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“TO BE ALIVE, TO BE ABLE TO SEE, TO WALK... IT'S ALL A MIRACLE. I HAVE ADOPTED THE TECHNIQUE OF LIVING LIFE FROM MIRACLE TO MIRACLE.”

-ARTHUR RUBENSTEIN



It's Boys' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM



**Aberdeen
Roncalli
Cavaliers VS
Groton Area Tigers**



8 p.m., Thursday, Jan. 23, 2020

at Aberdeen Roncalli

Sponsored by the Aberdeen Chrysler Center

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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Changes sought in football classifications, soccer season

By Dana Hess
For the S.D. Newspaper Association

PIERRE — The state's high school athletic directors will discuss a possible change in football classifications and the soccer season when they meet in late March.

The South Dakota High School Activities Association board of directors found out about the proposed changes Wednesday as they reviewed a report from the football advisory committee.

At its last meeting, the football advisory committee voted unanimously to propose changing to five football classifications, down from seven. According to the committee report, there have been multiple schools asking for some sort of change in the classification structure.

The proposal calls for:

- Class 11AA—to include the nine largest schools by male-only average daily membership and Sioux Falls O'Gorman. O'Gorman was included because it always goes up a division to compete with the largest schools. Teams in this class would play a nine game schedule and have an eight team postseason.
- Class 11A—to include the next 16 largest schools by male-only ADM. Teams in this class would play a nine game schedule and have an eight team postseason.
- Class 11B—to include all remaining schools with a 56.001 male-only ADM and greater. Teams in this division would play a eight game schedule and have a 16 team postseason.
- Class 9A—to include the top half of all nine-man teams by male-only ADM. Teams in this division would play an eight game schedule and have a 16 team postseason.
- Class 9B—to include the bottom half of all nine-man teams by male-only ADM which would play an eight game schedule and have a 16 team postseason.

Currently there are seven divisions, four for 11-man football and three for nine-man football.

The change must be approved by the athletic directors and then by the SDHSAA board. It would take effect in 2021 fall season.

Athletic directors will also consider a proposal from the soccer advisory committee that calls for changing the sport from a fall activity to a spring activity.

SDHSAA Assistant Executive Director John Krogstrand said with football and volleyball in the fall, some schools have a tough time fielding soccer teams.

"A spring season, potentially allows those athletes to participate," Krogstrand said.

All Nations Football Conference looks at adding teams

**By Dana Hess
For the S.D. Newspaper Association**

PIERRE — The inaugural season of the All Nations Football Conference was a success. That was the message that the South Dakota High School Activities Association's board of directors heard Wednesday from Lower Brule Superintendent Lance Witte.

Witte said the conference started with 12 teams from tribal schools. Three of those schools weren't regularly fielding football teams. The schools saw a participation increase of 60%, Witte said.

"This is a tremendous success story," said SDHSAA board member Brian Maher of Sioux Falls.

With more players on the teams, Witte said athletes were more likely to stick with the sport. "It's just been a better overall experience for athletes," Witte said.

Crow Creek was the first champion of the conference with the championship game played at the Dakota Dome in front of about 1,200 people.

Witte asked the board if it would be possible to play the conference championship game during the SDHSAA football championships at the Dakota Dome. He said there may be time available the morning of Nov. 14 prior to the 11AAA game.

The conference is in negotiations to add four schools, Witte said, two from Nebraska as well as teams from Standing Rock and McLaughlin.

—30—

SDHSAA seeking bids for broadcast rights

**By Dana Hess
For the S.D. Newspaper Association**

PIERRE — For the first time in 15 years, the South Dakota High School Activities Association is seeking bids on the broadcast rights for its championship games. Those rights are currently held by South Dakota Public Broadcasting

At its meeting Wednesday, the SDHSAA board of directors approved a request for proposals that outlines what broadcasters will have to provide in order to get the winning bid.

According to the RFP, broadcasters must offer live telecasts of state events that include football, girls' and boys' basketball, volleyball, wrestling, chorus and orchestra and track and field. The broadcaster must specify if other events will be broadcast live, on the internet or tape delayed.

SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos said that the language in the RFP had to be updated to reflect changes in the media world. The contract would allow the high bidder to resell a broadcast on the internet to outlets that wanted to show an event.

Swartos noted that newspapers and radio stations have changed in the past 15 years, with some of them offering the live stream of events on their websites.

"Media has changed," Swartos aid. "Radio stations and newspapers do webcasts."

Swartos said the bid documents will be sent out this week. The bids are due back at the SDHSAA office on April 9. They will be opened on April 14 and the bid letting will take place at the SDHSAA annual meeting on April 21.

—30—

SDHSAA board refuses to consider Sunday activities

**By Dana Hess
For the S.D. Newspaper Association**

PIERRE — Events sanctioned by the South Dakota High School Activities Association aren't held on Sundays. And that isn't about to change if the SDHSAA board of directors has its way.

At the board's meeting on Wednesday, SDHSAA staff presented an amendment to the association's constitution that would allow fine arts events on Sundays. SDHSAA Executive Director Dan Swartos explained that some national debate events are held on a Thursday through Monday schedule. If South Dakota students attend those events, he said, they can't compete on Sundays because of a rule in the association's constitution.

Board member Brian Maher of Sioux Falls said each school district has a calendar that jammed with activities. He often gets asked if an activity can be held on Sunday since no other day of the week is available.

Maher said he tells them, "There's a reason that day's unavailable." Maher also noted that there are debate events that don't include Sunday participation.

"I wonder why we would endorse having our students gone on Sunday," Maher said.

Board member Craig Cassens of Faulkton was also skeptical of the amendment.

"It's going to be setting that precedent for future requests," Cassens said.

By passing the first reading of the amendment, the board wouldn't be endorsing the idea, Swartos said, but rather passing it along to the membership.

If the board doesn't approve the first reading, Swartos said, 30 member schools would need to submit a petition asking for the amendment 30 days prior to the association's annual meeting in April.

That's what will have to happen as none of the board members would make a motion to pass the first reading of the amendment.

—30—

Outdoor Recreation Projects Funded

PIERRE, S.D. – Gov. Kristi Noem has awarded a total of \$764,430 in Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants to several communities. The federal assistance program provides up to 50 percent reimbursement for outdoor recreation projects.

The following communities were awarded LWCF grants for outdoor recreation projects:

Aberdeen – Manor Park Pickleball Court Construction, \$88,000

Britton – Baseball Complex Improvements, \$100,000

Custer – Herbach Park Master Plan Improvements Phase I, \$137,000

Emery – Pool Improvements project, \$29,430

Ipswich – Recreation Complex project, \$75,000

Menno – Pool Improvements project, \$20,000

Mitchell – Dry Run Creek Skatepark Expansion, \$53,000

Plankinton – Poolside Park Improvement project, \$73,000

Wessington Springs – Pool renovation, \$189,000

“I commend these project sponsors for their strong commitment to improve their communities and make South Dakota a better place to live, work and play,” Gov. Noem said. “Their efforts will benefit future generations of South Dakotans.”

Land and Water Conservation Funds come from the National Park Service and are administered in South Dakota by the state Department of Game, Fish and Parks.

For more information on the LWCF program, contact grants coordinator Randy Kittle by calling 605.773.5490 or e-mail him at: randy.kittle@state.sd.us

Funding Available for Trails

PIERRE, S.D. – South Dakota State Parks Director Scott Simpson announced today that applications are being accepted for grants from the Recreation Trails Program (RTP). The grants will be available for trail projects sponsored by municipalities, counties, state parks, federal land management agencies or tribal governments.

“When it comes to promoting healthy communities, recreational trails are key,” Simpson said. “As safe corridors for exercise and recreation, trails give families the opportunity to spend quality time together and enjoy the natural beauty of our state.”

The Recreational Trails Program provides partial reimbursement for approved trail projects. Eligible projects include construction of new public trails, rehabilitation of existing public trails, development of trail-related facilities and educational programs that relate to recreational trails.

The application deadline is Friday, April 17, 2020.

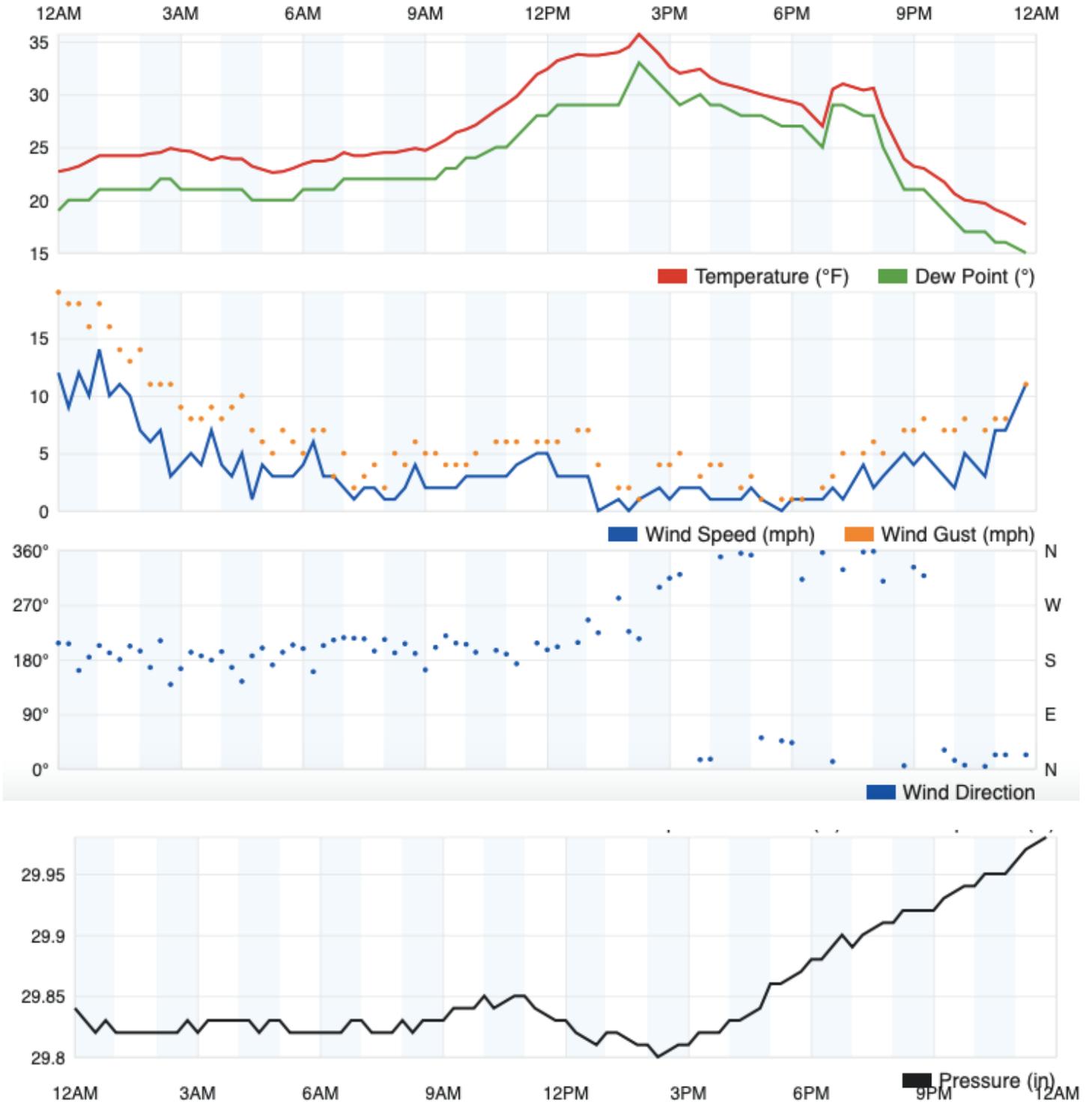
RTP funds come to the state through the Federal Highway Administration and are apportioned to states by Congress to fund both motorized and non-motorized public recreation trail projects. The amount of funds available is based upon the number of recreational vehicles licensed in each state.

Application packets are available online at the Game, Fish and Parks website. For more information, contact Grants Coordinator Randy Kittle at 605.773.5490 or by e-mail at randy.kittle@state.sd.us.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Upcoming Events

Thursday, January 23, 2020

3:00pm: Junior High Boys Basketball Game at Aberdeen Roncalli

5:00pm: Wrestling Quad at Clark.

6:30pm: Boys Basketball at Roncalli

Friday, January 24, 2020

Speech Fiesta Debate at Watertown High School

Saturday, January 25, 2020

Speech Fiesta Debate at Watertown High School

Robotics at GHS Gymnasium

10:00am: Boys Junior High Jamboree at GHS (rescheduled from 1-18-20)

10:00am: Wrestling Tournament at Arlington

Sunday, January 26, 2020

Carnival of Silver Skates at 2 p.m. and 6:30 p.m.

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena

2:00-4:00 PM Grades JK-8 (Students must be accompanied by an adult) 4:00-6:00 PM Grades 6-12

Monday, January 27, 2020

Boys Basketball at Northwestern (combined junior high game at 4 p.m., Junior Varsity game at 6:30 p.m. followed by the varsity game)

6:00pm: Junior High Wrestling Tournament at Redfield

Tuesday, January 28, 2020

6:30pm: Girls' Basketball at Clark/Willow Lake (at Clark School)

Thursday, January 30, 2020

4:00pm: Northeast Conference Wrestling at Britton-Hecla School

Friday, January 31, 2020

Lewis and Clark Debate at Yankton High School

Boys Basketball hosts Clark/Willow Lake. (Combined Junior High Game at 5:15 p.m., followed by Junior Varsity game at 6:30 p.m. and then the varsity game.)

82nd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

Sunday, January 26th—2:00 and 6:30
Groton Ice Rink—West Side of Groton

Dreams...both the kind you have when you're asleep
AND when you're awake... This show will entertain
through music, costumes and skating talent.
Join us for a *great show* performed by our *local
youth* that will inspire you to *DREAM!*

Admission: 13 & older—\$3.00
6-12—\$2.00

Parking: Provided around the
rink and on the ice
or cozy up on the bleachers
(ice parking begins at 10 am,
then again at 4:30 pm)

**Check us out on Facebook
at "Silver Skates"

WE HOPE TO
SEE YOU THERE!



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Today



Patchy Fog
and Blustery
then Cloudy

High: 26 °F

Tonight



Cloudy

Low: 17 °F

Friday



Patchy Fog
then Cloudy

High: 24 °F

Friday
Night



Mostly Cloudy

Low: 13 °F

Saturday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 24 °F

Today... Highs 21-34°

Light snow Mo valley in morning, over Prairie Coteau this
Afternoon. Patchy fog this morning.

Tonight... Lows 9-20°

Light snow east this evening, dry elsewhere.

Friday... Highs 20-32°

Partly to mostly cloudy.

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANOGRAPHIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 1/23/2020 3:08 AM Central

Light snow over the Missouri valley this morning should gradually come to an end. Meanwhile, light snow is expected to develop over northeast South Dakota and west central Minnesota this afternoon, and then lingering into the evening hours. Amounts will be light, likely less than an inch accumulation. Patchy fog should gradually lift this morning.

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Today in Weather History

January 23, 1969: Intermittent freezing rain on the 20th to the 22nd changed to snow on the 22nd which continued through the 24th. Snowfall of 2 to 6 inches fell across Minnesota and far northeast South Dakota. Blizzard conditions developed on the 23rd and 24th with 30 to 45 mph winds and temperatures dropping to below zero by the 24th. Most of the traffic was halted with many roads blocked from snow drifting. Some rural roads had been blocked for 3 to 4 weeks. Stranded motorists were common in the area. Some snowfall amounts included, 2 inches at Wilmot and Victor, 3 inches at Milbank and Artichoke Lake, and 4 inches at Clear Lake.

1556: An earthquake in Shaanxi, China kills an estimated 830,000 people. This estimated 8.0 to 8.3 magnitude earthquake struck in the middle of a densely populated area where many of the homes were a form of an earth shelter dwelling known as a yaodong. Much is known about this disaster as a scholar named Qin Keda survived the earthquake and recorded the details.

1812: A second major series of earthquakes was felt as part of the New Madrid Shocks of the winter of 1811-1812. Many observers reported that the January 23 shocks were as strong as the main earthquake on December 16th of the preceding year.

1916: Browning, Montana, saw the temperature plummet 100 degrees in 24 hours on January 23-24, from a relatively mild 44 to a bone-chilling 56 degrees below zero.

1969: An F4 tornado cut a 120-mile long path from Jefferson through Copiah, Simpson, Smith, Scott, and Newton Counties in Mississippi, killing 32 and injuring 241 others. Property damage was estimated at \$2 million. An inbound Delta Airlines aircraft reported a hook echo on its scope with this storm.

1780 - The coldest day of the coldest month of record in the northeastern U.S. A British Army thermometer in New York City registered a reading of 16 degrees below zero. During that infamous hard winter the harbor was frozen solid for five weeks, and the port was cut off from sea supply. (David Ludlum)

1971 - The temperature at Prospect Creek, AK, plunged to 80 degrees below zero, the coldest reading of record for the United States. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Strong winds ushered bitterly cold air into the north central U.S., and produced snow squalls in the Great Lakes Region. Snowfall totals in northwest Lower Michigan ranged up to 17 inches in Leelanau County. Wind chill temperatures reached 70 degrees below zero at Sault Ste Marie MI and Hibbing MN. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Northeastern Colorado experienced its most severe windstorm in years. A wind gust to 92 mph was recorded at Boulder CO before the anemometer blew away, and in the mountains, a wind gust to 120 mph was reported at Mines Peak. The high winds blew down a partially constructed viaduct east of Boulder, as nine unanchored concrete girders, each weighing forty-five tons, were blown off their supports. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Low pressure brought heavy snow to Wyoming, with 18 inches reported at the Shoshone National Forest, and 17 inches in the Yellowstone Park area. Gunnison CO, with a low of 19 degrees below zero, was the cold spot in the nation for the twelfth day in a row. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - A Pacific cold front brought strong and gusty winds to the northwestern U.S. Winds in southeastern Idaho gusted to 62 mph at Burley. Strong winds also prevailed along the eastern slopes of the northern and central Rockies. Winds in Wyoming gusted to 74 mph in Goshen County. (National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

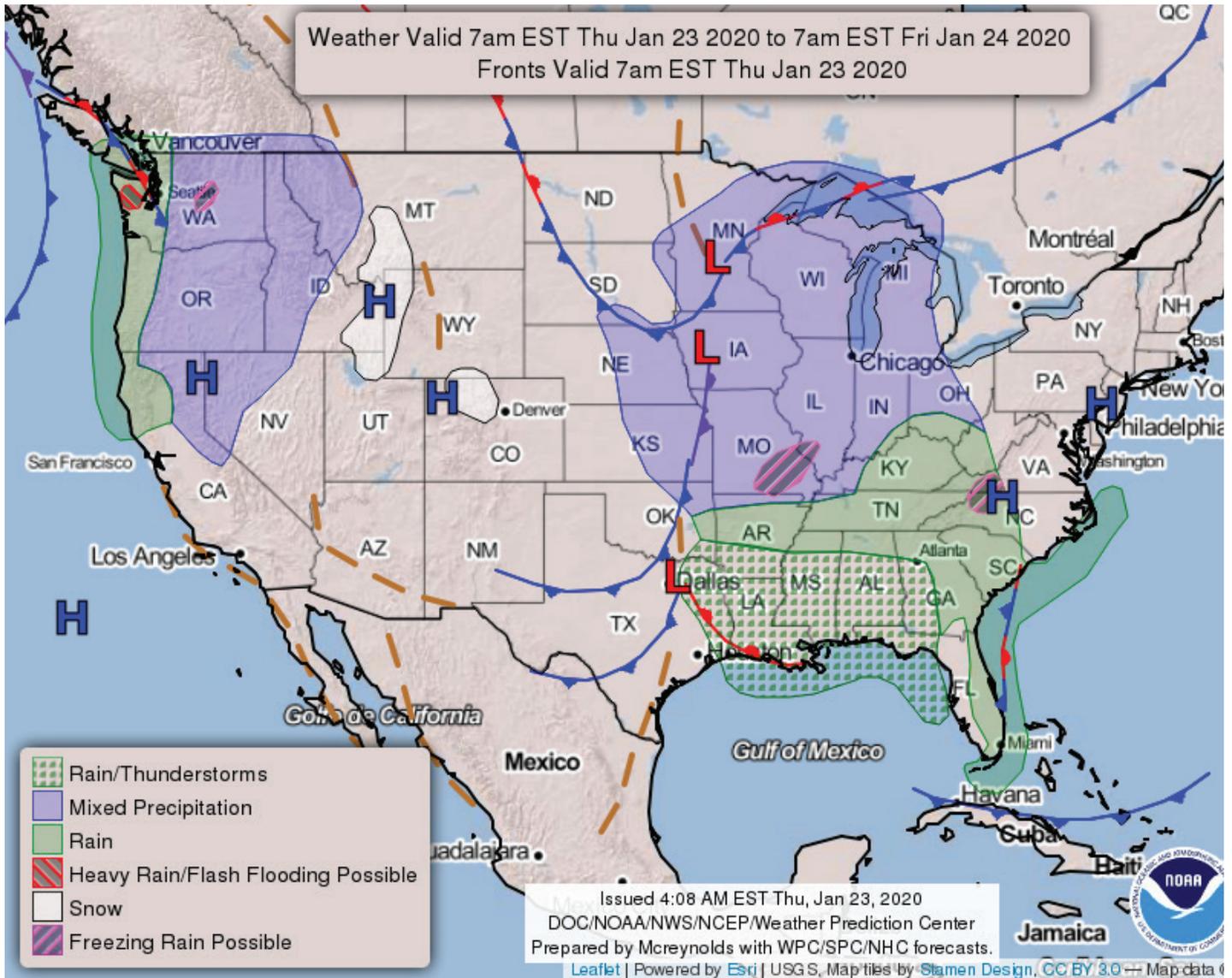
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 36 °F at 2:09 PM
Low Temp: 18 °F at 11:40 PM
Wind: 18 mph at 12:08 AM
Snow

Record High: 60° in 1981
Record Low: -34° in 1897
Average High: 23°F
Average Low: 1°F
Average Precip in Jan.: 0.35
Precip to date in Jan.: 0.35
Average Precip to date: 0.35
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 5:27 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 8:03 a.m.



