Gilday, chief of naval operations, said sailors are expected to conduct themselves with integrity and character at all times.

"To be clear, the Navy does not tolerate racism in any form," said Gilday. "And while the investigation determined there was no racist intent behind these actions, our behavior must be professional at all times and not give cause for others to question our core values of honor, courage and commitment."

The Navy investigation also made a number of recommendations to better coordinate and screen midshipmen who may be in high visibility areas for major events such as the game day. And it said there should be more training for the students on how they should conduct themselves.

The U.S. Military Academy at West Point reached similar conclusions. Lt. Gen. Darryl Williams, West Point superintendent, expressed disappointment in the cadets' immature behavior. The cadets involved also will receive "appropriate administrative" or disciplinary actions, West Point said. No details were provided.

"The American people trust our Soldiers to do the right things the right way," said Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army. "We must be mindful of behavior which brings that trust into question and ensure our actions meet the high ethical and professional standards our nation expects the American Soldier to uphold."

The circle game, around for generations, was featured in the early 2000s sitcom "Malcolm in the Middle" and has made a resurgence as a photo bomb prank in sports team photos--along the same line as "bunny ears" fingers. In more recent years, it became an internet meme in a online game of "gotcha."

But the Anti-Defamation League said the gesture, with the thumb and forefinger touched in a circle and the other fingers outstretched, has also been appropriated as a signal for white supremacy. That started as a hoax perpetuated on the online message board 4chan. The original idea was to take an innocent and common gesture and arbitrarily transform it into something that would enrage liberals.

The campaign was so successful that the gesture came to be used semi-sincerely by Neo-Nazis, Ku Klux Klansmen and other white nationalists to signal sympathizers in public places.

In 2018, the U.S. Coast Guard suspended an officer who appeared to be making the hand sign during a Hurricane Florence television broadcast.

## What if you knew a cookie would take 20 minutes to run off?

By CANDICE CHOI AP Food & Health Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Would you put down that bag of chips if you saw it had 170 calories? What if the label said it would take 16 minutes of running to burn off those calories?

Health experts for years have pushed for clearer food labeling to empower people to make better choices. In the U.S., a recent regulation requires calorie counts on packages to be bigger. Red, yellow and green labels signal the healthfulness of some foods in the United Kingdom. But with obesity rates persistently high, researchers are looking at whether more drastic approaches could help.

One attention-grabbing idea being explored: Labeling foods with "exercise calories," or the amount of physical activity needed to burn them off. For example, a chocolate bar might say it has 230 calories,

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alongside icons indicating that amounts to 42 minutes of walking or 22 minutes of running.

With calorie counts, experts worry the information doesn't mean much if people don't know how much they should be eating anyway. And with the "traffic light" system, people might not understand why a food is red — is it the fat, the sugar or something else?

It's no surprise some people don't pay attention to current labels, but exercise calories might be more useful, said Amanda Daley, a professor of behavioral medicine at Loughborough University in the United Kingdom,

"They may still ignore it, but let's give it a go. Let's at least give them a chance to be able to easily understand," she said.

Not everyone finds the idea compelling. Regardless of whether it gets people to eat less, it could reinforce negative attitudes about exercise, said Yoni Freedhoff, an obesity expert at the University of Ottawa.

"The idea that exercise is a punishment for eating does not strike me as a good way to promote exercise or healthy attitudes around food," he said.

Instead of trying to find a label that can finally persuade people to stop eating unhealthy foods, Freedhoff said it would be better to promote environments where it's easier to make good choices.

For now, it's unknown how exercise-time labeling would affect choices in the real world. Last week, a BMJ journal published an analysis co-authored by Daley reviewing the limited research so far. The review suggested it may lead people to pick lower-calorie items than no labeling at all. But the evidence was less clear when comparing exercise calorie labeling to specific alternatives like calorie counts alone.

The concept may seem too drastic to ever become reality. But Brian Elbel, a New York University public health expert who studies calorie counts on menus, said other measures — such as soda taxes — also once seemed far-fetched.

"Just because it's not going to happen tomorrow doesn't mean it's not an important thing to look at," Elbel said.

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## Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Dec. 21, the 355th day of 2019. There are 10 days left in the year. Winter arrives at 11:19 p.m. Eastern time.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Dec. 21, 1988, 270 people were killed when a terrorist bomb exploded aboard a Pam Am Boeing 747 over Lockerbie, Scotland, sending wreckage crashing to the ground.

On this date:

In 1620, Pilgrims aboard the Mayflower went ashore for the first time at present-day Plymouth, Massachusetts.

In 1861, President Abraham Lincoln signed a congressional act authorizing the Navy Medal of Honor.