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GIVE IT TO GOD!

A farmer was walking down a long, winding mountain road in Mexico carrying a heavy sack. Without realizing it, a man with a mule-drawn wagon was suddenly beside him and offered him a ride. He climbed on the back of the wagon and breathed a long sigh of relief.

After traveling for some time, the man driving the wagon turned around, and to his amazement, saw that the man was still holding his sack. "Why don't you drop it next to you?" asked the wagon driver.

"Oh, no," came the reply. "You are kind enough to carry me. You do not have to carry my load as well."

Many of us are like that farmer with the sack. God pleads with us to give Him our burdens. Yet, we needlessly and continuously carry them on our backs rather than setting them down at His feet. We say that we trust Him and talk of turning to Him in times of need, but we refuse to "let go and let God" do what He wants to do: completely take the weight from our shoulders and place it in His loving, caring hands.

If we can trust Him for our salvation, surely we can trust Him with every care or concern we have. Most assuredly, His strength will sustain us, always.

Prayer: Lord, help us to be willing to believe that You are able to relieve us of life's burdens if we truly trust You. In the words of Your disciple, "Help our unbelief!" In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Psalm 55:22 Give your burdens to the Lord, and he will take care of you. He will not permit the godly to slip and fall.

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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
- 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
Groton Hosting State B American Legion Baseball Tournament
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 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

Man rescued from well in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City firefighters came to the rescue of an elderly man who was trapped in the bottom of a well.

Crews from two fire stations responded to a location along East Highway 44 Wednesday about 3 p.m. The Rapid City Journal reports the man was safely extricated from the well and taken to the hospital for further evaluation. No other details were released.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Wednesday:

Dakota Cash

02-04-15-17-19

(two, four, fifteen, seventeen, nineteen)

Estimated jackpot: \$28,000

Lotto America

04-06-11-21-23, Star Ball: 6, ASB: 3

(four, six, eleven, twenty-one, twenty-three; Star Ball: six; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$7.43 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$130 million

Powerball

11-33-44-59-67, Powerball: 8, Power Play: 3

(eleven, thirty-three, forty-four, fifty-nine, sixty-seven; Powerball: eight; Power Play: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$343 million

South Dakota State edges North Dakota State 78-73

BROOKINGS, S.D. (AP) — Matt Dentlinger scored 21 points as South Dakota State won its 12th straight home game, narrowly defeating North Dakota State 78-73 on Wednesday night. Douglas Wilson added 20 points for the Jackrabbits.

Dentlinger shot 10 for 13 from the field.

Alex Arians had 14 points, 11 rebounds and six assists for South Dakota State (15-8, 6-2 Summit League). Matt Mims added 10 points.

Tyson Ward had 24 points and eight rebounds for the Bison (13-7, 4-2). Rocky Kreuser added 18 points. Vinnie Shahid had 12 points.

South Dakota State takes on Oral Roberts on the road next Wednesday. North Dakota State plays Denver at home on Saturday.

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

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Trump administration approves Keystone pipeline on US land

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — The Trump administration on Wednesday approved a right-of-way allowing the Keystone XL oil sands pipeline to be built across U.S. land, pushing the controversial \$8 billion project closer to construction though court challenges still loom.

The approval signed by Interior Secretary David Bernhardt and obtained by The Associated Press covers 46 miles (74 kilometers) of the pipeline's route across land in Montana that's controlled by the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, said Casey Hammond, assistant secretary of the Interior Department.

Those segments of federal land are a small fraction of the pipeline's 1,200-mile (1,930-kilometer) route, but the right-of-way was crucial for a project that's obtained all the needed permits at the state and local levels.

The pipeline would transport up to 830,000 barrels (35 million gallons) of crude oil daily from western Canada to terminals on the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Project sponsor TC Energy said in a court filing that it wants to begin construction on the U.S.-Canada border crossing in Montana in April. Opponents promised to challenge those plans in court.

First proposed in 2008, the pipeline has become emblematic of the tensions between economic development and curbing the fossil fuel emissions that are causing climate change. The Obama administration rejected it, but President Donald Trump revived it and has been a strong supporter.

The stretch approved Wednesday includes all federal land crossed by the line, Hammond said. Much of the rest of the route is across private land, for which TC Energy has been acquiring permissions to build on.

Environmentalists and Native American tribes along the pipeline route say burning the tar sands oil will make climate change worse, and that the pipeline could break and spill oil into waterways like Montana's Missouri River. They have filed numerous lawsuits.

Hammond said Interior officials and other agencies have done a thorough review of the potential effects on the environment. He said TC Energy had provided detailed plans to respond to any spill.

"We're comfortable with the analysis that's been done," Hammond said.

Another oil pipeline in TC Energy's Keystone network in October spilled an estimated 383,000 gallons (1.4 million liters) of oil in eastern North Dakota. Critics say a damaging spill from Keystone XL is inevitable given the length of the line and the many rivers and other waterways it would cross beneath.

An attorney for environmental groups that have sued to overturn Trump's permit for the line said they will ask the judge in the case to block the new approval.

"We have every confidence that the federal courts will set aside these approvals," said Steve Volker, who represents the Indigenous Environmental Network.

Additional approvals from the Army Corps of Engineers are needed for the pipeline's impact to Montana's Fort Peck dam. Two utilities must approve power lines that would connect to the project's pumping stations.

On Montana's Fort Peck Reservation, where tribal members fear an oil spill getting into water supplies, state Sen. Frank Smith said Trump's strong support for the project appeared to be pushing it through.

"All we can do is pray from here on in," Smith said. "The president said it's going through, and it's going through."

The Democratic lawmaker added that despite TC Energy's pledge to operate safely, "there can still be human error" and another spill would happen.

TC Energy spokeswoman Sara Rabern said in a statement that the government approval marked an "important step as we advance towards building this important energy infrastructure project."

In Phillips County, Montana, where the line would cross the Canada border into the U.S., officials want the tax revenue on the oil that would pass through, estimated at more than \$1 million annually.

"It's a no-brainer for us as far as how the community feels," county commissioner John Carnahan said. "We'd go out there and help them if we could. It's not only good for the county, it's good for America."

U.S. District Judge Brian Morris in Montana initially denied a request from environmentalists to block

construction in December because no work was immediately planned. But he also has ruled against the project, including a 2018 decision that stalled the line and prompted Trump to issue a new presidential permit for it to cross the U.S.-Canada border.

In Nebraska, the state Supreme Court removed the last major obstacle for the project in August when it ruled in favor of state regulators who had approved a route for the pipeline in 2017.

TC Energy intends next month to begin mobilizing construction machinery to areas for worker camps and pipeline storage yards in Montana, South Dakota and Nebraska, according to its court filings. It also plans to start toppling trees along the route in parts of South Dakota.

Associated Press reporter Grant Schulte in Lincoln, Nebraska, contributed to this report.

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

Man held in brother's death on Pine Ridge Reservation

PORCUPINE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have detained a man after his brother died in a fight on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in southwestern South Dakota.

Officers from the Oglala Sioux Tribe's Department of Public Safety were called about an assault at a home near Porcupine early Wednesday. A witness told arriving officers that two family members were fighting.

Officers "observed a large amount of blood" and found a man who had been struck with an unknown object. The man was taken to the Indian Health Service hospital, where he was pronounced dead. A brother allegedly involved in the fight was treated for minor injuries and taken to jail, the Rapid City Journal reported.

The names of those involved have not been released.

Tribal police, the FBI and the Bureau of Indian Affairs are investigating.

House to weigh banning gender-change treatments for minors

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — A South Dakota House committee on Wednesday passed a bill that would allow for the prosecution of physicians who help children under age 16 to change their gender.

The bill would make it a Class 1 misdemeanor for medical providers in the state to perform surgeries, administer puberty-blocking medication or hormone therapy drugs to minors to change their gender. Nurses and other non-licensed medical practitioners would be exempt from prosecution.

The bill is similar to legislation promoted by Republican lawmakers in several states including Florida, Texas, Georgia and Kentucky.

Rep. Fred Deutsch, a Watertown Republican, introduced the bill to the House State Affairs committee, calling it a "pause button" for youth who are considering a gender change.

Deutsch said he expects the Republican-dominated House to vote in favor of the measure, which was co-sponsored by more than 40 legislators, but that it will be a tougher sell in the state Senate.

LGBT activists say the bill targets transgender youth and could lead to an increase in suicides.

"I finally feel comfortable in my own body," said Quincy Parke, a transgender 17-year-old, who received puberty-blocking medication and testified at the committee. "I finally feel like I know who I am."

Deutsch said the bill would protect children from treatments that are difficult to reverse, much in the same way that laws protect children from smoking, alcohol or gambling.

Leading medical authorities, including the Endocrine Society and the World Professional Association for Transgender Health, do not recommend gender-change surgeries for minors. For youths experiencing puberty and older adolescents, the Endocrine Society recommends that a team composed of expert medical and mental health professionals manages treatment, which may include puberty-blocking drugs or hormone therapy.

Supporters of the bill from around the country delivered testimony to the committee via video, including psychiatrists, a transgender person who regretted undergoing gender-change treatment, and a transgender man.

Opponents included parents of transgender children, South Dakota doctor's associations, and several business groups.

The South Dakota State Medical Association said the bill would infringe on the doctor-patient relationship.

Mitch Rave is a lobbyist for Sanford Health. He said the medical group saw more than 1 million patients in South Dakota last year but that fewer than 20 of them were minors seeking treatment for gender dysphoria.

Bill prohibiting local plastics ban gathering support

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Twenty-one South Dakota legislators have signed on in support of a bill that would prohibit local governments from banning plastic bags, straws and other products.

Eight states have banned single-use plastic bags and 15 states, including Minnesota and North Dakota, have adopted laws prohibiting government entities from banning plastic bags, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Republican Sen. John Wiik tells the Argus Leader he decided to introduce the legislation after working with retailers on the issue and seeing neighboring states attempt similar legislation.

"I just thought it was time to move ahead and give the small businesses, your mom-and-pop convenience stores and small town businesses, a little more solid footing going into the future," Wiik said.

The question of a ban rose to the surface in Sioux Falls last year after the flooded Big Sioux River left thousands of plastic bags stuck in the trees along the river banks when the water receded.

Man arrested for beating child with belt

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Police say a Sioux Falls man has been arrested for beating a 12-year-old child with a belt.

The girl reported the beating to school staff who notified police. The man was arrested on an abuse of cruelty to minor charge.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says the girl suffered some marks and bruising in the beating last weekend.

Clemens cited Marsy's Law in declining to provide additional details. The law protects a victim's right to privacy by excluding information about identification, where the alleged crime happened and where it was reported.

Day care provider charged in baby's strangulation death

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls day care provider has been charged with manslaughter following the death of a baby who became strangled in a car seat.

Prosecutors say Kayla Styles left the 9-month-old boy in the car seat to nap Nov. 14 and when she checked two hours later she found the baby was slumped down with the seat's straps pressing against his neck.

She told detectives the child had a cough, and she thought sleeping in an elevated position would be easier for him. She said she then took the baby out of the car seat and put him in a portable crib and summoned her husband who attempted to revive the child, according to prosecutors.

The Argus Leader reports the coroner determined the cause of death was "positional asphyxia due to inappropriate sleep environment."

Styles, 30, is charged with second-degree manslaughter and abuse of a minor. She was arrested Tuesday. It was not clear if Styles has hired an attorney.

Weinstein trial turns to accusers, starting with Sciorra

By **MICHAEL R. SISAK** and **TOM HAYS** Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — For years, actress Annabella Sciorra felt powerless against Harvey Weinstein, keeping to all but a few friends the allegation that the once-revered Hollywood honcho pinned her to a bed and raped her in the early 1990s.

Now, more than a quarter-century later, Sciorra is set to confront Weinstein as a key prosecution witness at his New York City rape trial. A guilty verdict could put the 67-year-old disgraced movie mogul in prison for the rest of his life.

Sciorra, a 59-year-old actress best known for her work in "The Sopranos," is expected to testify Thursday, setting up the first of several face-to-face confrontations between Weinstein and his accusers at a trial that's a landmark moment for the #MeToo movement.

The New York trial involves just a pair of the dozens of allegations that surfaced against Weinstein in recent years. He is charged with forcibly performing oral sex on former "Project Runway" production assistant Mimi Haley in his apartment in 2006 and raping an aspiring actress in a Manhattan hotel room in 2013.

Weinstein has insisted any sexual encounters were consensual. As he left court on Wednesday, he told reporters he felt "very confident" about the case.

Sciorra's allegations are outside the statute of limitations for criminal charges on their own, but her testimony could be a factor as prosecutors look to show that Weinstein has engaged in a pattern of predatory behavior.

Her testimony about events in the mid-to-late 1990s could give the jury of seven men and five women a sense of the breadth of Weinstein's alleged wrongdoing and insight into the power dynamics at play in his interactions with young actresses.

Prosecutors previewed Sciorra's testimony in a lengthy, at-times graphic opening statement Wednesday that painted Weinstein as a sexual predator who used his film industry clout to abuse women for decades.

She's one of four other accusers that prosecutors plan to call as witnesses during the monthlong trial.

The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they have been victims of sexual assault, unless they come forward publicly.

Sciorra alleges Weinstein showed up at her Manhattan apartment after dropping her off from a dinner, forced himself inside and raped her sometime in late 1993 or early 1994.

"The evidence will show that despite her protests, despite her fight, despite her body revolting, Harvey Weinstein felt he was entitled to take what he wanted from Annabella forcing her to live in terror of him for decades," prosecutor Meghan Hast told jurors in her opening statement.

That touched off several years of Weinstein tormenting Sciorra, Hast said, culminating in an incident at the Cannes Film Festival in 1997 in which he arrived at her hotel door in his underwear, with a bottle of baby oil in hand.

A petrified Sciorra ran to the back of the room and started hitting call buttons, at which point Weinstein left, Hast said.

Sciorra did not go to authorities because she feared reprisal from Weinstein, prosecutors said. She went public in The New Yorker in October 2017, telling the magazine that for years she had been "so ashamed of what happened."

"I fought. I fought. But still I was like, 'Why did I open that door? Who opens the door at that time of night?'" Sciorra said. "I was definitely embarrassed by it. I felt disgusting."

Weinstein lawyer Damon Cheronis, in his opening statement, made clear the defense intends to go on the offensive.

He questioned the validity of Sciorra's account, saying she once told a friend that she "did a crazy thing and had sex with Harvey Weinstein" and that she had a consensual encounter with him.

"She didn't describe it as rape because it wasn't," Cheronis said.

10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. **DEMOCRATS FACE RISKS AND LIMITS IN IMPEACHMENT TRIAL** No matter how overwhelming the evidence confronting Trump, it becomes less compelling to both the Senate and a deeply divided America when presented again and again, day after day.

2. **CHINA SHUTS DOWN MORE CITIES TO STOP SPREAD OF VIRUS** China locks down three cities that are home to more than 18 million people in an unprecedented effort to try to contain a deadly new viral illness.

3. **WHAT UN'S TOP COURT ORDERED** That Myanmar take all measures in its power to prevent genocide against the Rohingya, declaring the Muslim minority "remain extremely vulnerable."

4. **WORLD LEADERS RALLY AGAINST ANTI-SEMITISM** Vladimir Putin, Emmanuel Macron and Mike Pence are among world leaders in Jerusalem for the largest-ever gathering focused on commemorating the Holocaust, the liberation of Auschwitz 75 years ago, and combating modern-day anti-Semitism.

5. **DEMOCRATS NOT ALONE IN SOLICITING VOTES IN IOWA** Keenly aware of optics, Donald Trump's reelection campaign is trying to persuade Republican voters to turn out at their caucus sites, too.

6. **AUSTRALIAN FIREFIGHT CLAIMS AMERICAN LIVES** Three U.S. crew members have been killed when a C-130 Hercules aerial water tanker crashed while battling wildfires in the southeastern part of the country.

7. **US TREASURY CHIEF TAKES SWIPE AT GRETA THUNBERG** Steven Mnuchin says the Swedish climate activist is in no position to give economic advice until she's gone to college and come out with an economics degree.

8. **TRUMP TARGETS 'BIRTH TOURISM'** The White House is coming out with new visa restrictions aimed at restricting women who travel to the U.S. to give birth so their children can have U.S. passports.

9. **WHO IS SLATED TO TESTIFY AT WEINSTEIN TRIAL** Actress Annabella Sciorra, who says the former Hollywood mogul raped her in the mid 1990s.

10. **'WE WANT ZION!'** Zion Williamson caps his long-awaited NBA debut by scoring 17 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and stirring the New Orleans crowd into a frenzy only to see his team come up short against the Spurs.

China shuts down more cities in bid to contain deadly virus

By KEN MORITSUGU and YANAN WANG Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China decided Thursday to lock down three cities that are home to more than 18 million people in an unprecedented effort to try to contain a deadly new viral illness that has sickened hundreds and spread to other cities and countries in the Lunar New Year travel rush.

Police, SWAT teams and paramilitary troops guarded Wuhan's train station, where metal barriers blocked the entrances at 10 a.m. sharp. Only travelers holding tickets for the last trains were allowed to enter, with those booked for later trains being turned away.

Normally bustling streets, shopping malls, restaurants and other public spaces in the city of 11 million people were eerily quiet. In addition to the train station, airport, ferry, subway and bus services were also halted.

Similar measures will take effect from Friday in the nearby cities of Huanggang and Ezhou. Theaters, internet cafes and other entertainment centers were also ordered closed, further increasing the economic costs of the response to the outbreak.

"To my knowledge, trying to contain a city of 11 million people is new to science," Gauden Galea, the World Health Organization's representative in China, told The Associated Press in an interview at the WHO's Beijing office. "It has not been tried before as a public health measure. We cannot at this stage say it will or it will not work."

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The illnesses from a newly identified coronavirus first appeared last month in Wuhan, an industrial and transportation hub in central China's Hubei province. The vast majority of mainland China's 571 cases have been in the city.

Other cases have been reported in the United States, Japan, South Korea and Thailand. One case was confirmed Thursday in Hong Kong after one was earlier confirmed in Macao. Most cases outside China were people from Wuhan or who had recently traveled there.

A total of 17 people have died, all of them in and around Wuhan. Their average age was 73, with the oldest 89 and the youngest 48.

Images obtained from inside Wuhan following the closure showed long lines and empty shelves at supermarkets, as residents stocked up for what could be weeks of relative isolation. That appeared to be an over-reaction, since no restrictions have been placed on trucks carrying supplies into the city, although many Chinese still have strong memories of shortages and privations in the years before the country's recent economic boom.

Such sweeping measures are typical of China's authoritarian communist government, although their effectiveness in containing the outbreak remains uncertain.

Local authorities in Wuhan have demanded all residents wear masks in public places and urged government staff to wear them at work and for shopkeepers to post signs for their visitors, Xinhua news agency quoted a government notice as saying.

Xinhua cited the city's anti-virus task force as saying the measures were taken in an attempt to "effectively cut off the virus spread, resolutely curb the outbreak and guarantee the people's health and safety."

Liu Haihan left Wuhan last Friday after visiting her boyfriend there. She said everything was normal then, before human-to-human transmission of the virus was confirmed. But things have changed rapidly.

"(My boyfriend) didn't sleep much yesterday. He disinfected his house and stocked up on instant noodles," Liu said. "He's not really going out. If he does he wears a mask."

The significant increase in illnesses reported just this week come as millions of Chinese travel for the Lunar New Year, one of the world's largest annual migrations of people. Chinese are expected to take an estimated 3 billion trips during the 40-day spike in travel.

While state broadcaster CCTV has largely ignored the outbreak to emphasize traditional observances of the festival, reports have filtered in of events such as temple fairs being canceled in cities including Beijing.

Analysts have predicted the reported cases will continue to multiply.

"Even if (the number of cases) are in the thousands, this would not surprise us," the WHO's Galea said, adding, however, that the number of cases is not an indicator of the outbreak's severity, so long as the mortality rate remains low.

The coronavirus family includes the common cold as well as viruses that cause more serious illnesses, such as the SARS outbreak that spread from China to more than a dozen countries in 2002-2003 and killed about 800 people, and Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome, which developed from camels.

China is keen to avoid repeating mistakes with its handling of SARS. For months, even after the illness had spread around the world, China parked patients in hotels and drove them around in ambulances to conceal the true number of cases and avoid WHO experts.

In the current outbreak, China has been credited with sharing information rapidly, and President Xi Jinping has emphasized that as a priority.

"Party committees, governments and relevant departments at all levels must put people's lives and health first," Xi said Monday. "It is necessary to release epidemic information in a timely manner and deepen international cooperation."

Health authorities were taking extraordinary measures to prevent additional person-to-person transmissions, placing those suspected to be infected in plastic tubes and wheeled boxes where air passed through filters.

The first cases in the Wuhan outbreak were connected to people who worked at or visited a seafood market, which has since been closed for an investigation. Experts suspect the virus was first transmitted

from wild animals but the virus also may be mutating. Mutations can make it deadlier or more contagious.

WHO plans another meeting of scientific experts Thursday on whether to recommend declaring the outbreak a global health emergency, which it defines as an "extraordinary event" that constitutes a risk to other countries and requires a coordinated international response.

Many countries are screening travelers from China for illness, especially those arriving from Wuhan. North Korea has banned foreign tourists, a step it also took during the SARS outbreak and in recent years due to Ebola. Most foreigners going to North Korea are Chinese or travel there through neighboring China.

Associated Press researcher Shanshan Wang in Shanghai contributed to this report.

Rohingya hail UN ruling ordering Myanmar to prevent genocide

By MIKE CORDER Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — In a sweeping legal victory for members of the Rohingya Muslim minority, the United Nations' top court on Thursday ordered Myanmar take all measures in its power to prevent genocide against the Rohingya people.

The court's president, Judge Abdulqawi Ahmed Yusuf, said the International Court of Justice "is of the opinion that the Rohingya in Myanmar remain extremely vulnerable."

In a unanimous decision, the court added that its order for so-called provisional measures intended to protect the Rohingya is binding "and creates international legal obligations" on Myanmar.

The court also ordered Myanmar to "take effective measures to prevent the destruction and ensure the preservation of evidence related" to allegations of genocidal acts.

Yasmin Ullah, a Rohingya activist who lives in Vancouver and was in court for the decision, called it a historic ruling.

"Today, having the judges unanimously agree to the protection of Rohingya means so much to us because we're now allowed to exist and it's legally binding," she told reporters on the steps of the court.

At the end of an hour-long sitting in the court's wood-paneled Great Hall of Justice, judges also ordered Myanmar to report to them in four months on what measures the country has taken to comply with the order and then to report every six months as the case moves slowly through the world court.

Rohingya refugees living in camps in Bangladesh welcomed the order.

"This is good news. We thank the court as it has reflected our hope for justice. The verdict proves that Myanmar has become a nation of torturers," 39-year-old Abdul Jalil told The Associated Press by phone from Kutupalong camp in Cox's Bazar.

However, he expressed doubts that Myanmar would fully comply.

"Myanmar has become a notorious state. We do not have confidence in it," Jalil said. "There is little chance that Myanmar will listen."

Rights activists also welcomed the decision, which was even supported by a temporary judge appointed by Myanmar to be part of the 17-judge panel.

"The ICJ order to Myanmar to take concrete steps to prevent the genocide of the Rohingya is a landmark step to stop further atrocities against one of the world's most persecuted people," said Param-Preet Singh, associate international justice director of New York-based Human Rights Watch. "Concerned governments and U.N. bodies should now weigh in to ensure that the order is enforced as the genocide case moves forward."

The world court order for what it calls provisional measures came in a case brought by the African nation of Gambia on behalf of an organization of Muslim nations that accuses Myanmar of genocide in its crackdown on the Rohingya.

Judges did not rule Thursday on the substance of the case, which will be debated in legal arguments likely to last years. But their order to protect the Rohingya made clear they fear for ongoing attacks.

At public hearings last month, lawyers for Myanmar's accusers used maps, satellite images and graphic photos to detail what they call a campaign of murder, rape and destruction amounting to genocide per-

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petrated by Myanmar's military.

The hearings drew intense scrutiny as Myanmar's former pro-democracy icon Aung San Suu Kyi defended the campaign by military forces that once held her under house arrest for 15 years.

Suu Kyi, who as Myanmar's state counselor heads the government, was awarded the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize for championing democracy and human rights under Myanmar's then-ruling junta. She wasn't present in court for Thursday's hearing.

Buddhist-majority Myanmar has long considered the Rohingya to be "Bengalis" from Bangladesh even though their families have lived in the country for generations. Nearly all have been denied citizenship since 1982, effectively rendering them stateless. They are also denied freedom of movement and other basic rights.

In August 2017, Myanmar's military launched what it called a clearance campaign in northern Rakhine state in response to an attack by a Rohingya insurgent group. The campaign forced more than 700,000 Rohingya to flee to neighboring Bangladesh and led to accusations that security forces committed mass rapes, killings and burned thousands of homes.

Suu Kyi told world court judges in December that the exodus was a tragic consequence of the military's response to "coordinated and comprehensive armed attacks" by Rohingya insurgents.

She urged judges to drop the genocide case and allow Myanmar's military justice system to deal with any abuses. Judges rejected that appeal in their decision.

The Myanmar delegation left the court without commenting on the decision.

Thursday's ruling came two days after an independent commission established by Myanmar's government concluded there are reasons to believe security forces committed war crimes in counterinsurgency operations against the Rohingya, but that there is no evidence supporting charges that genocide was planned or carried out.

The report drew criticism from rights activists. Pending release of the full report, Phil Robertson, Human Rights Watch's deputy Asia director, said the panel's findings were "what would have been expected from a non-transparent investigation by a politically skewed set of commissioners working closely with the Myanmar government."

At December's public hearings, Paul Reichler, a lawyer for Gambia, cited a U.N. fact-finding mission report at hearings last month that said military "clearance operations" in Myanmar's northern Rakhine state spared nobody. "Mothers, infants, pregnant women, the old and infirm. They all fell victim to this ruthless campaign," he said.

Gambia's Justice Minister Aboubacarr Tambadou urged the world court to act immediately and "tell Myanmar to stop these senseless killings, to stop these acts of barbarity that continue to shock our collective conscience, to stop this genocide of its own people."

The world court's orders are legally binding but it relies on the United Nations to add political pressure, if necessary, to enforce them.

The court is expected to take years to issue a final ruling in the case.

Anna Roberts, executive director of Burma Campaign UK, called Thursday's order "a major blow to Aung San Suu Kyi and her anti-Rohingya policies."

She urged the international community to press her to enforce the court's order.

"The chances of Aung San Suu Kyi implementing this ruling will be zero unless significant international pressure is applied," Roberts said. "So far, the international community has not been willing to apply pressure on Aung San Suu Kyi over her own appalling record on human rights."

Firefighting plane crashes in Australia, killing 3 Americans

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

SYDNEY (AP) — Three American crew members were killed Thursday when a C-130 Hercules aerial water tanker crashed while battling wildfires in southeastern Australia, officials said.

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New South Wales Premier Gladys Berejiklian confirmed the crash deaths in the state's Snowy Monaro region, which came as Australia grapples with an unprecedented fire season that has left a large swath of destruction.

Coulson Aviation in the U.S. state of Oregon said in a statement that one of its Lockheed large air tankers was lost after it left Richmond in New South Wales with retardant for a firebombing mission. It said the accident was "extensive" but had few other details.

"The only thing I have from the field reports are that the plane came down, it's crashed and there was a large fireball associated with that crash," said Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne said she had conveyed Australia's condolences to U.S. Ambassador Arthur Culvahouse Jr.

"Our hearts go out to their loved ones. They were helping Australia, far from their own homes, an embodiment of the deep friendship between our two countries," she said in a statement.

"Thank you to these three, and to all the brave firefighters from Australia and around the world. Your service and contribution are extraordinary. We are ever grateful," she added.

The tragedy brings the death toll from the blazes to at least 31 since September. The fires have also destroyed more than 2,600 homes and razed more than 10.4 million hectares (25.7 million acres), an area bigger than the U.S. state of Indiana.

Coulson grounded other firefighting aircraft as a precaution pending investigation, reducing planes available to firefighters in New South Wales and neighboring Victoria state. The four-propeller Hercules drops more than 15,000 liters (4,000 gallons) of fire retardant in a single pass.

Australian Transport Safety Bureau, the national air crash investigator, and state police will investigate the crash site, which firefighters described as an active fire ground.

"There is no indication at this stage of what's caused the accident," Fitzsimmons said.

Berejiklian said there were more than 1,700 volunteers and personnel in the field, and five fires were being described at an "emergency warning" level — the most dangerous on a three-tier scale — across the state and on the fringes of the national capital Canberra.

Also Thursday, Canberra Airport closed temporarily because of nearby wildfires, and residents south of the city were told to seek shelter. The airport reopened after several hours with Qantas operating limited services, but Virgin and Singapore Airlines canceled flights for the rest of the day.

The blaze started Wednesday but strong winds and high temperatures caused conditions in Canberra to deteriorate. A second fire near the airport that started on Thursday morning is at a "watch and act" level — the middle of the three tiers.

Residents in some Canberra suburbs were advised to seek shelter and others to leave immediately.

"The defense force is both assisting to a degree and looking to whether that needs to be reinforced," Chief of Defense Angus Campbell told reporters.

"I have people who are both involved as persons who need to be moved from areas and office buildings that are potentially in danger, and also those persons who are part of the (Operation) Bushfire Assist effort," he said.

World leaders rally in Jerusalem against anti-Semitism

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Dozens of world leaders descended upon Jerusalem on Thursday for the largest-ever gathering focused on commemorating the Holocaust and combating rising modern-day anti-Semitism — a politically charged event that has been clouded by rival national interpretations of the genocide.

Russian President Vladimir Putin, French President Emmanuel Macron, Britain's Prince Charles, Vice President Mike Pence and the presidents of Germany, Italy and Austria were among the more than 40 dignitaries attending the World Holocaust Forum, which coincides with the 75th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz death camp.

The three-hour-long ceremony at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial — called "Remembering

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the Holocaust: Fighting Antisemitism” — looks to project a united front in commemorating the genocide of European Jewry amid a global spike in anti-Jewish violence.

But the unresolved remnants of World War II’s politics have permeated the solemn assembly over the differing historical narratives of various players. Poland’s president, who’s been criticized for his own war-time revisionism, has boycotted the gathering since he wasn’t invited to speak. Putin was granted a central role even as he leads a campaign to play down the Soviet Union’s pre-war pact with the Nazis and shift responsibility for the war’s outbreak on Poland, which was invaded in 1939 to start the fighting.

On the eve of the gathering, Israeli President Reuven Rivlin implored visiting dignitaries to “leave history for the historians.”

“The role of political leaders, of all of us, is to shape the future,” he said.

But Putin quickly ventured into the sensitive terrain shortly after his arrival Thursday, claiming that 40% of Jewish Holocaust victims were Soviet.

Of the 6 million Jews killed by the Nazis, historians say about 1 million were Soviet. Putin’s controversial figure appears to include an additional 1.5 million Jewish victims from eastern European areas occupied by the Soviets under their pact with the Nazis.

“When it comes to the tragedy of the Holocaust, 40% of tortured and killed Jews were Soviet Union Jews. So this is our common tragedy in the fullest sense of the word,” he said during a meeting with Rivlin.

Arkadi Zeltser, a Yad Vashem historian, said the accuracy of the statement depended on rival “definitions” of when the war began. Yad Vashem, along with all other reputable institutions, considers the war to have been sparked on Sept. 1, 1939 with the invasion of Poland. The Soviets generally consider their “Great Patriotic War” to have started two years later, when Germany invaded the Soviet Union.

It was the latest chapter in a bitter dispute over Soviet actions in World War II. Putin has been leading a campaign to play down the Soviet Union’s pre-war pact with the Nazis and focus instead on its role in defeating them.

Israel has given Putin a warm welcome, hosting him for the dedication of a monument honoring the nearly 900-day Nazi siege of Leningrad. The city, now known as St. Petersburg, is Putin’s hometown.

The event marks one of the largest political gatherings in Israeli history, as a cascade of delegations including European presidents, prime ministers and royals, as well as American, Canadian and Australian representatives, arrived at Ben-Gurion Airport. More than 10,000 police officers were deployed in Jerusalem and major highways leading to it. Large parts of the city were shut down ahead of the event.

For Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu it offered another opportunity to solidify Israel’s diplomatic standing and boost his profile as he seeks re-election on March 2. He was hoping to use his meetings with world leaders to bolster his tough line toward Iran and rally opposition to a looming war crimes case against Israel in the International Criminal Court.

For historians, though, the main message is one of education amid growing signs of ignorance and indifference to the Holocaust. A comprehensive survey released this week by the Claims Conference, a Jewish organization responsible for negotiating compensation for victims of Nazi persecution, found that most people in France did not know that 6 million Jews were killed during World War II. Among millennials, 45% said they were unaware of French collaboration with the Nazi regime and 25% said they weren’t even sure they had heard of the Holocaust.

The World Holocaust Forum is the brainchild of Moshe Kantor, the president of the European Jewish Congress, an umbrella group representing Jewish communities across Europe. The group recently reported that 80% of European Jews feel unsafe in the continent.

Kantor established the World Holocaust Forum Foundation in 2005 and it has held forums before in Auschwitz, the killing fields of Babi Yar in Ukraine and at the former concentration camp Terezin. Thursday’s event is the first time it is convening in Israel. The official commemoration marking the 75th anniversary of Auschwitz’s liberation will be held next week at the site itself in southern Poland.

Organizers of the Jerusalem event have come under criticism for not including enough Holocaust survivors and instead focusing on the panoply of visiting dignitaries and the festival-like atmosphere surrounding it.

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In response, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy tweeted on Thursday that his delegation was giving up its seats to allow more survivors to attend.

Yad Vashem called the decision "odd" since about 100 survivors were expected to be among the 780 attendees and it was too late to make any adjustments in any case.

"It's a shame he took such a step," the memorial said in a statement.

The gathering comes amid an uptick in anti-Semitic violence. Tel Aviv University researchers reported last year that violent attacks against Jews grew significantly in 2018, with the largest reported number of Jews killed in anti-Semitic acts in decades. They recorded 400 cases, with the spike most dramatic in western Europe. In Germany, for instance, there was a 70% increase in anti-Semitic violence. In addition to the shooting attacks, assaults and vandalism, the research also noted increased anti-Semitic vitriol online and in newspapers, as extremist political parties grew in power in several countries, raising shock and concern among aging survivors.

In advance of the forum, an anthology of statements from world leaders sending delegations to Jerusalem was published to project a newfound commitment to quelling a climate some said was reminiscent of that before World War II.

"I express my fervent hope that by continued vigilance and positive education, the iniquities perpetrated during one of the darkest periods in our history will be eliminated from the face of the earth," Pope Francis wrote.

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau specifically mentioned "the scourge of antisemitism and hatred that is becoming all too common once again."

"The murder of six million Jews by the brutal and antisemitic Nazi regime started with a slow erosion of rights, and the normalization of discrimination," he wrote. "We cannot permit the passage of time to diminish our resolve never to allow such horrors to happen again."

Follow Aron Heller at www.twitter.com/aronhellerap

See all of AP's coverage of the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz at <https://apnews.com/Auschwitz>

24 hours in, senators flout quaint impeachment rules

By LAURIE KELLMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — So much for the Senate's quaint rules and tradition.

Almost immediately after Chief Justice John Roberts gavelled in Wednesday's session of President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, bored and weary senators started openly flouting some basic guidelines in a chamber that prizes decorum.

A Democrat in the back row leaned on his right arm, covered his eyes and stayed that way for nearly a half-hour. Some openly snickered when lead prosecutor Adam Schiff said he'd only speak for 10 minutes. And when one of the freshman House prosecutors stood to speak, many of the senator-jurors bolted for the cloak rooms, where their phones are stored.

"I do see the members moving and taking a break," observed freshman Rep. Jason Crow of Colorado, one of the House prosecutors, in mid-speech at the center podium. "I probably have another 15 minutes."

The agony of the senator-jurors had begun to show the night before, with widespread but more subtle struggles to pay attention to opening arguments. Gum-chewing, snacking, yawning and alleged napping could be seen throughout the cramped chamber.

Around midnight, things got looser. Senators paced and chatted near the wall. Then the prosecutors and Trump's defense team got into a back-and-forth over who was lying and making false allegations about Trump's pressure on Ukraine to help him politically.

Roberts admonished everyone to tone it down. The Senate, he reminded those gathered, is the "world's greatest deliberative body," functioning, for now, as a court of impeachment. It has a tradition of civility

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— and for grave and rare impeachment trials, specific rules: No coffee or snacking on the floor. No pacing, note-passing, working on other matters or chit-chat. Technically, only water is allowed in the Senate chamber, but there have been exceptions in years past for milk and even eggnog.

"There's coffee, but it's miserable coffee" in the cloakrooms, according to Sen. Bill Cassidy, R-La. "I mean you would wish it on a Democrat, no one else," he said, adding, "Just joking."

It's all designed to focus the senator-jurors on the issues at hand. So napping is not, in theory, part of the plan.

But for many, Wednesday hurt. Roberts had gaveled Tuesday's session closed at 1:50 a.m.

Fewer than 12 hours later, the senators were back, with little sleep, for more of the same impeachment story, told by Schiff and his team in exhaustive detail. Even with Roberts' scolding still fresh, many senators were in no mood for rules or traditions.

Well into Schiff's second hour of opening arguments, he moved on from discussing the first of two charges against Trump.

"Now let me turn to the second article," Schiff said. That prompted several senators to shift in their seats and smile at each other in apparent bemusement. It also sparked a small exodus for the cloakroom, especially on the Republican side, including Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri and Sen. Tom Cotton of Arkansas.

Within the first hour, Sen. Mark Warner of Virginia could be seen at his desk in the back row, leaning on his right arm with a hand covering his eyes. He stayed that way for around 20 minutes, then shifted to rest his chin in the same hand, eyes closed, for about five more minutes. Despite the late-night votes, Warner's day had started as scheduled at a 10 a.m. Senate Intelligence Committee hearing.

Crow, a military veteran speaking on the impact of Trump's holdup of military aid to Ukraine, had trouble holding the Senate's attention. Some senators left their seats and headed to cloakrooms, stood in the back or openly yawned as he spoke. At one point during his address, more than 10 senators' seats were empty.

Crow wondered aloud if the Senate wanted to take a recess.

No dice. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said there would be no break until dinner, more than an hour later.

The water-only practice seemed to be one guideline the senators could get around by tradition.

Cotton, R-Ark., for example, was seen drinking a glass of milk early in the day. Spokeswoman Caroline Tabler said Cotton was drinking skim milk — a nice complement to the chocolate snacks he and other senators were getting in their cloakroom and from one lawmaker's desk.