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union forces led by Maj. Gen. William T. Sherman concluded their "March to the Sea" as they captured Savannah, Georgia.

In 1891, the first basketball game, devised by James Naismith, is believed to have been played at the International YMCA Training School in Springfield, Massachusetts. (The final score of this experimental game: 1-0.)

In 1913, the first newspaper crossword puzzle, billed as a "Word-Cross Puzzle," was published in the New York World.

In 1914, the U.S. government began requiring passport applicants to provide photographs of themselves.

In 1945, U.S. Army Gen. George S. Patton, 60, died in Heidelberg, Germany, 12 days after being seri-

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ously injured in a car accident.

In 1967, Louis Washkansky, the first human heart transplant recipient, died at a hospital in Cape Town, South Africa, 18 days after receiving the donor organ. The satirical comedy-drama "The Graduate," starring Anne Bancroft and Dustin Hoffman, was released by Embassy Pictures.

In 1968, Apollo 8 was launched on a mission to orbit the moon.

In 1969, Vince Lombardi coached his last football game as his team, the Washington Redskins, lost to the Dallas Cowboys, 20-10.

In 1991, eleven of the 12 former Soviet republics proclaimed the birth of the Commonwealth of Independent States and the death of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

In 1995, the city of Bethlehem passed from Israeli to Palestinian control.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama hailed a crucial, early-morning test vote in the Senate on his health care overhaul, in which all 58 Democrats and two independents held together against unanimous Republican opposition. The Obama administration imposed a 3-hour limit on how long airlines can keep passengers waiting inside planes delayed on the ground. A Russian rocket blasted off from Kazakhstan, shuttling an American, a Russian and a Japanese to the International Space Station.

Five years ago: Jordan Axani, a 28-year-old businessman from Toronto, and a woman he'd never met before, Elizabeth Quinn Gallagher, a 23-year-old student from Nova Scotia, set out on a round-the-world trip. (Axani had advertised on social media for a travel companion after breaking up with his girlfriend, also named Elizabeth Gallagher; the companion was required to be a Canadian named Elizabeth Gallagher to take advantage of the non-refundable, non-exchangeable airline tickets.) Actress Billie Whitelaw, 82, died in London.

One year ago: The House and Senate adjourned without a deal on spending, guaranteeing that a partial government shutdown would begin at midnight; President Donald Trump continued to push for \$5 billion in border wall funding, a proposal Democrats staunchly opposed. Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg had surgery in New York to remove two malignant growths in her left lung, the third time she had been treated for cancer since 1999. In his annual Christmas speech, Pope Francis demanded that priests who had raped and molested children turn themselves in, and vowed that the Catholic Church would "never again" hide their crimes.

Today's Birthdays: Talk show host Phil Donahue is 84. Actress Jane Fonda is 82. Actor Larry Bryggman is 81. Singer Carla Thomas is 77. Musician Albert Lee is 76. Conductor Michael Tilson Thomas is 75. Actor Josh Mostel is 73. Actor Samuel L. Jackson is 71. Rock singer Nick Gilder is 69. Movie producer Jeffrey Katzenberg is 69. Actor Dennis Boutsikaris is 67. Singer Betty Wright is 66. International Tennis Hall of Famer Chris Evert is 65. Actress Jane Kaczmarek is 64. Country singer Lee Roy Parnell is 63. Entertainer Jim Rose is 63. Former child actress Lisa Gerritsen is 62. Actor-comedian Ray Romano is 62. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin is 57. Country singer Christy Forester (The Forester Sisters) is 57. Rock musician Murph (The Lemonheads; Dinosaur Jr.) is 55. Actor-comedian Andy Dick is 54. Rock musician Gabrielle Glaser is 54. Actress Michelle Hurd is 53. Actor Kiefer Sutherland is 53. Actress Karri Turner is 53. Actress Khristyne Haje is 51. Country singer Brad Warren (The Warren Brothers) is 51. Actress Julie Delpy is 50. Country singer-musician Rhean (rehn) Boyer (Carolina Rain) is 49. Contemporary Christian singer Natalie Grant is 48. Actor Glenn Fitzgerald is 48. Singer-musician Brett Scallions is 48. World Golf Hall of Famer Karrie Webb is 45. Rock singer Lukas Rossi (Rock Star Supernova) is 43. Actress Rutina Wesley is 41. Rock musician Anna Bulbrook (Airborne Toxic Event) is 37. Country singer Luke Stricklin is 37. Actor Steven Yeun is 36. Actress Kaitlyn Dever is 23.

Thought for Today: "It is not necessary to understand things in order to argue about them." — Pierre Augustin Caron de Beaumarchais, French author and dramatist (1732-1799).

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