Like so much about the fusty Senate, even the beverage exceptions are rooted in history. Cassidy told reporters that milk joined water as the officially permitted drinks in the Senate chamber in the 1950s. Cassidy, a doctor, said that at the time, milk was believed to be a treatment for stomach ulcers.

According to the Senate Historical Office, Sen. Robert LaFollette, R-Wis., drank eggnog during a 1908 filibuster, and Sen. Strom Thurmond of South Carolina, while still a Democrat in 1957, drank orange juice during his record 24-hour filibuster against the Civil Rights Act.

Factoids aside, the novelty of the impeachment trial had clearly worn off Wednesday. Senators had heard the Trump-Ukraine story before, many times. Their boredom, one Republican senator suggested, had become a challenge to the prolific House managers' strategy. Sen. Mike Rounds of South Dakota said the less wordy president's legal team had "read the Senate" better.

"It was a long day and the House managers did a lot of repeating the same material," Rounds told reporters. "I've got 20 pages of notes, and towards the end, we were basically hearing the same thing over again. It was a diatribe."

Associated Press Writers Alan Fram, Eric Tucker and Matthew Daly contributed to this report.

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

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'Who is she?' - US Treasury chief takes swipe at Thunberg

DAVOS, Switzerland (AP) — U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin says Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg is in no position to give economic advice until she's gone to college and come out with an economics degree.

At a press briefing at the World Economic Forum in the Swiss town of Davos, Mnuchin took a swipe at the 17-year-old environmental campaigner for her recommendation that both the public and private sectors should divest from fossil fuels.

When asked how that would affect the U.S. economic model, Mnuchin took a swipe at Thunberg.

"Is she the chief economist? Who is she? I'm confused," he said. Then following a brief pause, he said it was "a joke."

"After she goes and studies economics in college, she can come back and explain that to us," he concluded.

Over the past year, Thunberg has taken issue with many aspects of U.S. policy, not least President Donald Trump's decision to pull the country out of the Paris accord to limit global warming.

Mnuchin insisted that U.S. policy has been misinterpreted, and that Trump "absolutely believes" in a clean environment.

The U.S., Mnuchin said, has been a leader in reducing carbon emissions. "What the president objects to is the Paris agreement, because he thought it was an unfair agreement for the United States."

Trial highlights: Democrats roll out case as senators fidget

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House prosecutors faced fidgeting senators as they rolled out their case against President Donald Trump on Wednesday, the trial's previous session having lasted a fatigue-inducing 13 hours. Trump was busy himself, returning from an international business conference but finding time to send 120-plus tweets that included trial commentary and criticism.

Highlights of Wednesday's session and what's ahead as senators conduct just the third impeachment trial of a president:

'CORRUPT SCHEME'

Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., the lead prosecutor, spoke for more than two hours, laying out the case House Democrats made in weeks of hearings last year. Schiff, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, said Trump had pursued a "corrupt scheme" to abuse his presidential power and then obstruct Congress' investigation.

He appealed to senators not to be "cynical" about the politics of impeachment, asking them to draw on the intent of the nation's Founding Fathers.

The founders "feared that a president could subvert our democracy by abusing the awesome power of his office for his own personal or political gain," Schiff said. "And so they devised a remedy as powerful as the evil it was meant to combat: Impeachment."

FIDGETY SENATORS

The challenge before Schiff and other House managers was clear, as they tried to win over not just fidgety senators sitting silently in the chamber but a divided American public. Senators were especially restless Wednesday, as lawmakers convened less than 12 hours after the marathon session that stretched to nearly 2 a.m.

Freshman Rep. Jason Crow, D-Colo., a House impeachment manager, had trouble holding the attention of senators, who by Senate rules were sitting in silence without access to phones or other electronics. Many senators left their seats and headed to nearby cloak rooms, or stood in the back or openly yawned as Crow talked about Trump's hold on military aid to Ukraine. At one point, more than 10 senators' seats were empty.

Crow, a military veteran who tried to emphasize the importance of the delayed aid to Ukraine, noticed the unusual level of activity, telling Chief Justice John Roberts at about 5 p.m. that he saw a lot of senators moving about. He wondered aloud if the Senate wanted to take a recess. No such luck. Roberts urged

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him to continue, and McConnell announced the Senate would not break until 6:30 p.m. for dinner.

A TRUMP TWEETSTORM

As Democrats presented their case, Trump blasted the proceedings from afar, joking that he would face off with Democrats by coming to "sit right in the front row and stare at their corrupt faces." Trump, who returned Wednesday from a global leaders conference in Davos, Switzerland, set a presidential record for activity on his favorite social media platform, sending at least 124 tweets in a single day, according to Factbase, a service that compiles and analyzes data on Trump's presidency.

The previous record for tweets was set on the day last month that the House Judiciary Committee opened its marathon session to approve two articles of impeachment against the president.

DEMONSTRATOR REMOVED

Just before dinner, Capitol police swiftly grabbed and dragged out of the chamber a man in the visitors' gallery who was yelling. As he was being held in a hallway outside the chamber, the gray-haired man could be heard shouting, "Dismiss the charges!" He also yelled "you're hurting me!" as police subdued him.

WHAT'S AHEAD

Democrats will continue arguments through Friday under rules approved by the Senate. Trump's lawyers will then have up to three days to rebut the Democrats' case. Trump's legal team passed on an opportunity Wednesday to file a motion to dismiss the case, an acknowledgement that there were not enough Republican votes to support it.

While polling suggests widespread agreement that Trump should allow top aides and former aides to appear as witnesses at the trial, that possibility seems remote.

In wrangling over rules for the trial that stretched into the early morning hours, Republicans shot down, one by one, Democratic efforts to get Trump aides to testify, including former national security adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney.

While some Republicans have expressed openness to new witnesses, it is unclear if four GOP senators will join Democrats to allow new testimony.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaró, Amer Madhani and Alan Fram contributed to this report.

Iran uses violence, politics to try to push US out of Iraq

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Iran has long sought the withdrawal of American forces from neighboring Iraq, but the U.S. killing of an Iranian general and an Iraqi militia commander in Baghdad has added new impetus to the effort, stoking anti-American feelings that Tehran hopes to exploit to help realize the goal.

The Jan. 3 killing has led Iraq's parliament to call for the ouster of U.S. troops, but there are many lingering questions over whether Iran will be able to capitalize on the sentiment.

An early test will be a "million-man" demonstration against the American presence, called for by influential Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr and scheduled for Friday.

It is not clear whether the protesters will try to recreate a New Year's Eve attack on the U.S. Embassy compound in Baghdad by Iran-supported militias in the wake of U.S. airstrikes that killed 25 militiamen along the border with Syria. Iran might simply try to use the march to telegraph its intention to keep up the pressure on U.S. troops in Iraq.

But experts say Iran can be counted on to try to seize what it sees as an opportunity to push its agenda in Iraq, despite an ongoing mass uprising that is targeting government corruption as well as Iranian influence in the country.

"Iran is unconstrained by considerations of Iraqi sovereignty, domestic public opinion, or legality when compared to the Western democracies," said David Des Roches, an expert with The Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington. "This is Iran's strategic advantage; they should be expected to press it."

A withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq would be a victory for Iran, and Tehran has long pursued a two-pronged strategy of supporting anti-U.S. militias that carry out attacks, as well as exerting political pressure

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on Iraqi lawmakers sympathetic to its cause.

Despite usually trying to keep attacks at a level below what might provoke an American response, Iran-backed Kataib Hezbollah fired a barrage of rockets at a military base in Kirkuk in December, killing a U.S. contractor and wounding several U.S. and Iraqi troops. The U.S. responded first with deadly airstrikes on Iran-affiliated militia bases in western Iraq and Syria, then followed with the Jan. 3 drone attack that killed Gen. Qassem Soleimani, Iran's most powerful military officer, along with Iraqi militia commander Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis as they left Baghdad's airport.

The severity of the U.S. response surprised Iran and others, and it had the unanticipated result of bolstering Tehran's political approach by prompting the Iraqi parliament to pass the nonbinding resolution pushed by pro-Iran political factions calling for the expulsion of all foreign troops from the country. In response, President Donald Trump has threatened sanctions on Iraq.

"What they want to do is get rid of U.S. troops in what they see as a legitimate political manner," said Dina Esfandiary, a London-based expert with The Century Foundation think tank. "If Iraqis themselves are voting out U.S. troops, it looks a lot better for Iran than if Iran is a puppet master in Iraq trying to get rid of them — and on top of that it would be a more lasting decision."

The legitimacy of the resolution is a matter of dispute. Not only was the session boycotted by Kurdish lawmakers and many Sunnis, but there also are questions of whether Prime Minister Adel Abdul-Mahdi has the ability to carry it out. Abdul-Mahdi resigned in November amid mass anti-government protests but remains in a caretaker role.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo bluntly rejected the call for the troops' removal, instead saying Washington would "continue the conversation with the Iraqis about what the right structure is."

Abdul-Mahdi strongly supported the resolution, but since then has said it will be up to the next government to deal with the issue, and there are indications he has been working behind the scenes to help keep foreign troops in the country.

After closed-door meetings with German diplomats last week, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said the prime minister had assured them that he had "great interest" in keeping the Bundeswehr military contingent and others part of the anti-Islamic State coalition in Iraq.

The U.S., meantime, said it had resumed joint operations with Iraqi forces, albeit on a more limited basis than before.

Trump met Iraqi President Barham Saleh on Wednesday on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum in Davos Switzerland, and said Washington and Baghdad have had "a very good relationship" and that the two countries had a "host of very difficult things to discuss." Saleh said they have shared common interests including the fight against extremism, regional stability and an independent Iraq.

Asked about the plan for U.S. troops in Iraq, Trump said, "We'll see what happens."

In a sign that bodes well for NATO's continuing mission in the country, Iraq's deputy foreign minister went to Brussels last week for talks with Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg on the alliance's presence in Iraq.

The mixed message of publicly calling for the troops to go but privately wanting them to stay is an indication of Iran's strong influence, particularly among its fellow Shiite Muslims, Des Roches said.

"For any Iraqi politician in Baghdad — particularly a Shia politician — to defy Iran openly is to risk political as well as physical death," he said. "So we shouldn't be surprised if the public and the private lines espoused by Iraqi politicians differ."

American forces withdrew from Iraq in 2011 but returned in 2014 at the invitation of the government to help battle the Islamic State after the extremist group seized vast areas in the north and west of the country. A U.S.-led coalition provided crucial air support as Iraqi forces, including Iran-backed militias, regrouped and drove IS out in a costly three-year campaign. There are currently some 5,200 American troops in the country.

Even before the drone strike, there were growing calls in nationwide protests across sectarian lines, which started in October centered in Baghdad's Tahrir Square, for the end of all foreign influence in the country. The demonstrations also targeted government corruption and poor public services.

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The rejection of Iranian influence over Iraqi state affairs has been a core component of the movement, and pro-Iranian militias have targeted those demonstrations along with Iraqi security forces, killing hundreds and injuring thousands. Protesters fear that with the focus on the push for the U.S. troop withdrawal in response to the attack that killed Soleimani, they may be even easier targets for those forces and that their message will be lost.

"I think Iraq has had enough of having to deal with the Americans and the Iranians alike," Esfandiary said. "But the assassination of al-Muhandis, almost more so than Solemani, was such a glaring oversight of sovereignty and of all agreements they had signed on to with the U.S. in terms of the U.S. presence in Iraq, that it has kind of taken some of the attention away from Iran, to Tehran's delight."

Friday's march called for by al-Sadr is expected to redirect the focus onto the U.S. troops. The cleric, who also leads the Sairoon bloc in parliament, derives much of his political capital through grassroots mobilization.

The Tahrir Square protesters initially rejected that call, saying they want the escalating conflict between Iran and the U.S. off of Iraqi soil.

Since then, al-Sadr has reached out to them directly, saying the demonstrations against the government and against the American troops are "two lights from a single lamp," and it is not yet clear whether that might convince them to participate in the march.

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville in Davos, Switzerland, and Samya Kullab in Baghdad contributed to this story.

This story has been corrected to show that the first name of the Iraqi prime minister is Adel, not Abdel.

Williamson's 22 in debut not enough for Pelicans vs. Spurs

By **BRETT MARTEL AP Sports Writer**

NEW ORLEANS (AP) — Zion Williamson scored the final point of his first NBA regular season game as a packed and standing crowd belted out chants of "M-V-P!"

Then the NBA's No. 1 overall draft pick went to the bench — as mandated by medical staff — and watched the game slip away from the Pelicans while unheeded chants of, "We want Zion!" echoed around the Smoothie King Center.

Williamson capped his long-awaited NBA debut by scoring 17 of his 22 points in the fourth quarter and stirring the crowd into a frenzy — but the savvy and composed San Antonio Spurs weathered the surge for a 121-117 victory Wednesday night.

The celebrated rookie out of Duke, whose maiden regular season appearance was delayed three months by arthroscopic surgery on his right knee, said watching the final five minutes from the bench out of caution was "very hard."

"I'm 19, honestly. In that moment, I'm not thinking about longevity," Williamson continued. "I'm thinking about winning that game, so it was very tough."

LaMarcus Aldridge had 32 points and 14 rebounds, DeMar DeRozan added 20 points, and the San Antonio Spurs withstood Williamson's late surge for a 121-117 victory over New Orleans on Wednesday night.

"The crowd got into it. We didn't let it rattle us," DeRozan said, adding that Williamson "went on a hell of a run."

"It was great that we held our composure, executed when we needed to, and came up with stops when we needed to," DeRozan added.

With Spurs coach Gregg Popovich sending double-teams at Williamson, the rookie struggled to find his shot during the first three quarters. When the fourth quarter began, he had just five points, four rebounds, an assist and four turnovers in a little less than 12 minutes.

But when the 6-foot-6, 285-pound Williamson found himself open for a straight-on 3 with about nine minutes to go, he let it fly and it went down, infusing the stadium with energy. He followed that up with

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a torrid three-minute stretch in which he laid in an alley-oop lob, put back a missed shot with a reverse layup and hit three more 3s.

Williamson wasn't known for shooting 3s when he starred at Duke. He was so often able to dominate inside. But Williamson noted that his long rehabilitation probably helped him refine his outside shot.

"When you're not able to move around and do athletic movements for a while, the only thing you can do is just shoot spot-up jumpers, I guess that was the result of that."

His teammates loved it.

"The first one, I was like, 'All right. Cool,'" guard Jrue Holiday said. "Then the second three I was like, 'All right, boy, you've been practicing.' And the third one, and from that point on, the energy was crazy."

Williamson came into the game knowing his playing time would be limited — even though he started. He had played a total of 18:18 when he was subbed out for good with the Pelicans — who trailed by 12 to start the final period — down 109-108.

Soon after, DeRozan began San Antonio's decisive surge with a finger roll and pull-up jumper. Aldridge followed with a tip-in and jumper shortly after.

New Orleans got as close as 119-117 on Josh Hart's 3, but Aldridge responded with two free throws and the Spurs did not give up another basket.

"I was really proud of our guys," Popovich said. "We took a huge blow. We stayed the course and just played."

Brandon Ingram scored 22 for New Orleans but missed 16 of 22 shots, while Lonzo Ball had 14 points and 12 assists.

Williamson entered the Smoothie King Center wearing a black suit with a blue design and blue basketball sneakers. Written in pink on the black T-shirt he wore under his sport coat was the expression, "Let's Dance," which was his message to New Orleans the night the Pelicans drafted him.

He certainly found his rhythm in the fourth quarter of his first game, raising hopes for what lies ahead in New Orleans' remaining 37 games.

"It was everything I dreamed of, except for the losing part," Williamson said. "Just the energy the crowd brought, the energy the city brought, it was electric and I'm just grateful that they did that. So it was a dream come true to finally get out there, but at the end of the day I did want to win, so we've got to look to the next game."

TIP-INS

Spurs: Dejounte Murray scored 13 and Derrick White 12. ... DeRozan has scored at least 20 points in 15 of 16 games. ... Rudy Gay returned after being sidelined three games by an illness. He had two rebounds in nine minutes off the bench.

Pelicans: Jrue Holiday scored 12 points. ... Derrick Favors had 11 points and 10 rebounds. ... JJ Redick and Hart each scored 10 points.

POP'S PRAISE

Popovich sounded genuinely enthused to be in the building for Williamson's first game.

"You just feel like you're seeing a new generation come in and you get to see it. You get to be right in the middle of it," Popovich said before tip-off.

The 24th-year Spurs head coach, who has won five championships, began to reminisce about his first NBA job as a San Antonio assistant under Larry Brown in the 1988-89 season, which was the heart of the Michael Jordan era.

"I can remember my first days as an assistant for Larry and being mesmerized sitting on the bench watching Michael go up and down the court. I don't even know if I knew what was going on in the game. I just couldn't take my eyes off of him," Popovich said. "So, I think about that and now we've got this generation coming in and it's been a lot of fun to see."

UP NEXT

Spurs: Host Phoenix on Friday night to open a two-game home stand.

Pelicans: Host Denver on Friday night in the second of three home games in five nights.

More AP NBA: <https://apnews.com/NBA> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Democrats not alone in soliciting votes in Iowa; GOP is, too

By JILL COLVIN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With all eyes on Democrats as they prepare to cast their ballots in Iowa's highly anticipated kickoff caucuses, President Donald Trump's reelection campaign is working to try to persuade Republican voters to turn out at their caucus sites, too — even if there's no real competition.

The push — complete with a presidential rally, GOP-led training sessions and a new video featuring the president's daughter-in-law — makes clear the campaign is trying to avoid the optics of empty Republican rooms on caucus night juxtaposed with Democratic gatherings brimming with enthusiastic voters.

But they also demonstrate just how dramatically Trump has seized control of his adopted party, ensuring that no Republican could credibly take him on, despite his historic unpopularity. And they show the remarkable daylight between Trump's threadbare 2016 operation and his current Iowa campaign, which has more staffers on the ground today than it had in November 2016.

But the caucuses also provide the campaign a test run of sorts, serving as an organizing and party-building tool that reaches across all the state's 99 counties and nearly 1,700 precincts, bringing in new volunteers, building enthusiasm and testing ground operations, officials say.

"It's an amazing tool that will pay dividends for us for the entire year," said Eric Branstad, a senior campaign adviser in the state who also directed Trump's Iowa campaign in 2016. "It really gives us an opportunity to activate our base."

"The Iowa caucuses are a chance to flex the organizational muscles of President Trump's campaign," said Trump campaign spokesman Tim Murtaugh, who promised a "heavy presence across the entire state" in the days ahead.

While states such as South Carolina, Nevada, Arizona, Alaska and Kansas chose to cancel their Republican primaries and caucuses outright to save cash and signal Trump's lock on the nomination, Iowa chose to press forward, in part to maintain its status as the first-in-the-nation nominating contest.

"That has never been a consideration for us out here in Iowa. We were going to hold this caucus. Period," said Jeff Kaufmann, the chairman of the Iowa Republican Party. While "it would have been so much easier and so much less expensive for us to just go ahead and cancel this," he said, the state couldn't risk giving the Republican National Committee a reason to reconsider the calendar.

"In some ways, my audience for this is about 160 people in the RNC," Kaufmann said.

Nonetheless, he and other GOP officials have been working to remind their voters to turn out on Feb. 3, even if Trump is a shoo-in among Republicans in the state. The state party has organized over 100 caucus training sessions. Vice President Mike Pence is planning a bus tour. And Trump himself will be holding a marquee rally in Des Moines next week, just days before the caucuses to build excitement.

His campaign also released a video Wednesday in which the president's daughter-in-law and senior campaign adviser, Lara Trump, explains the caucus process and encourages Trump supporters to take "the unique opportunity to be one of the first Americans to support President Trump at the first-in-the-nation caucuses."

"Without opposition, we definitely have to educate, and we've been heightening the awareness of these caucuses," said Kaufmann, who acknowledged that low turnout is likely on the Republican side.

In contrast, "If it is a blizzard that night, I'm guessing Bernie supporters are going to trudge through to get there," he said, referring to Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, even as he maintained that Trump's impeachment trial in Washington has dramatically energized Republican voters in the state.

In addition to casting ballots for Trump, the video released Wednesday notes that caucus attendees will also have the chance to elect delegates who will be responsible for formally choosing the nominee at the 2020 Republican National Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina.

"It is imperative that we only select the top supporters of President Donald J. Trump for this honor," Lara Trump says in the video.

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The comment underscores lingering anger about 2016, when Trump rival Ted Cruz's sophisticated campaign operation locked in delegates who supported him instead of Trump — prompting fears of a contested convention.

Not this time. Since shortly after his election, Trump's campaign has worked aggressively to monitor and influence local party operations to dramatically increase the likelihood that only Trump loyalists make it to the Republican nominating convention in August 2020. As part of that effort, they have overhauled state party leadership, rewritten state party rules and fanned out across county and state caucuses and conventions to elevate pro-Trump leaders and potential delegates.

That includes in Iowa, where the state Republican Party adopted new rules in consultation with the White House to seize control of the delegate selection process. In 2016, virtually all of Iowa's delegates preferred Cruz, the senator from Texas, and they fought unsuccessfully to oppose Trump at the convention. This time around, it will be much more difficult for a Trump challenger to install anti-Trump delegates after the caucuses.

It was "embarrassing and classless," said Kaufmann, a strong Trump supporter, of what happened in 2016. This time, "they're not taking any chances."

"To make sure that our state doesn't have a black eye, we have to make sure that the very few 'Never-Trumpers' that climb out from underneath their rock every four years to whistle at the wind and howl at the moon ... don't embarrass our state," he said.

But former New Hampshire GOP Chairwoman Jennifer Horn, who led her state party during Trump's first run and is deeply critical of the president, slammed the effort as both "unprecedented" and "extremely damaging" to the party's long-term health.

"I think that there are thousands of good people who feel like they have been pushed out," she said. "The way that they have gone about it is so heavy handed ... almost corrupt." _____

Follow Colvin on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/colvinj>

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

Democrats appeal for GOP help to convict 'corrupt' Trump

By LISA MASCARO, ERIC TUCKER and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats launched into marathon arguments in President Donald Trump's impeachment trial Wednesday, appealing to skeptical Republican senators to join them in voting to oust Trump from office to "protect our democracy."

Trump's lawyers sat by, waiting their turn, as the president blasted the proceedings from afar, threatening jokingly to face off with the Democrats by coming to "sit right in the front row and stare at their corrupt faces."

The challenge before the House managers is clear. Democrats have 24 hours over three days to prosecute the charges against Trump, trying to win over not just fidgety senators sitting silently in the chamber but an American public, deeply divided over the president and his impeachment in an election year.

Rep. Adam Schiff, chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, outlined what the Democrats contend was the president's "corrupt scheme" to abuse his presidential power and then obstruct Congress' investigation. He then called on senators not to be "cynical" about politics, but to draw on the intent of the nation's Founding Fathers who provided the remedy of impeachment.

"Over the coming days, we will present to you — and to the American people — the extensive evidence collected during the House's impeachment inquiry into the president's abuse of power," said Schiff standing before the Senate. "You will hear their testimony at the same time as the American people. That is, if you will allow it."

After a dinner break, Schiff returned to the well of the Senate to detail the administration's hold on military aid to Ukraine. He played several clips of testimony from Ambassador William Taylor, who said

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the assistance was held back as Trump pushed the country to announce investigations of Democrats.

Most senators sat at their desks throughout, as the rules stipulate, though some stretched their legs, standing behind the desks or against the back wall of the chamber, passing the time. Visitors watched from the galleries, one briefly interrupting in protest.

The Democrats wrapped up the first day of their presentation shortly before 10 p.m. ET.

The proceedings are unfolding at the start of an election year, and there are few signs that Republicans are interested in calling more witnesses or going beyond a fast-track assessment that is likely to bring a quick vote on charges related to Trump's dealings with Ukraine.

Several GOP senators said Wednesday they'd seen no evidence to support the allegations against Trump even though, just 24 hours earlier, they had rejected subpoenas for witnesses and documents. Democrats, meanwhile, described the evidence against the president as overwhelming but said senators have a duty to gather more.

The trial marks just the third time the Senate has weighed whether an American president should be removed from office. Democrats argue Trump abused his office by asking Ukraine to investigate political rival Joe Biden while withholding crucial military aid, and also obstructed Congress by refusing to turn over documents or allow officials to testify in the House probe. Republicans have defended Trump's actions and cast the process as a politically motivated effort to weaken the president in the midst of his reelection campaign.

A new poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows the public is slightly more likely to say the Senate should convict and remove Trump from office than to say it should not, 45% to 40%. But a sizable percentage, 14%, say they don't know enough to have an opinion.

One question there's wide agreement on: Trump should allow top aides to appear as witnesses at the trial. About 7 in 10 said so, including majorities of Republicans and Democrats, according to the poll.

The strategy of more witnesses, though, seems all but settled. Wrangling over rules for the trial stretched past midnight Tuesday night, with Republicans shooting down one-by-one Democratic efforts to get Trump aides including former national security adviser John Bolton, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and acting chief of staff Mick Mulvaney, to testify.

Senators are likely to repeat those rejections next week, shutting out any chance of new testimony.

One longshot idea to pair one of Trump's preferred witnesses — Biden's son Hunter Biden — with Bolton or another that Democrats want was swiftly rejected.

"That's off the table," Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer told reporters.

Chief Justice John Roberts gaveled open Wednesday's session as senators settled in for the long days ahead.

Trump, who was in Davos, Switzerland, attending a global economic forum, praised his legal team, and suggested he would be open to his advisers testifying, though that seems unlikely. He said here were "national security" concerns that would stand in the way.

After the House prosecutors present their case, the president's lawyers will follow with another 24 hours over three days. They are expected to take only Sunday off.

"There's a lot of things I'd like to rebut," said Trump lawyer Jay Sekulow at the Capitol, "and we will rebut."

Then there will be 16 hours for senators, who must sit quietly at their desks, no speeches or cellphones, to ask written questions, and another four hours for deliberations.

The impeachment trial is set against the backdrop of the 2020 election. All four senators who are Democratic presidential candidates are off the campaign trail, seated as jurors.

Campaigning at stops in Iowa, Joe Biden also rejected having his son testify, or even appearing himself. "I want no part of that," he said.

"People ask the question, isn't the president going to be stronger and harder to beat if he survives this? Yes, probably. But Congress has no choice," he said. Senators must cast their votes and "live with that in history."

Some Republicans expressed disdain for it all.

Joni Ernst of Iowa spoke sarcastically about how excited she was to hear the "overwhelming evidence"

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the House Democrats promised against Trump. "And once we've heard that overwhelming evidence," she added, raising her voice mockingly, "I don't know that we'll need to see additional witnesses, but let's hear about that overwhelming evidence."

The trial began with a setback Tuesday for Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell, who backed off his plans to limit each side's arguments to two days, as the White House had preferred.

But the GOP leader has been skilled at keeping even the most wayward Republicans, those with some concerns about Trump, united in batting back Democratic requests for witnesses and testimony. They ultimately approved a rules package that pushes off a final decision on whether or not to seek additional testimony until late in the trial.

Schumer bemoaned the remaining limitations, saying Wednesday the impeachment trial "begins with a cloud hanging over it, a cloud of unfairness."

Republicans are eager for a swift trial. Yet Trump's legal team passed on an opportunity to file a motion to dismiss the case Wednesday, an acknowledgement that there were not enough Republican votes to support it.

The White House legal team, in its court filings and presentations, has not disputed Trump's actions. But the lawyers insist the president did nothing wrong.

Associated Press writers Mary Clare Jalonick, Alan Fram, Andrew Taylor, Laurie Kellman, Matthew Daly and Padmananda Rama in Washington and Bill Barrow in Osage, Iowa, contributed to this report.

Aerosmith drummer loses bid to rejoin band for Grammy honors

By PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — A judge has told Aerosmith's drummer Joey Kramer to dream on if he hopes to rejoin the band as it's set to perform and be honored at Grammy events this week.

Massachusetts Superior Court Judge Mark Gildea on Wednesday denied Kramer's request to order the band, whose first hit single was 1973's "Dream On," to let him participate in an award celebration in Los Angeles on Friday as well as Sunday's prime time Grammy Awards show.

"Given that Kramer has not played with the band in six months and the dearth of available rehearsal time before the upcoming performances, Kramer has not shown a realistic alternative course of action sufficient to protect the band's business interests," the judge's decision reads in part.

Kramer said in a statement that he's "extremely disappointed" but respects Gildea's decision.

"I knew filing a lawsuit was a bit of an uphill battle," he said. "I can hold my head high knowing that I did the right thing — to fight for my right to celebrate the band's success that I have dedicated the better part of my life to helping build."

The 69-year-old Magnolia, Texas, resident had argued the band, which he helped found in Boston 50 years ago, is in breach of contract because it required him to re-audition for his job after an ankle injury last year caused him to miss a chunk of the band's residency at a Las Vegas casino.

Kramer said in his suit that the band required him to earn his job back by performing a series of solo rehearsals to prove he could play "at an appropriate level."

He argued the "artificial, made-up and undefined" requirement was "insulting and upsetting" because that no other member of the band has been asked to do it before. Singer Steven Tyler, guitarists Joe Perry and Bradley Whitford, and bassist Tom Hamilton have all been recently sidelined with injuries and illnesses and weren't asked to re-audition for their jobs, Kramer noted in his suit.

"This is not about money," he said in a statement ahead of Wednesday's hearing in Plymouth, Massachusetts. "I am being deprived of the opportunity to be recognized along with my peers, for our collective, lifetime contributions to the music industry."

Representatives for Aerosmith didn't comment on the judge's decision.

The band has said previously it invited Kramer to join it for the Grammy events. There just wasn't enough time to rehearse together for him to play on stage, the band maintained.

"Joey Kramer is our brother; his well-being is of paramount importance to us. However he has not been

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emotionally and physically able to perform with the band, by his own admission, for the last 6 months," the statement reads.

"We have missed him and have encouraged him to rejoin us to play many times but apparently he has not felt ready to do so," the statement continues. "Joey has now waited until the last moment to accept our invitation, when we unfortunately have no time for necessary rehearsals during Grammys week."

Kramer said after Wednesday's decision he appreciates the band's offer, which he said amounts to "red carpet photo ops." But he said it's still "extremely hurtful" to know someone else will be playing in his place.

In his lawsuit, Kramer said his fellow band members deemed his "try out" wasn't "technically correct" and lacked "energy," an assessment he strongly disputed. He's also said it's "devastating" to miss out on being honored on the music industry's biggest stage.

"The greatest magic and success of Aerosmith happens when all the band's founding members are together in the house," he said before Wednesday's decision. "To be removed from my rightful place on stage to celebrate our success — a success that acknowledges my own life's work, is just plain wrong."

Aerosmith is slated to receive the 2020 MusiCares Person of the Year award on Friday at the Los Angeles Convention Center.

Alice Cooper, Foo Fighters, Jonas Brothers, John Legend and John Mayer are among the artists slated to perform as the band is recognized for its philanthropic work by the Recording Academy, which awards the Grammys.

Aerosmith is also set to perform a "career-spanning medley" at the Grammy Awards show Sunday night at the Staples Center where they're expected to be joined on stage by hip hop's Run-DMC.

Arrest warrant issued for NFL wide receiver Antonio Brown

HOLLYWOOD, Fla. (AP) — A warrant has been issued for the arrest of NFL wide receiver Antonio Brown following accusations that he and his trainer attacked another man near Brown's Florida home.

Hollywood police spokesman Christian Latta said in a Wednesday news release that Brown faces charges of burglary with battery, burglary of an unoccupied conveyance and criminal mischief.

Officers responded Tuesday afternoon to a disturbance call, where the alleged victim said Brown and his trainer, Glen Holt, hit him, police said. Holt was arrested a short time later and charged with one count of burglary with battery.

Officers attempted to make contact with Brown but were unsuccessful, Latta said.

Police didn't immediately identify the alleged victim or what prompted the confrontation.

Jail records didn't list an attorney for Holt, and it wasn't clear if Brown had a lawyer.

Brown, who is a free agent, played nine seasons with the Pittsburgh Steelers. He was traded to the Oakland Raiders last year but released before ever playing a regular-season game following several off-the-field incidents. He was then signed by the New England Patriots, who released Brown in September after a second woman in 10 days accused him of sexual misconduct.

Biden and Sanders' rift could define closing days in Iowa

By **BILL BARROW** Associated Press

MASON CITY, Iowa (AP) — The rivalry between Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders is deepening as the Democratic presidential candidates are increasingly at loggerheads over their support of Social Security, signaling a battle ahead that could last well beyond the Iowa caucuses.

Biden's campaign released a video late Tuesday accusing Sanders of "dishonest" attacks, while Sanders' official Twitter account countered: "Let's be honest, Joe. One of us fought for decades to cut Social Security, and one of us didn't."

Sanders, a Vermont senator, has accused Biden of advocating for budget deals as a senator from Delaware that would have curtailed entitlement spending over time. During his decades on Capitol Hill, Biden supported a balanced budget constitutional amendment, but he says he would not have "cut" Social Security

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benefits as part of the deals. In his current campaign, Biden proposes expanding Social Security benefits and raising more revenue by lifting the cap on the income that is subject to Social Security payroll taxes.

Biden tacitly acknowledged on Wednesday that he's moved to the left over the years on Social Security. But he compared that with Sanders' legislative history on gun control, an issue that — like Social Security — is a core concern to many Democratic voters.

Sanders "voted to protect gun manufacturers," Biden said in an MSNBC interview, referring to Sanders' vote to give weapons makers immunity from civil liability. Hillary Clinton skewered Sanders over that position during their 2016 primary battle.

"He's indicated that was past," Biden said, suggesting Sanders has shifted positions on guns in a way that's more acceptable to Democratic primary voters.

The sniping comes at a tumultuous moment in the Democratic primary as candidates are increasingly feuding with one another on multiple fronts. Tensions within the party soared on Tuesday after The Hollywood Reporter published an interview in which Clinton ripped into Sanders, reigniting divisions from the 2016 campaign and raising concerns that Democrats may struggle to unify behind a nominee and defeat President Donald Trump.

It seemed for a period on Wednesday that the tensions between Biden and Sanders may cool. As a current senator, Sanders is stuck in Washington to sit as a juror in Trump's impeachment trial, sidelining him from the campaign trail. Biden, meanwhile, spoke of the need for Democrats and the country to come together.

"We not only have to unite our party, we have to unite our country," he told voters in Mason City, Iowa.

During his interview with MSNBC earlier on Wednesday, Biden demurred when asked whether Sanders had "lied" when he and his campaign aides asserted Biden sought to cut Social Security benefits. Biden also noted that Sanders apologized to him after one of the Vermont senator's top supporters wrote that the former vice president has a "corruption" problem.

"Sometimes campaign staff gets a little ahead of the candidate," Biden told the network, later adding, "I accept his apology, and I hope we can argue on the facts."

But hours later, Biden pointedly noted to reporters that Sanders' apology was only about a high-profile supporter suggesting the former vice president is corrupt. The senator, Biden said, is still coming after him on Social Security.

The former vice president also had tough words about the Senate's impeachment trial of Trump.

"I was embarrassed for the institution," Biden told MSNBC when asked about Trump's lawyers stating clear mistruths during the proceedings, which are expected to end with Trump's acquittal on charges that he abused his power and obstructed Congress.

The impeachment case is pegged to Trump pressuring Ukrainian officials to launch an investigation into Biden and his son Hunter Biden, based on discredited theories about the younger Biden's business dealings in Ukraine while his father handled U.S. foreign policy in the country as vice president.

The elder Biden on Wednesday dismissed the possibility that the Senate could call him or his son to testify. Asked by reporters to respond to reports that Democratic senators are involved in such talks, he replied multiple times, "No, they're not." He ignored other questions on the matter.

In Washington, Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer agreed with Biden's assessment. "That's not even on the table," he said.

The scenario nonetheless surfaced Wednesday in Osage, Iowa, where a voter asked Biden whether he'd consider testifying as a way to call Trump and the GOP's bluff.

"The reason why I would not make the deal: This is a constitutional issue, and we are not going to turn it into a farce, into a political theater," Biden said, later adding of Trump, "I'm not going to play his game. It's the Senate's job now to try him. My job now is to beat him."

Associated Press writer Laurie Kellman contributed to this report from Washington.

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

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Giants' Eli Manning retires after 16 seasons, 2 Super Bowls

By TOM CANAVAN AP Sports Writer

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. (AP) — Eli Manning is ending a 16-year NFL career that saw him recognized as a great quarterback, a leader, a solid citizen and the man who led the New York Giants back into prominence with two Super Bowl titles.

Manning, who set almost every Giants passing record in career solely based in New Jersey's Meadowlands, has retired, the Giants said Wednesday. He will formally announce his retirement on Friday and there is little doubt the team will retire his No. 10 jersey.

"For 16 seasons, Eli Manning defined what it is to be a New York Giant both on and off the field," John Mara, the Giants' president and chief executive officer said in a statement.

"Eli is our only two-time Super Bowl MVP and one of the very best players in our franchise's history. He represented our franchise as a consummate professional with dignity and accountability. It meant something to Eli to be the Giants quarterback, and it meant even more to us. We are beyond grateful for his contributions to our organization and look forward to celebrating his induction into the Giants Ring of Honor in the near future."

The recently turned 39-year-old's future had been in doubt since the end of the season. Manning's contract with the Giants expired after the 4-12 season and there was little chance he would be returning after losing his long-time starting job to rookie Daniel Jones.

Manning said he wanted to think about his future after the season and roughly three weeks after the season ended he decided his career was over.

He leaves the NFL with as many Super Bowl titles as his brother, Peyton, who retired after leading the Denver Broncos to a title after the 2015 season.

The Giants acquired Manning from San Diego on draft day in 2004 after the Ole Miss quarterback told the Chargers he did not want to play for them and forced the deal that general manager Ernie Accorsi gladly accepted.

It started a major turnaround for a team that was 4-12 the previous season.

Manning replaced Hall of Famer Kurt Warner as the starter for then-new coach Tom Coughlin after nine games. They won the NFC East the following season.

Within three seasons, the Giants won their first NFL championship since the 1990 season and Manning got his first Super Bowl MVP award, knocking off the previously unbeaten New England Patriots. The second came after the 2011 season when Manning and company again beat Tom Brady, Bill Belichick and the Pats.

In both games, Manning hit a clutch late pass on game-winning drives. He and David Tyree hooked up on the helmet catch in the first one and he found Mario Manningham on sideline go pattern in the second, igniting an 88-yard drive.

"Eli Manning not only is the quarterback on those great teams, but he is the MVP of the Super Bowls," Coughlin said. "He's an incredible big-game performer. You talk about a guy that's great to coach, focused every day, took tremendous pride in preparing, practice, had a great sense of humor, was a cynic in the locker room. But the guys loved him and they loved him for it, and they played for him. The guys that had the opportunity to play with him know what it's like to be with a guy with as much talent, as much grit, as much determination."

Manning is the only player in Giants' history to play 16 seasons. His 236 regular-season games (234 starts) and 248 total games are team records.

From Nov. 21, 2004, through Nov. 23, 2017, Manning started 210 consecutive regular-season games, then the second-longest streak by a quarterback in NFL history (to Brett Favre's 297). After sitting out one game, he started the next 22 in a row, giving him 232 starts in 233 games — plus 12 postseason games. Manning never missed a game because of injury.

Manning is sixth in NFL history with 8,119 attempts and seventh with 4,895 completions, 57,023 yards and 366 touchdown passes. He also has the franchise's highest career completion rate (60.29 percent). He was selected to four Pro Bowls.

There are many who think he is the Giants' greatest quarterback, although others will debate that honor

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belongs to either Y.A. Tittle or Charlie Conerly.

Manning started the first two games of the recently concluded season before recently fired coach Pat Shurmur replaced him with Jones, the No. 6 pick overall in the draft. He started two more games in December after Jones sprained an ankle and led the Giants to a win over Miami in his final start at MetLife Stadium.

Off the field, Manning has donated his time to many charitable events. He was the co-recipient of the Walter Payton NFL Man of the Year Award in 2016 with Larry Fitzgerald of the Arizona Cardinals.

During the Super Bowl week, Manning will be presented with the 2020 Athletes in Action/Bart Starr Award for serving as a positive role model to his family, teammates and community.

Manning is one of just five players in NFL history to win multiple Super Bowl MVP awards, joined by Brady, Joe Montana, Terry Bradshaw and Starr. Manning is one of 21 quarterbacks to win a Super Bowl without losing one and one of 12 to win at least two Super Bowls.

In the 2004 draft, the Giants picked fourth and selected quarterback Philip Rivers. Accorsi sent Rivers, their third-round choice in 2004 (No. 65 overall), and first and fifth-round picks in the 2005 draft to the Chargers for Manning.

It was the game-changing deal for the Giants.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and https://twitter.com/AP_NFL

Chinese city stops outbound flights, trains to fight virus

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — A Chinese city of more than 11 million people planned to shut down outbound flights and trains Thursday as the world's most populous country battled the spread of a new virus that has sickened hundreds of people and killed 17, state media reported.

Everyone in the city of Wuhan was to be restricted to some degree. The state-owned People's Daily newspaper said no one would be allowed to leave. The official Xinhua News Agency said no one would be permitted to leave without a specific reason.

Train stations and the airport were to shut down at 10 a.m. Buses, subways, ferries and long-distance shuttle buses would also be temporarily closed.

Most of the cases are in Wuhan and surrounding Hubei province, but dozens of infections have popped up this week around the country as millions travel for the Lunar New Year, one of the world's largest annual migrations of people. A handful of infected people who came from Wuhan have also been found overseas.

In Geneva, the World Health Organization put off deciding whether to declare the outbreak a global health emergency and asked an expert committee to continue meeting for a second day Thursday.

"We need more information," WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said.

WHO defines a global emergency as an "extraordinary event" that constitutes a risk to other countries and requires a coordinated international response.

When asked about Wuhan's public transport shutdown, WHO chief Tedros said authorities were likely acting to prevent transmission and mass gatherings.

"We cannot say they have done something unusual," he said.

The number of new cases has risen sharply in China, the center of the outbreak. The 17 deaths were all in Hubei province, where the outbreak emerged in the provincial capital of Wuhan late last month. Wuhan authorities said the province has confirmed 444 cases, which would bring the national total to more than 500.

The illness comes from a newly identified type of coronavirus, a family of viruses that can cause the common cold as well as more serious illnesses, such as the SARS outbreak that spread from China to more than a dozen countries in 2002-2003 and killed about 800 people. Some experts have drawn parallels between the new coronavirus and Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome, another coronavirus that does not spread easily among humans and is thought to be carried by camels.

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"There has already been human-to-human transmission and infection of medical workers," Li Bin, deputy director of the National Health Commission, said at a news conference Wednesday. "Evidence has shown that the disease has been transmitted through the respiratory tract, and there is the possibility of viral mutation."

A tweet from WHO's Asia office this week raised the possibility that the epidemic is spreading more easily and may no longer require an animal source to spark infections, as officials initially reported.

Authorities in Thailand on Wednesday confirmed four cases — a Thai national and three Chinese visitors. Japan, South Korea, the United States, Taiwan and Macao, a former Portuguese colony that is a semi-autonomous Chinese city, have all reported one case each. All of the illnesses were of people from Wuhan or who recently traveled there.

"The situation is under control here," Thai Public Health Minister Anutin Charnvirakul told reporters, saying there are no reports of the infection spreading to others. "We checked all of them: taxi drivers, people who wheeled the wheelchairs for the patients, doctors and nurses who worked around them."

Dr. Peter Horby, a professor of emerging infectious diseases at Oxford University, said there were three criteria for the outbreak to be declared an international emergency: The outbreak must be an extraordinary event. There must be a risk of international spread, and a globally coordinated response is required.

"In my opinion, those three criteria have been met," he said.

In response to the U.S. case, President Donald Trump said: "We do have a plan, and we think it's going to be handled very well." He said the U.S. and China were both "in very good shape."

The patient, a man in his 30s who traveled to China in November, was doing well in an isolation unit in a hospital north of Seattle. He returned to Washington state Jan. 15, before the start of U.S. airport screening, health officials said.

In Wuhan, pharmacies limited sales of face masks to one package per customer as people lined up to buy them. Residents said they were not overly concerned as long as they took preventive measures.

"As an adult, I am not too worried about the disease," Yang Bin, the father of a 7-year-old, said after buying a mask. "I think we are more worried about our kids."

Medical workers in protective suits could be seen carrying supplies and stretchers into Wuhan Medical Treatment Center, where some of the patients are being treated.

Some countries have stepped up screening measures for travelers from China, especially those arriving from Wuhan. Travel agencies that organize trips to North Korea said the country banned foreign tourists because of the outbreak. Most tourists to North Korea are either Chinese or travel to the country through neighboring China.

Officials said it was too early to compare the new virus with SARS or MERS, or Middle East respiratory syndrome, in terms of how lethal it might be. They attributed the spike in new cases to improvements in detection and monitoring.

"We are still in the process of learning more about this disease," Gao Fu, an academician of the Chinese Academy of Sciences and head of the Chinese Center for Disease Control, said at the news conference.

Gao said officials are working on the assumption that the outbreak resulted from human exposure to wild animals being sold illegally at a food market in Wuhan and that the virus is mutating. Mutations can make it spread faster or make people sicker.

One veteran of the SARS outbreak said that while there are some similarities in the new virus — namely its origins in China and the link to animals — the current outbreak appears much milder.

Dr. David Heymann, who headed WHO's global response to SARS in 2003, said the new virus appears dangerous for older people with other health conditions, but doesn't seem nearly as infectious as SARS.

"It looks like it doesn't transmit through the air very easily and probably transmits through close contact," he said. "That was not the case with SARS."

Associated Press journalists Dake Kang and Emily Wang in Wuhan, China; Tassanee Vejpongsa in Bangkok; Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, South Korea; Maria Cheng in London; Yanan Wang in Beijing; Alice Fung in

Hong Kong and Carla K. Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

Lebanese Cabinet faces multiple challenges, growing unrest

By ZEINA KARAM and BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon's new government made up of appointees nominated by the Shiite group Hezbollah and its allies got down to business Wednesday, a day after it was formed. Questions arose immediately about its ability to halt spiraling violence and economic and financial collapse.

As the government headed by Hassan Diab held its first meeting, protesters briefly closed major roads in and around the capital Beirut, denouncing it as a rubber stamp Cabinet for the same political parties they blame for widespread corruption. Later, a few hundred protesters engaged in some of the most violent confrontations yet with security forces in the capital.

Groups of young men rampaged through streets near Parliament and the Beirut Souks shopping mall in the capital's commercial district. They smashed windows at luxury shops and restaurants in the shopping area and ripped tiles off buildings and broke them up to use as projectiles to throw at police. The area was the scene of fierce battles between warring factions during the country's 15-year civil war, which ended in 1990.

Thick gray smoke hung over the city center as police fired volley after volley of gas canisters that left protesters retching and gasping for breath.

"We are here to say this government doesn't represent the revolutionaries as the prime minister Hassan Diab says. ... They are the same parties, the same corrupt political elite," said Mahmoud Shaar, a 40-year-old from the southern market town of Nabatiyeh, who was among the protesters.

Protesters first took to the streets in mid-October in a mass uprising against the country's ruling elite, which they blame for decades of corruption and mismanagement that have brought Lebanon to the brink of economic collapse.

Since then, the country has sunk deeper into a political crisis. The Lebanese pound, long pegged to the dollar, has lost up to 60% of its value against the dollar and banks have imposed unprecedented capital controls to preserve liquidity. The once strikingly peaceful protests, praised around the world, recently turned violent as anger and frustration mounts. Over 500 people were injured over the weekend in confrontations in Beirut that saw security forces fire rubber bullets to disperse protesters.

Although the government announced Tuesday is technically made up of specialists, the ministers were named by political parties in a process involving horse trading and bickering with little regard for the demands of protesters for a transparent process and independent candidates. Key political parties are not part of the government, making it one made up exclusively of nominees backed by Hezbollah and its allies.

Diab vowed to tackle the country's crippling crisis — the worst since the civil war — saying his Cabinet will adopt financial and economic methods different than those of previous governments. But analysts said it was highly unlikely a government backed by the powerful militant group would be able to drum up the international and regional support needed to avoid economic collapse.

Hezbollah is considered a terrorist organization by the U.S. and oil-rich Gulf countries whose support is badly needed for debt-ridden Lebanon. The European Union considers the military wing of Hezbollah a terrorist organization.

"These ministers and this government will not be able to make independent decisions related to the economy or the political situation, so long as their decisions are up to the parties that formed this government, first and foremost Hezbollah," said political analyst Youssef Diab.

Sherine, an 18-year-old student studying radio and TV journalism, said she was against the vandalism and violence targeting security forces.

"The government is creating this separation between us. We need to go and break the power holders. This violence might be the only way to achieve anything but I am against it," she said.

President Michel Aoun told the new ministers they have a "delicate mission" to win the confidence of the Lebanese people by working to improve living conditions and the economy. He said they should also

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work to win the confidence of the international community in "Lebanon's state institutions."

In some of the first international reaction, French President Emmanuel Macron pledged to do "everything" to help Lebanon out of its crisis. He added, however, that France is concerned about any "terrorist activity originating in Lebanon or stirred up in Lebanon, which could threaten Israel as well."

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the formation of a new government, saying that "he looks forward to working with" Diab and his Cabinet, "including in support of Lebanon's reform agenda and to address the pressing needs of its people."

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo urged the new government to heed the demands of protesters for a nonpartisan leadership that makes changes and fights corruption. "Only a government that is capable of and committed to undertaking real and tangible reforms will restore investor confidence and unlock international assistance for Lebanon," he said in a statement.

Speaking about the economic and financial deterioration, Finance Minister Ghazi Wazni told the local Al-Jadeed TV that "stopping the deterioration in the coming period cannot be achieved without foreign help."

Samir Geagea, head of the Christian Lebanese Forces party that refused to take part in the Cabinet, criticized the new government saying that after three months of protests the state "is behaving as if nothing happened." He said "most of the ministers are connected to political groups that brought the country to where it is" today.

The Association of Banks in Lebanon said it expects from the new government a "clear financial and economic program that takes into consideration the big challenges that Lebanon is facing." It added that the banking sector is ready to help in getting Lebanon out of its crisis.

Also on Wednesday, the U.S. dollar was being bought at exchange shops around the country for 2,000 Lebanese pounds after hitting a record of 2,500 pounds to the dollar last week. The official rate remained at 1,507 pounds to the dollar. Panic and anger have gripped the public as the pound, pegged to the dollar for more than two decades, plummeted in value. It fell more than 60% in recent weeks on the black market.

Associated Press writer A.J. Naddaff contributed reporting.

New rules could bump emotional-support animals from planes

By DAVID KOENIG AP Airlines Writer

The days of passengers bringing their pets on airplanes as emotional-support animals could be ending. The U.S. Department of Transportation on Wednesday proposed that only specially trained dogs qualify as service animals, which must be allowed in the cabin at no charge.

Airlines could ban emotional-support animals including untrained dogs, cats and more exotic companions such as pigs, pheasants, rabbits and snakes.

Airlines say the number of support animals has grown dramatically in recent years. They lobbied the Transportation Department to crack down on what they consider a scam — passengers who call their pets emotional-support animals to avoid pet fees that generally run more than \$100 each way.

"This is a wonderful step in the right direction for people like myself who are dependent on and reliant on legitimate service animals," said Albert Rizzi, founder of My Blind Spot, an advocacy group for people with disabilities. He said some people "want to have the benefits of having a disability without actually losing the use of their limbs or senses just so they can take their pet with them."

The main trade group for large U.S. airlines praised the proposal. Nicholas Calio, president of Airlines for America, said, "The proposed rule will go a long way in ensuring a safer and healthier experience for everyone."

Flight attendants had pushed to rein in support animals, and they too were pleased.

"The days of Noah's Ark in the air are hopefully coming to an end," said Sara Nelson, president of the Association of Flight Attendants. She said some of her union's members were hurt by untrained pets.

Veterans groups also sided with the airlines, arguing that a boom in untrained dogs and other animals threatens their ability to fly with properly trained service dogs. Last year, more than 80 veterans and dis-

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ability groups endorsed banning untrained emotional-support animals in airline cabins.

On the other side are people who say that an emotional-support animal helps them with anxiety or other issues that would prevent them from traveling or make it more stressful. They aren't a very organized group, but there are lots of them.

Southwest Airlines handles more than 190,000 emotional support animals per year. American Airlines carried 155,790 emotional support animals in 2017, up 48% from 2016, while the number of checked pets dropped 17%. United Airlines carried 76,000 comfort animals in 2017.

Transportation Department officials said in a briefing with reporters that they proposed the changes to improve safety on flights. Some passengers have been bitten by support animals, and airlines complain that they relieve themselves on planes and in airports.

The public will have 60 days to comment on the proposed changes. Officials highlighted a few areas where they are most eager to get comments, including whether miniature horses should continue to qualify as service animals.

The Transportation Department proposes a narrow definition in which a service animal could only be a dog that is trained to help a person with a physical or other disability. Passengers with a service dog would have to fill out a federal form on which they swear that the dog is trained to help them. A dog trained to help with psychiatric needs would qualify as a service animal.

Current rules do not require any training for emotional-support animals. However, airlines can demand that the animal's owner show them a medical professional's note saying they need the animal for support.

The proposed rules would prohibit airlines from banning particular types of dog breeds if the animal qualifies as a service dog, although they could refuse to board an individual dog they deem a threat. Delta Air Lines, which bans pit bulls, said it is studying the proposal.

The president of the Humane Society of the United States said airlines like Delta had maligned pit bulls. Kitty Block said the Transportation Department's proposal to prohibit breed-specific bans "sends a clear message to airlines that their discriminatory practices are not only unsound, but against the law."

The new rules would also bar the current practice by many airlines of requiring animal owners to fill out paperwork 48 hours in advance. A department official said that practice can harm disabled people by preventing them from bringing their service dog on last-minute trips.

The proposal also says people with service animals must check in earlier than the general public.

Airlines could require that service animals be on a leash or harness and fit in its handler's foot space. They could limit passengers to two service animals each, although it is unclear how often that happens under the current rules.

AP Writer Cathy Bussewitz contributed to this report.

Trump sets presidential record for most tweets in a day

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump set a presidential record for activity on his favorite social media platform Wednesday, tweeting and retweeting at length about the Senate impeachment trial, the Democrats who want to replace him and much, much more.

By 4:25 p.m. ET, Trump had barreled through his previous record of 123 Twitter postings in a day that he set a little over a month ago, according to Factba.se, a service that compiles and analyzes data on Trump's presidency.

Trump's previous record for tweets on a single day during his time in the White House was set on Dec. 12, 2019, the day the House Judiciary Committee opened its marathon session to approve two articles of impeachment against the president.

Trump set his all-time record for tweets in a day before he became president, with 161 posts in January 2015, according to Factba.se. Most of his tweeting that day was dedicated to plugging his reality television show.

Trump, who began his day in Davos, Switzerland, where he was attending the World Economic Forum,

started his Wednesday morning by hammering out 41 tweets between 12 a.m. and 1 a.m. ET (6 a.m. to 7 a.m. in Davos).

The vast majority of his postings to his more than 71 million followers were retweets of messages, videos and images from Republican lawmakers and other backers haranguing Democrats over the impeachment trial.

His barrage of tweets included plenty of incendiary posts excoriating Rep. Adam Schiff, one of the House Democratic impeachment managers, and a retweet of a provocative image posted by White House social media director Dan Scavino that shows Trump walking in front of a fiery scene meant to symbolize the incineration of the "Deep State."

Britain's Brexit bill passes final hurdle in Parliament

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Britain's Brexit bill passed its final hurdle in Parliament on Wednesday after the House of Lords abandoned attempts to amend it, leaving the U.K. on course to leave the European Union next week.

The bill was approved by Parliament's upper chamber after the House of Commons overturned changes to the government's flagship Brexit bill made a day earlier by the unelected House of Lords.

The bill will become law when it receives royal assent from Queen Elizabeth II, a formality that could come as soon as Thursday.

Britain is scheduled to leave the European Union on Jan. 31, more than three and a half years after voters opted for Brexit in a June 2016 referendum, and after many rounds of political wrangling.

"At times it felt like we would never cross the Brexit finish line, but we've done it," Prime Minister Boris Johnson said.

The Lords voted Tuesday to demand that post-Brexit Britain continues to let unaccompanied migrant children in EU countries join relatives living in the U.K. The promise was made in 2018 by former British Prime Minister Theresa May, but it was removed from the Brexit legislation after Johnson's Conservatives won a big parliamentary majority in an election last month.

Johnson's government says it intends to continue resettling child migrants in Britain after the country leaves the EU but argues that the issue does not belong in the EU withdrawal bill, which sets out the terms of Britain's departure from the 28-nation bloc.

Brexit Secretary Stephen Barclay said an agreement on taking in the children "is ultimately a matter which must be negotiated with the EU, and the government is committed to seeking the best possible outcome in those negotiations."

But Labour lawmaker Yvette Cooper accused Johnson's Conservative government of planning to "betray the commitments that have been made to the most vulnerable children of all."

The House of Commons also stripped out changes made by the Lords to bolster the rights of EU citizens in Britain, protect the powers of U.K. courts and ensure a say for Scotland and Wales in post-Brexit legal changes.

The wrangling didn't stop the Brexit bill from becoming law, because the House of Commons can override the unelected Lords.

Members of the Lords acknowledged Wednesday that they would have to give way.

"We are at the end of a very long road," said Martin Callanan, a Conservative Brexit minister in the Lords.

The EU parliament also must approve the Brexit divorce deal before Jan. 31. A vote by the European Parliament is expected next week.

Despite Johnson's repeated promise to "get Brexit done" on Jan. 31, the departure will only mark the start of the first stage of the country's EU exit. Britain and the EU will then launch into negotiations on their future ties, racing to strike new relationships for trade, security and a host of other areas by the end of 2020.

Saudi crown prince's WhatsApp linked to Bezos phone hack

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The cellphone of Amazon founder and Washington Post owner Jeff Bezos was hacked in what appeared to be an attempt by Saudi Arabia's crown prince to "influence, if not silence" the newspaper's reporting on the kingdom, two U.N. human rights experts said Wednesday.

The U.N. experts called for an "immediate investigation" by the United States into a report commissioned by Bezos that showed the billionaire technology mogul's phone was likely hacked after he received an MP4 video file sent from Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's WhatsApp account after the two men exchanged phone numbers during a dinner in Los Angeles in 2018.

The video file was sent to Bezos' phone five months before Saudi critic and Washington Post columnist Jamal Khashoggi was killed by Saudi government agents inside the Saudi consulate in Turkey in October. At the time, the crown prince was being widely hailed for ushering in major social reforms to the kingdom, but Khashoggi was writing columns in the Post that highlighted the darker side of Prince Mohammed's simultaneous clampdown on dissent.

The Post was harshly critical of the Saudi government after Khashoggi's killing and demanded accountability in a highly public campaign that ran in the paper for weeks after his death.

"The information we have received suggests the possible involvement of the Crown Prince in surveillance of Mr. Bezos, in an effort to influence, if not silence, The Washington Post's reporting on Saudi Arabia," the independent U.N. experts said.

At a time when Saudi Arabia was "supposedly investigating the killing of Mr. Khashoggi, and prosecuting those it deemed responsible, it was clandestinely waging a massive online campaign against Mr. Bezos and Amazon targeting him principally as the owner of The Washington Post," the experts said.

Bezos first went public about the hack last year. He said the National Enquirer tabloid, whose owner has ties to the crown prince, was threatening to publish Bezos' private messages and photos if he didn't stop a private investigation he'd sought into the hacking of his phone.

Iyad el-Baghdadi, an activist who worked with Bezos' investigators, told The Associated Press it appears the hacking was about free speech. "It's not about trying to compromise a businessman for business purposes," he said. "It's not about Amazon, it's about The Washington Post."

Saudi Arabia's foreign minister, Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, called the hacking allegations "absolutely illegitimate."

"There was no information in there that's relevant. There was no substantiation, there was no evidence," he told an AP reporter at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. "It was purely conjecture, and if there is real evidence, we look forward to seeing it."

The independent experts, Agnes Callamard, special rapporteur on summary executions and extrajudicial killings, and David Kaye, special rapporteur on freedom of expression, were appointed by the U.N. Human Rights Council. They published their statement after reviewing the report conducted by FTI Consulting, which was hired by Bezos' security adviser to manage the investigation. The report was published in full exclusively by VICE's Motherboard later on Wednesday.

The digital forensic investigation assessed with "medium to high confidence" that Bezos' phone was infiltrated on May 1, 2018, via the video file sent from the crown prince's WhatsApp account.

The U.N. experts said that records showed that within hours of receiving the video from Prince Mohammed's account, there was "an anomalous and extreme change in phone behavior" with enormous amounts of data being transmitted and exfiltrated from the phone, undetected, over months.

The report stated that Bezos' phone was compromised "possibly via tools procured by Saud al-Qahtani," the former adviser to the crown prince who was sanctioned by the U.S. for his suspected role in orchestrating the operation that killed Khashoggi.

Saudi Arabia's justice system found al-Qahtani not guilty of any wrongdoing in the killing. A judge sentenced five people to death and sentenced three others to a combined 24 years in prison in December for Khashoggi's slaying.

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Al-Qahtani was also head of Saudi Arabia's cybersecurity federation and allegedly behind campaigns that created artificially-trending tweets to attack the prince's perceived enemies, rally support around the leadership and stymie criticism on social media.

The full investigative report, reviewed by The Associated Press, found that due to end-to-end encryption, it was virtually impossible to decrypt the contents of the downloader to determine if it did indeed have any malicious code.

Saudi Arabia has already been accused of spying in America in a case involving Twitter. U.S. prosecutors in California allege that the Saudi government, frustrated by growing criticism of its leaders and policies on social media, recruited two Twitter employees to gather confidential personal information on thousands of accounts that included prominent opponents.

Adam S. Hickey, deputy assistant attorney general of the U.S. Department of Justice's National Security Division, would not confirm or deny a U.S. investigation of the latest allegations was underway, but said "we investigate nation state-sponsored hacking all the time."

Separately, a Trump administration official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss internal matters, said presidential adviser Jared Kushner has communicated with the Saudi crown prince on WhatsApp.

Bezos visited Saudi Arabia in 2016 to meet with Prince Mohammed before the two men met again during the prince's tour of the United States in 2018.

The billionaire had been looking for a site in the Middle East to expand Amazon's cloud services. The company ultimately selected the island nation of Bahrain off the coast of Saudi Arabia.

During that time, Amazon had already expanded into the Middle East with its 2017 purchase of e-commerce website Souq.com, which is a competitor of Noon.com, a platform launched that same year and is heavily funded by Saudi Arabia's Public Investment Fund, which is overseen by the crown prince.

Bezos went public last February after allegedly being shaken down by the National Enquirer, which he said threatened to expose a "below-the-belt" selfie he'd taken and other private messages and pictures he'd exchanged with a woman he was dating while he was still married.

Bezos wrote in a lengthy piece for the Medium that rather than capitulate to extortion and blackmail, "I've decided to publish exactly what they sent me, despite the personal cost and embarrassment they threaten. While he did not accuse Saudi Arabia's crown prince of being behind the hacking of his phone, he noted that the owner of the National Enquirer had been investigated for various actions taken on behalf of the Saudi government.

Bezos' chief investigator, Gavin De Becker, went further, saying in a published report last March that the investigation "concluded with high confidence that the Saudis had access to Bezos' phone, and gained private information." In a piece for The Daily Beast he outlined in detail what he said was the crown prince's close relationship with David Pecker, the chairman of AMI, which is the parent company of the National Enquirer.

The investigation said that any number of cyber weapons could have been used, including Israeli spyware firm NSO Group's Pegasus. The firm's wares have been used by governments to target journalists in Mexico, opposition figures in Panama and human rights activists from the Middle East.

The U.N. experts said Bezos' phone hacking occurred during a period in which the phones of two close associates of Khashoggi were also hacked, allegedly using the Pegasus malware.

In response, the company denied involvement in Bezos' phone hack and said its technology was "not used in this instance".

Associated Press writers David Rising and Jon Gambrell in Dubai, Jamey Keaten in Davos, Switzerland, Chris Den Hond in Paris and Jonathan Lemire in New York contributed to this report.

Hallmark media CEO leaves, month after same-sex ad backlash

NEW YORK (AP) — The head of Hallmark's media business is leaving the company after 11 years, just a month after its flagship Hallmark Channel faced an outcry over a decision to pull an ad with a lesbian couple kissing.

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No reason was given for Bill Abbott's departure, and no replacement was immediately named.

In a statement, Mike Perry, president and CEO of Hallmark Cards Inc., said that with immense competition from TV networks and streaming services, it is important for the company to find "relevant new ways to grow our business."

Abbott was CEO of Crown Media Family Networks, a company controlled by Hallmark Cards. Crown Media's flagship cable channel is The Hallmark Channel, known for family-friendly programming, particularly made-for-TV Christmas-themed movies.

In December, the Hallmark Channel's decision to pull an ad featuring the same-sex couple led to an outcry online. The company later reversed the decision.

Crown Media also operates the Hallmark Movies & Mysteries, Hallmark Drama networks, subscription streaming service Hallmark Movies Now and e-book publishing division Hallmark Publishing.

Impeachment trial brings angst for 4 presidential hopefuls

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The four Democratic senators seeking the White House want to be out there campaigning, but they're pulled off the presidential campaign trail and into the Senate to serve as jurors in President Donald Trump's impeachment trial.

That means forgoing raucous events and adoring crowds for hours of passively listening to a procedure designed to be solemn and rule-bound. The presidential hopefuls can't freely ask questions or even talk to their colleagues or use their cellphones. It amounts to a political muzzle for Sens. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts, Bernie Sanders of Vermont, Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota and Michael Bennet of Colorado -- all of whom want as much attention as they can get right now.

"I am used to going practically 24/7, town hall after town hall answering questions, and all of a sudden you're in like a digital detox," Klobuchar said in an interview Wednesday.

Bennet said he'll campaign whenever possible on Sundays, when the Senate isn't in session. Otherwise, he's trying to take the interruption in stride.

"There's no sense worrying about it," he said by phone. "It's out of my hands."

The timing couldn't be worse. The trial may run six days a week and last through the Iowa caucuses, which kick off the Democratic contest on Feb 3. That means the four senators in the race likely won't get the chance to deliver critical, final arguments to voters who could set the tone for the rest of the race.

"This is where you are in the manager's office trying to get the best price on that new car and suddenly you're not there to close the deal," said Alice Stewart, a Republican strategist who worked on Sen. Ted Cruz's presidential campaign in 2016 and Mike Huckabee's 2008 bid, when each won Iowa.

Democratic pollster John Zogby said Sanders, Warren and Klobuchar have perhaps the most to lose because they "are the three that seem to have the most momentum."

"Presence is preeminent," Zogby said. "You've got to be there to press the flesh."

Making matters worse, the Senate trial will be long and complicated enough that it doesn't give the candidates many opportunities to present themselves hard at work on behalf of voters. During the closing stretch of the 2008 general election, Barack Obama and John McCain returned to Washington to vote on measures responding to the economic collapse. More recently, the Supreme Court confirmation hearings of Brett Kavanaugh offered high-profile opportunities for candidates including Klobuchar to take on the Trump administration.

But for the trial, senators can only submit questions in writing. It's up to Chief Justice John Roberts, who is presiding over the trial, to read them.

The contrast between hustling for homestretch support in snowy Iowa and the plodding impeachment trial was on full display this week.

Sanders sat through the proceedings nearly totally motionless, listening with one hand balled into a fist pushed against his lips and the other on his hip. He often had little more than a legal pad on his desk. When White House counsel Pat Cipollone, arguing in support of the president, quipped Tuesday, "Some

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of you are upset because you should be in Iowa right now," Sanders offered a small, brief grin.

Warren held both a blue pen and a yellow pencil, alternating between the two to take notes. She sometimes held the pen, or just its cap, in her teeth.

Publicly, the senators say they are proud to participate in historic proceedings, as their day jobs demand. But privately, their advisers acknowledge that campaigns that were already difficult to manage logistically have gotten exponentially more so.

Before returning to Washington, Sanders said he'd rather be campaigning and implored supporters to "carry the ball" in his absence. Warren suggested she'd be nostalgic for Iowa while stuck in Washington, saying, "I truly love this part of the campaign, and I hope I'll be able to come back more."

Both Warren and Sanders have spoken about attending the trial by day and rushing to Iowa to campaign by night -- something that might be possible using private jets. But Sanders canceled a Wednesday evening rally he'd planned at the University of Northern Iowa, given the trial's long and still uncertain upcoming schedule.

In the meantime, Sanders has stepped up his online presence, holding internet discussions with supporters, a model Warren will also use starting this week. High-profile supporters can also take candidates' place, including Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and ice cream icons Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfield, of "Ben & Jerry's" fame, and actress Ashley Judd and former presidential hopeful Julián Castro for Warren.

Klobuchar has her husband and daughter campaigning in her place, and she purchased studio time to do hits with TV stations in Iowa and beyond.

It could all be a boon to former Vice President Joe Biden and Pete Buttigieg, the former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, who aren't part of the trial. But their aides said they're not operating with an assumption that the trial will hurt the political prospects of their rivals.

"They aren't going to be pulling down their ads or pulling their organizers off during the trial," said Anita Dunn, a Biden senior strategist. "There's no reason why everyone doesn't continue their campaigns, and they will."

Still, Iowa does feel eerily suspended in time. There are no frantic days of multi-candidate, multi-city stops. Biden and Buttigieg wrapped up brief bus tours on Wednesday, leaving businessman Andrew Yang with the state to himself on Thursday and Friday.

Keri Quattlebaum, a 48-year-old office manager for a nonprofit in the Iowa capital of Des Moines, said she's still deciding among Sanders, Warren and Biden. But she said it's not a deal breaker that she won't see them in person.

"I think people in Iowa are savvy enough to follow impeachment," Quattlebaum said.

Associated Press writers Steve Peoples and Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report from Des Moines, Iowa.

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

This story has been corrected to show Cipollone said, "Some of you are upset because you should be in Iowa right now," not "Some of you are upset because you shot be in Iowa right now."

Can equality pledges fix country music's gender problem?

By KRISTIN M. HALL Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — What started as a joke on Twitter about an unwritten rule among country radio stations not to play two female artists in a row prompted outrage by country music stars, but also pledges to give women equal airtime.

A now-deleted tweet by a Michigan radio station 98 WKCQ-FM last week claimed "we cannot play two females back to back" in response to a writer for Variety magazine. The station's parent company later denied that was ever a rule, but the fire that had been steadily smoldering for years over the perceived

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barriers to women in country music had already been reignited.

Grammy-winning country singer Kacey Musgraves snapped back on Twitter to the station, "And yet, they can play 18 dudes who sound exactly the same back to back."

Kelsea Ballerini chimed in to say, "I'm really sorry that in 2020, after YEARS of conversation of equal play, there are still some companies that make their stations play by these rules."

But others took an immediate action.

CMT announced on Tuesday that they would institute equal airplay for female artists across their two channels. And a country radio station in Ontario, Canada, started an equal play initiative for one week, pledging to split the airplay time 50-50 between men and female voices.

The so-called rule against playing two women back to back is a familiar excuse heard by country singer Mickey Guyton, who was one of several female country stars tweeting about the controversy.

"I have also heard them say that women need to write better songs," said Guyton, in an email interview with The Associated Press.

Guyton said the industry is more concerned with finding reasons why women aren't succeeding than finding solutions.

"For the longest time, I was so scared to speak up because I was taught to fear losing the support of the industry, but you can't lose what you don't have," said Guyton, who has a new single called "Sister." "The people who have felt underrepresented are thanking me for standing up for something that they have seen go on for a long time."

"No women back to back" might not be a rule, but statistics show that overall country radio has put it in practice for the last two decades.

Jada Watson, a professor at the University of Ottawa who studies country music and gender, found that country radio has been for several years severely lopsided in how many female artists are played.

Her report, in consultation with WOMAN Nashville, found that between 2000 and 2018, there was a 66% decline in the number of songs by female artists on country radio.

"Ultimately what they're doing with these 50/50 and equal play campaigns is retraining an audience to be familiar with female voices, who've they not heard for the last decade," said Watson.

Still this is not surprising information to anyone in country music. In 2015, a radio consultant who compared women to tomatoes in a salad and encouraged stations to remove female voices from their playlists prompted a similar call for changes in the industry.

Brittany Thompson, program director for CKLC-FM, a country radio station in Kingston, Ontario, said everyone in country music points fingers elsewhere when these gender discussions come up, whether it's at radio, labels or concert promoters.

"We will use our platform to hopefully at least not only start a discussion, but show that you don't have to be scared of women on country radio," said Thompson.

Thompson said that prior to their equal play initiative, the station was playing about 40% women to 60% male artists for songs that are current. For recurrent and gold playlists, which are songs that have been released months or years prior, the disparity was much larger for women, Thompson said.

"We had a minuscule amount of women. There might have been a couple of Carrie Underwood songs. I don't think we had any Miranda Lambert songs," Thompson said.

Leslie Fram, senior vice president of music and talent at CMT, has been behind a number of initiatives meant to support new and existing female acts in country music, including a popular CMT Next Women of Country tour. She dismissed the critics of equality pledges who say songs should be chosen based on merit, not gender.

"We are basing it on merit," said Fram. "We're saying the best song should win, but women should have an equal playing field."

Other initiatives some stations have taken include playing women for an entire hour, or having programming that is dedicated to playing women. These initiatives are a little frustrating, but it's better than no action at all, said Brandy Clark, who will be part of CMT's Next Women of Country tour this year. She applauded CMT for its equality pledge.

"I hate that for women to get played we have to turn ourselves into even more of a minority," Clark said. "But it has to start somewhere. People can't like what they don't hear."

For Guyton, she wants to see more stations and companies pledge to play more women and stop adhering to false notions about what country listeners want to hear.

"I have a hard time believing that 50% of the population doesn't want to hear songs that represent them," Guyton said.

Online: <http://www.cmt.com>

Watchdog files FEC complaint against pro-Sanders nonprofit

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The watchdog group Common Cause filed a complaint with the Federal Election Commission on Wednesday, alleging that Our Revolution, a political nonprofit organization founded by Bernie Sanders, violated campaign finance law by accepting donations in excess of federal limits while boosting his White House ambitions.

The complaint comes after The Associated Press reported earlier this month about the donations.

Our Revolution denies any wrongdoing. Spokesman Paco Fabian called the complaint "meritless" and "legally flawed." Sanders' campaign did not respond to a request for comment.

The campaign finance act says groups established by federal officeholders or candidates cannot raise money for federal electoral activity that exceeds the limitations of the law. Those contributions are currently set at \$2,800 for candidates and \$5,000 for political action committees.

Our Revolution has taken in nearly \$1 million from donors whose contributions exceeded those limits and whose identities it hasn't fully disclosed, according to tax filings for 2016, 2017 and 2018. Much of it came from donors who contributed six-figure sums.

The group has paid for some social media ads backing Sanders' campaign and is working to turn out voters who will support the senator in the Democratic presidential primary. The group will not have to disclose its 2020 spending until after the election.

"Because Sanders set up Our Revolution and they have raised and spent money in candidate elections, Our Revolution is required to comply with contribution limits, register with the FEC and disclose its donors — but it hasn't," said Paul S. Ryan, an attorney for Common Cause. "It's his establishment of the group that triggers these laws. That means a \$5,000 limit, full donor disclosure and no contributions from prohibited sources."

Candidates are barred from accepting contributions from corporations, labor unions, federal contractors and foreign nationals. The group does not fully disclose who its contributors are.

For years, Sanders has railed against the torrent of money allowed to flood the political system following the Supreme Court's landmark 2010 Citizens United decision. But he has saved special ire for super political action committees, or super PACs.

Our Revolution is not a super PAC. But the tax-exempt political nonprofit functions much like one — but without having to reveal its donors. Like super PACs, these nonprofits were similarly empowered to raise and spend unlimited sums after the Citizens United decision.

But such groups must take steps to keep their activities separate from the candidates they support.

It's far from clear if the FEC, which enforces campaign finance laws, will take action. After a recent resignation, the commission does not currently have enough members to legally meet.

"The simplistic and legally flawed analysis advanced by Common Cause is based both on a misunderstanding of the law and a misrepresentation of the facts," Fabian, the Our Revolution spokesman, said in a statement. "To claim that Our Revolution is simply an arm of the Bernie Sanders 2020 campaign is an insult to our grassroots members and all that we have accomplished. ... Our mission is much more than just electing Bernie to the White House."

Sanders on Sunday sought to distance himself from Our Revolution during a candidate forum with New

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Hampshire Public Radio. While he acknowledged that he founded the group and had “no apologies for that,” he also suggested he was legally prevented from telling them to stop.

“If I got on the phone and I told them what to do, that would be a violation of campaign finance law,” Sanders said.

However, legal experts say there’s nothing preventing him from asking them to stop.

“It’s dubious,” said Adav Noti, a former FEC lawyer who now works for the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center in Washington. “A full disavowal — ‘I do not want an outside group spending money from secret, wealthy donors to support my election’ — there’s nothing in the law that would prohibit a candidate from saying that.”

Sanders founded Our Revolution to further the political movement galvanized by his unsuccessful 2016 campaign for the Democratic presidential nomination, though Our Revolution leaders say he hasn’t held a formal role since its first governing board was appointed in 2016.

The group, which also includes hundreds of local affiliates across the U.S., initially backed a series of candidates in Sanders’ mold during the 2018 midterms. But after he entered the 2020 contest, its focus has shifted toward him.

Nina Turner, a former Ohio state senator and a co-chair of Sanders’ campaign, was president of the group until she took a leave of absence to work on his presidential bid. In May, she resigned from the role, which paid her \$187,000 in 2018. Other Sanders surrogates, including radio commentator Jim Hightower and Palestinian rights activist Jim Zogby, have also served on the board.

There are other connections, too, between Our Revolution and people in Sanders’ orbit.

Sanders’ wife, Jane O’Meara Sanders, was a founding director of Our Revolution, according to business filings. In August 2018, the group also subleased Washington office space to Sanders’ Senate campaign, Friends of Bernie Sanders Inc., a financial disclosure shows.

Our Revolution also provided a \$105,000 seed loan to the Sanders Institute, a think tank founded by O’Meara Sanders and her son, David Driscoll. The Sanders Institute, which was mothballed after Sanders launched his 2020 campaign, paid Driscoll \$100,000 a year to serve as its executive director. Driscoll previously was an executive for Nike and the Vermont snowboarding firm Burton, but had no previous nonprofit experience, according to his LinkedIn profile. The loan was paid off in 2018.

While Our Revolution doesn’t fully disclose donors, it does list many of them on its website, though it does not include donation amounts. It does grant anonymity, however, to donors who don’t want to reveal their identity.

Still, other tax filings and FEC records reveal who some of the top contributors are.

National Nurses United for Patient Protection, a super PAC that supported Sanders’ 2016 run, disclosed that it donated \$300,000 to Our Revolution.

Sixteen Thirty Fund, a nonprofit group that allows donors to anonymously funnel large contributions to progressive and liberal causes, was the source of a \$100,000 contribution in 2017.

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

Trump: Travel ban expansion coming, nations aren’t yet final

By COLLEEN LONG, MATTHEW LEE and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Wednesday the U.S. would soon be imposing visa restrictions on more countries — though it’s not clear yet how many nations will be affected by his expansion of the travel ban.

Seven additional nations were listed in a draft of the proposed restrictions — but the countries were notified by Homeland Security officials that they could avoid being included if they make changes before the announcement is made, according to two administration officials who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity to discuss ongoing negotiations.

The tentative list featured Belarus, Eritrea, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Nigeria, Sudan and Tanzania, according

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to the officials and a person familiar with the draft proposal. But several countries are believed to have taken action or demonstrated good faith efforts to comply in order to avoid inclusion, the officials said. The steps include better border security, better sharing of identification information among nations and better travel document security, one official said. It's not clear how many nations will wind up on the final list.

Trump told reporters at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that he's doing it to protect the United States.

"We're adding a couple of countries to it," he said. "We have to be safe. Our country has to be safe. You see what's going on in the world. Our country has to be safe. So we have a very strong travel ban and we'll be adding a few countries to it."

Five of the countries on the draft list have either Muslim majorities or substantial Muslim minorities.

The current ban suspends immigrant and non-immigrant visas to applicants from five majority-Muslim nations: Iran, Libya, Somalia, Syria and Yemen, as well as Venezuela and North Korea.

But it allows exceptions, including for students and those who have established "significant contacts" in the U.S.. And it represents a significant softening from Trump's initial order, which had suspended travel from Iraq, Iran, Libya, Somalia, Sudan and Yemen for 90 days, blocked refugee admissions for 120 days and suspended travel from Syria.

That order was immediately blocked by the courts, prompting a months-long effort by the administration to develop clear standards and federal review processes to try to pass legal muster. Under the current system, restrictions are targeted at countries that Homeland Security says fail to share sufficient information with the U.S. or haven't taken necessary security precautions, such as issuing electronic passports with biometric information and sharing information about travelers' terror-related and criminal histories.

Iraq, Sudan and Chad had been affected by the original order, which the Supreme Court upheld in a 5-4 vote after the administration released a watered-down version intended to withstand legal scrutiny. They were not part of the pared-down version.

During his 2016 campaign, Trump had floated the idea of a ban to keep all Muslims from entering the country and he criticized his Justice Department for the subsequent changes.

Several of the people said they expected the announcement to be timed to coincide with Monday's third anniversary of the first, explosive travel ban, announced without warning on Jan. 27, 2017, just days after Trump took office. That order sparked an uproar, with massive protests across the nation and chaos at airports where passengers were detained.

Associated Press Writer Darlene Superville contributed to this report from Davos.

Will Grammy voters take the 'Old Town Road' on Sunday?

By MESFIN FEKADU and NEKESA MUMBI MOODY AP Music Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — The 2020 Grammy Awards are shaping up to be the night of the new kids, with Lizzo, Billie Eilish and Lil Nas X leading in nominations.

Those acts, who all released huge No. 1 hits in the last year, have strong chances of beating their more-seasoned competitors, from Lady Gaga to Vampire Weekend to Ariana Grande.

Or maybe they won't. If there's one thing we can predict about the Grammys, it's that the oddball act might actually win. Remember when Beck beat out Beyoncé? Or when Steely Dan won album of the year over Eminem? Or when Milli Vanilli ... OK, I'll stop.

Who knows how things will really play out Sunday, when the awards are handed out live from the Staples Center in Los Angeles. Here are some good guesses from Associated Press music writers Mesfin Fekadu and Nekesa Mumbi Moody.

ALBUM OF THE YEAR: "I,I," Bon Iver; "Norman (Expletive) Rockwell!," Lana Del Rey; "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?," Billie Eilish; "Thank U, Next," Ariana Grande; "I Used to Know Her," H.E.R.; "7," Lil Nas X; "Cuz I Love You (Deluxe)," Lizzo; "Father of the Bride," Vampire Weekend.

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FEKADU: This seriously could go so many ways, but let's start with who most likely won't win: Lil Nas X, Ariana Grande, H.E.R. and Lizzo. The other four will split a lot of the votes, eliminating Bon Iver and Vampire Weekend as possible winners. Left are Lana Del Rey, whose album was critically acclaimed and praised, and Billie Eilish, who was not just the year's brightest newcomer, but arguably the year's most successful singer. Though I want to say Eilish will win here, something in my gut is telling me that Lana, who has consistently released top notch music for the last eight years, will be celebrating her first-ever Grammy win Sunday night.

MOODY: It would be a cool moment to have the 18-year-old Billie become the youngest to ever take home a best album Grammy, and she certainly deserves it! But with arguably the night's top honor, Grammy voters tend to want their winners to have a few years under their belt before granting them the biggest win of their career. While none of the nominees here have their AARP card, Lana Del Rey has been around long enough to be the veteran. After a career that got off to a rocky start, she has become one of the more acclaimed singer-songwriters of her generation, and therefore will be victorious Sunday night.

RECORD OF THE YEAR: "Hey, Ma," Bon Iver; "Bad Guy," Billie Eilish; "7 Rings," Ariana Grande; "Hard Place," H.E.R.; "Talk," Khalid; "Old Town Road," Lil Nas X featuring Billy Ray Cyrus; "Truth Hurts," Lizzo; "Sunflower," Post Malone and Swae Lee.

MOODY: Clearly Lil Nas X had the most popular song of the year with "Old Town Road," even breaking Mariah Carey's record for the most weeks at No. 1 with his country-rap hybrid. But this isn't the American Music Awards where popularity counts, and I don't think a song that started out from TikTok is going to win voters over. "Truth Hurts" wasn't at No. 1 as long as "Old Town Road" but may have resonated far, becoming an anthem for so many women (and beyond). Lizzo is 100% getting this Grammy.

FEKADU: In the past at the Grammys, the ubiquitous, unconventional No. 1 hit doesn't take this trophy home. "Despacito," "All About That Bass" and "I Gotta Feeling" are some good examples. However, "Old Town Road" seemed to get past being the silliest song of the year, becoming an undeniably good tune that was hard to resist, which is why it topped the Hot 100 chart for 19 weeks. That's why I think Lil Nas X is going to take his horse to the old town road and ride it to the Grammys stage.

SONG OF THE YEAR (songwriter's award): "Always Remember Us This Way," Lady Gaga, Natalie Hemby, Hillary Lindsey and Lori McKenna; "Bad Guy," Billie Eilish and Finneas O'Connell; "Bring My Flowers Now," Tanya Tucker, Brandi Carlile, Phil Hanseroth and Tim Hanseroth; "Hard Place," H.E.R., Rodney Jerkins, Ruby Amanfu, Sam Ashworth and D. Arcelious Harris; "Lover," Taylor Swift; "Norman (Expletive) Rockwell," Lana Del Rey and Jack Antonoff; "Someone You Loved," Lewis Capaldi, Tom Barnes, Pere Kelleher, Benjamin Kohn and Sam Roman; "Truth Hurts," Lizzo, Ricky Reed, Tele and Jesse Saint John.

FEKADU: In my humble opinion, the top candidates here are Taylor Swift, Billie Eilish and Lewis Capaldi. Swift has some edge since she wrote "Lover" alone, but if the song had performed stronger, I would be more convinced to pick her. That leaves me with Eilish and Capaldi, who might be a bit too new to win such a huge award. Good guys do finish last because "Bad Guy" will win.

MOODY: Swift really should win this one (and should have been nominated for album of the year, too, if I can get a little Swiftie here). But as much as she deserves to win, the Grammys love a comeback story, and giving Tanya Tucker's "Bring My Flowers Now" would be that moment voters would be proud of, plus they adore Brandi Carlile. Tucker will take home the gold.

BEST NEW ARTIST: Black Pumas; Billie Eilish; Lil Nas X; Lizzo; Maggie Rogers; Rosalía; Tank and the Bangas; Yola.

MOODY: There might be eight names listed here, but it's really a contest between two: Lizzo and Billie Eilish. Both are singer-songwriters, musicians, and have paved unique paths in the journey to fame. But as brilliant and entertaining as Lizzo is, she's hardly a new artist, with at least two albums released already. My money is on the kid!! Eighteen-year-old Billie will likely take this one.

FEKADU: The truth does hurt, Lizzo: Billie wins here.

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BEST POP VOCAL ALBUM: "The Lion King: The Gift," Beyoncé; "When We All Fall Asleep, Where Do We Go?," Billie Eilish; "Thank U, Next," Ariana Grande; "No. 6 Collaborations Project," Ed Sheeran; "Lover," Taylor Swift.

FEKADU: Love Taylor, but she won't win here. Everything Beyoncé releases is a gift, but the holidays are over. And we all know how much the Grammys love to shade Ed Sheeran — oops, I'm just thinking out loud. That leaves us with Ariana Grande, who won this award last year and dominated the Billboard charts with multiple songs from "Thank U, Next." And in the other corner is newcomer Billie Eilish, who made an influential pop project in her bedroom with her brother, Finneas, in the producer role. Me thinks Eilish will edge Grande for the win, especially since the 18-year-old's album scored a nod for best engineered album (non-classical) and Finneas is up for producer of the year (non-classical).

MOODY: The fact that this is just Taylor's second nod shows Grammy voters aren't in a loving mood toward Swift this year (maybe she'll call them out on her next album). Mesfin makes some very good points about Eilish and I kind of want to believe him, but Grande had such a brilliant year and a hot tour that something tells me she'll be saying "Thank You" when the winner is revealed here.

BEST ALTERNATIVE MUSIC ALBUM: "U.F.O.F.," Big Thief; "Assume Form," James Blake; "I,I," Bon Iver; "Father of the Bride," Vampire Weekend; "Anima," Thom Yorke.

MOODY: Thom Yorke has already won this category twice as a member of Radiohead. Expect this Rock and Roll Hall of Famer to win it once again with his solo work.

FEKADU: Sike, Nekesa. Because both Bon Iver and Vampire Weekend are nominated for album of the year, I thought maybe they were the front-runners. But then I remembered how epic James Blake's album is and how he has continuously been the go-to guy in music, with Beyoncé, Kendrick Lamar, Jay-Z, Travis Scott and others requesting his services. That'll give him enough votes to take this home.

BEST R&B PERFORMANCE: "Love Again," Daniel Caesar and Brandy; "Could've Been," H.E.R. featuring Bryson Tiller; "Exactly How I Feel," Lizzo featuring Gucci Mane; "Roll Some Mo," Lucky Daye; "Come Home," Anderson .Paak featuring André 3000.

FEKADU: This is "Exactly How I Feel": NO ONE EVEN KNOWS THIS LIZZO SONG. Why is it even nominated here??? It's extremely offensive when there were hundreds of other R&B performances the academy could have recognized instead, from Jhene Aiko's "Triggered" to any release from Summer Walker to Ari Lennox. When it comes to the R&B categories, the Grammys are garbage. Anyway, I think H.E.R. — who won this award last year — will scoop it up again.

MOODY: Someone is "Triggered" by Lizzo's nomination! But Mesfin speaks the truth that there were way better options than "Exactly How I Feel." The only explanation is voters love Lizzo; still, I don't think they love her enough to give her a win. H.E.R. will take it (though I wonder if voters can pass up a chance to give Andre 3000 another Grammy).

BEST RAP SONG: "Bad Idea," YBN Cordae featuring Chance the Rapper; "Gold Roses," Rick Ross featuring Drake; "A Lot," 21 Savage featuring J. Cole; "Racks in the Middle," Nipsey Hussle featuring Roddy Ricch and Hit-Boy; "Suge," DaBaby.

MOODY: Nipsey Hussle was up for his first Grammy and lost last year, and weeks later he was shot dead. I can't see them not honoring him by giving him his first Grammy posthumously this year, as tough as this category is.

FEKADU: The Marathon Continues, with Nipsey winning here.

BEST COUNTRY DUO/GROUP PERFORMANCE: "Brand New Man," Brooks & Dunn and Luke Combs; "I Don't Remember Me (Before You)," Brothers Osborne; "Speechless," Dan + Shay; "The Daughters," Little Big Town; "Common," Maren Morris featuring Brandi Carlile.

FEKADU: Little Big Town have won this award three times, and a Maren-Brandi collab will never fail. But it's hard to resist the sweet sound of Dan + Shay, who won this award last year for "Tequila" and will do it again with "Speechless," which will be played at weddings over the next 10 years. Those boys can sang!

MOODY: It will be four for Little Big Town here! "The Daughters" wasn't their biggest hit, but the controversy surrounding it and its message about the inequities women face will make up for that.

Air bag woes force Honda, Toyota to recall 6M vehicles

By TOM KRISHER AP Auto Writer

DETROIT (AP) — Two different air bag glitches have forced Toyota and Honda to recall over 6 million vehicles worldwide, and both problems present different dangers to motorists.

The Toyota recall affects about 3.4 million vehicles globally and is being done because the air bags may not inflate in a crash. The cars have air bag control computers made by ZF-TRW that are vulnerable to electrical interference and may not signal the bags to inflate.

The problem could affect as many as 12.3 million vehicles in the U.S. made by six companies. It's possible that as many as eight people were killed when air bags didn't inflate. U.S. safety regulators are investigating.

Honda's recall covers about 2.7 million vehicles in the U.S. and Canada with Takata air bag inflators. But they're a different version than the ones blamed for 25 deaths worldwide. Still, it's possible the air bags could blow apart a metal canister and hurl shrapnel at drivers and passengers.

Both recalls were announced on Tuesday.

In a statement, Toyota said the computer may not have adequate protection against electrical noise that can happen in crashes, such as when the vehicle runs under a different vehicle. The problem can cause incomplete opening of the air bags, or they may not open at all. Devices that prepare seat belts for a collision also may not work.

In most cases Toyota dealers will install a noise filter between the air bag control computer and a wiring harness. But in some vehicles dealers will inspect the computer to determine if it needs the filter. Owners will be notified by mid-March.

The recall covers certain 2011-2019 Corollas, the 2011 to 2013 Matrix, the 2012 through 2018 Avalon and the 2013 to 2018 Avalon Hybrid in the U.S.

Toyota wouldn't say if it will offer loaner cars to people who fear their air bags might not protect them. A spokeswoman suggested that owners call its customer hotline to discuss their issue at (800) 331-4331.

In March of 2017, the U.S. National Highway Traffic Safety Administration began investigating problems with ZF-TRW air bag computers. The probe was expanded in April of last year to 12.3 million vehicles made by Toyota, Honda, Kia, Hyundai, Mitsubishi and Fiat Chrysler from the 2010 through 2019 model years.

Toyota joins Hyundai, Kia and Fiat Chrysler in issuing recalls for the problem. Four deaths that may have been caused by the problem were reported in Hyundai-Kia vehicles and three in Fiat Chrysler automobiles. The investigation was upgraded after investigators found two serious crashes involving 2018 and 2019 Toyota Corollas in which the air bags did not inflate. One person was killed. Toyota said it's cooperating in the probe, which is continuing.

NHTSA is evaluation how susceptible the air bag control units are to electrical signals as well as other factors that could stop air bags from inflating. In documents, the agency said that it didn't find any other cases of electrical interference in Hyundai, Kia or Fiat Chrysler vehicles that used the ZF-TRW system but were not recalled.

ZF-TRW said Tuesday it continues to cooperate with the NHTSA investigation.

The Honda recall covers certain Honda and Acura vehicles from the 1996 to 2003 model years. Honda vehicles included are the 1998 to 2000 Accord Coupe and Sedan, the 1996 to 2000 Civic coupe and sedan, the 1997 to 2001 CR-V, the 1998 to 2001 Odyssey and the 1997 and 1998 EV Plus.

Acura vehicles covered are the 1997 and 1998 2.2CL, the 1997 to 1999 3.0CL, the 1998 and 1999 2.3CL, the 2001 and 2002 3.2CL, the 2001 and 2002 MDX, the 1998 to 2003 3.5RL, and the 1999 to 2001 3.2TL.

The front driver's inflators being recalled are part of a recall announced by Takata in November covering

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at least 1.4 million vehicles from five automakers. Honda said it's recalling a larger number of vehicles to make sure it gets all of the bad inflators.

In this case, the inflators don't contain ammonium nitrate, which is blamed for previous Takata problems that have killed 25 people and injured hundreds worldwide.

But three of the newly recalled inflators exploded and hurled shrapnel, two in Japan and one in Texas that injured a driver, Honda said in a statement. The company said in all three cases, the inflators were exposed to excessive moisture. In Texas, the car had a salvage title with a date that coincided with a major flood, while the two cases in Japan were in salvage yards where the windows are typically left open, the company said.

"Honda believes that the risk of improper air bag deployment in its vehicles remains very low at this time, but we cannot absolutely guarantee the performance of any recalled part," the company said in a statement.

Owners will be notified in mid-March, but replacement parts won't be available for another year, Honda said.

Asked about loaner cars, a Honda spokesman said customer concerns will be addressed on a case-by-case basis. Customers can call Honda at (888) 234-2138 with questions.

This story corrects the phone number to reach Toyota.

Today in History By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Jan. 23, the 23rd day of 2020. There are 343 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Jan. 23, 1964, the 24th Amendment to the United States Constitution, eliminating the poll tax in federal elections, was ratified as South Dakota became the 38th state to endorse it.

On this date:

In 1368, China's Ming dynasty, which lasted nearly three centuries, began as Zhu Yuanzhang (zhoo whan-zhahng) was formally acclaimed emperor following the collapse of the Yuan dynasty.

In 1845, Congress decided all national elections would be held on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November.

In 1932, New York Gov. Franklin D. Roosevelt announced his candidacy for the Democratic presidential nomination.

In 1950, the Israeli Knesset approved a resolution affirming Jerusalem as the capital of Israel.

In 1962, Jackie Robinson was elected to the Baseball Hall of Fame in his first year of eligibility. Tony Bennett recorded "I Left My Heart in San Francisco" in New York for Columbia Records.

In 1968, North Korea seized the U.S. Navy intelligence ship USS Pueblo, commanded by Lloyd "Pete" Bucher, charging its crew with being on a spying mission; one sailor was killed and 82 were taken prisoner. (Cmdr. Bucher and his crew were released the following December after enduring 11 months of brutal captivity at the hands of the North Koreans.)

In 1973, President Richard Nixon announced an accord had been reached to end the Vietnam War, and would be formally signed four days later in Paris.

In 1977, the TV mini-series "Roots," based on the Alex Haley novel, began airing on ABC.

In 1989, surrealist artist Salvador Dali died in his native Figueres, Spain, at age 84.

In 1998, a judge in Fairfax, Virginia, sentenced Aimal Khan Kasi (eye-MAHL' kahn KAH'-see) to death for an assault rifle attack outside CIA headquarters in 1993 that killed two men and wounded three other people. (Kasi was executed in November 2002.)

In 2002, John Walker Lindh, a U.S.-born Taliban fighter, was returned to the United States to face criminal charges that he'd conspired to kill fellow Americans. (Lindh was sentenced to 20 years in prison after

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pleading guilty to providing support for the Taliban; he was released in May, 2019, after serving more than 17 years.)

In 2009, President Barack Obama quietly ended the Bush administration's ban on giving federal money to international groups that performed abortions or provided information on the option. New York Gov. David Paterson chose Democratic Rep. Kirsten Gillibrand (KEHR'-sten JIL'-uh-brand) to fill the Senate seat vacated by Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Ten years ago: Abby Sunderland, 16, left Marina del Rey, California, on her first attempt to become the youngest person to sail solo around the world. (The voyage ended a week and a-half later because the boat experienced power problems; Sunderland then made a second attempt, but that, too, fell short.) Rachael Flatt won her first title at the U.S. Figure Skating Championships in Spokane, Washington, finishing more than 10 points ahead of Mirai Nagasu (mih-RY' NAH'-guh-soo).

Five years ago: King Abdullah of Saudi Arabia, 90, the powerful U.S. ally who'd fought against al-Qaida and sought to modernize the ultraconservative Muslim kingdom, died in Riyadh. Chicago Cubs Hall of Famer Ernie Banks, 83, died. Roger Federer was ousted from the Australian Open in the third round, beaten by Andreas Seppi 6-4, 7-6 (5), 4-6, 7-6 (5).

One year ago: After a week-long showdown with House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, President Donald Trump said he was postponing his State of the Union address until the partial government shutdown was over. Venezuela's political crisis escalated as an opposition leader backed by the Trump administration, Juan Guaido (gwy-DOH'), declared himself interim president; President Nicolas Maduro responded by breaking off relations with the United States. (The opposition failed to oust Maduro, who retained the backing of the country's military). Democrat Pete Buttigieg (BOOT'-eh-jehj), the 37-year-old mayor of South Bend, Indiana, said he was forming an exploratory committee for a 2020 presidential bid. Police in Phoenix announced the arrest of a licensed practical nurse accused of sexually assaulting an incapacitated woman who had given birth in December at a long-term health care facility. (Nathan Sutherland is awaiting trial.)

Today's Birthdays: Actress Chita Rivera is 87. Actor-director Lou Antonio is 86. Jazz musician Gary Burton is 77. Actor Gil Gerard is 77. Sen. Thomas R. Carper, D-Del., is 73. Singer Anita Pointer is 72. Actor Richard Dean Anderson is 70. Rock musician Bill Cunningham is 70. Rock singer Robin Zander (Cheap Trick) is 67. Former Los Angeles Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (vee-yah-ry-GOH'-sah) is 67. Princess Caroline of Monaco is 63. Singer Anita Baker is 62. Reggae musician Earl Falconer (UB40) is 61. Actor Peter Mackenzie is 59. Actor Boris McGiver is 58. Actress Gail O'Grady is 57. Actress Mariska Hargitay is 56. Rhythm-and-blues singer Marc Nelson is 49. CBS Evening News anchor Norah O'Donnell is 46. Actress Tiffani Thiessen is 46. Rock musician Nick Harmer (Death Cab for Cutie) is 45. Actress Lindsey Kraft is 40. Christian rock musician Nick DePatee (formerly with Kutless) is 35. Singer-actress Rachel Crow is 22.

Thought for Today: "It's not what you are, it's what you don't become that hurts." — Oscar Levant, pianist-composer-actor (1906-1972).

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