

Groton Daily Independent

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Chicken Soup
for the Soul.

“LOVE AND
KINDNESS ARE
NEVER WASTED.
THEY ALWAYS MAKE
A DIFFERENCE.
THEY BLESS THE
ONE WHO RECEIVES
THEM, AND THEY
BLESS YOU, THE
GIVER. “

-BARBARA DE ANGELIS



Girls' Basketball Livestream

Groton Area vs. Elk Point/Jefferson at 4:15 p.m. today

Here is the link to the Madison Livestream

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCQ9DzC9IXocj8_H3rr3fGew/feed

Note Time Changes Below

It's Boys' JV Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM

 **Chamberlain
Cubs** VS 
Groton Area Tigers

2:00 p.m., Sat., Feb. 8, at Groton Area

Sponsored by
Kathy and Jerry

It's Boys' Basketball Action on GDILIVE.COM

 **Chamberlain
Cubs** VS 
Groton Area Tigers

3:15 p.m., Sat., Feb. 8, at Groton Area

Sponsored by Allied Climate Professionals
Blocker Construction, Groton Dairy Queen
Jark Real Estate, John Sieh Agency
Milbrandt Enterprises, Tyson DeHoet Trucking

Also Today

Robotics at Harrisburg High School

10 a.m.: Wrestling Varsity Tournament at Stanley County High School

Wambdi hand Tigers second NEC loss

Three players hit double figures for Groton Area Friday night but it was not enough to overcome the Tiospa Zina Wambdi in boys' basketball action in Groton, 71-67.

The Tigers controlled the tip and scored first and went on to a 24-20 first quarter lead. Groton had an eight-point lead, 36-28, midway in the second quarter but the Wambdi battled back to make it a two-point game at half time, 36-34.

Free throws allowed the Wambdi to come to within one, 41-40. Then Tiospa Zina went on an explosive run, forcing quick turnovers that turned into points and a nine-point run put the Wambdi on top, 49-43.

The Tigers returned the favor and went on a nine-point run of their own to take the lead, 52-49. Groton Area led at the end of the third quarter, 53-51.

Caleb White was an offensive weapon for the Wambdi in the fourth quarter as he made two free throws, two three-pointers and two two-pointers for 12 points and the Tigers could only make three of 13 shots in the fourth quarter for 23 percent. Tiospa Zina opened up a five-point lead, 68-63, but the Tigers closed it to two with 8.5 seconds left, 69-67. White made his two free throws and that gave the Wambdi a 71-67 win.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Allied Climate Professionals, Blocker Construction, Groton Dairy Queen, Jark Real Estate, John Sieh Agency, Milbrandt Enterprises and Tyson DeHoet Trucking.

Brodyn DeHoet had a double-double night with 22 points, 19 rebounds, three assists and two steals. Jonathan Doeden led the scoring with 24 points, six rebounds, one assist, three steals and one block. Kaden Kurtz had 10 points, two assists and one steal. Cade Guthmiller had seven points, six rebounds, two assists and two steals. Isaac Smith finished with three points and Tristan Traphagen had four rebounds and one assist.

Groton Area made 17 of 36 two-pointers for 47 percent, was six of 17 in three-pointers for 35 percent, was 15 of 26 from the line for 58 percent off of Tiospa Zina's 20 team fouls, the Tigers had 21 turnovers, 39 rebounds, nine assists, eight steals and one blocked shot.

Caleb White led the Wambdi with 30 points which included six of eight free throws and four three-pointers, Jamison Pratt scored his 1000th high school career point with 5:14 left in the first quarter and finished the night with 12 points. Johnny German had 10 points while Courage Brown had eight, Payton Halseide seven and Jasiah Redbear had four points.

Tiospa Zina made 26 of 47 shots for 55 percent, was 12 of 20 from the line for 60 percent and had 11 turnovers.

Groton Area won the junior varsity game, 40-34. That game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by the Jungle Lanes & Lounge. Jayden Zak led the Tigers with 12 points followed by Chandler Larson with nine, Lane Tietz eight, Isaac Smith four, Wyatt Hearnen, Kannon Coats and Tate Larson each had two and Jackson Cogley had one point. Caleb Barse led the Wambdi with 12 points.

Groton Area won the C game, 49-23. That game was also broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Weber Landscaping. Wyatt Hearnen led the Tigers with 10 points followed by Cole Simon and Tate Larson with eight apiece, Cade Larson had six, Jackson Bahr five, Tristan Traphagen and Jackson Cogley each had four and Jacob Zak and Steve Paulson each had two points. Reondre Greely led the Wambdi with eight points.

Three hit double figures as Lady Tigers beat Wambdi

Groton Area's Lady Tigers defeated Tiospa Zina in a pair of games on Thursday at Agency Village. The junior varsity won their game, 34-16 and the varsity won their game, 54-41.

There were three lead changes in the first quarter before the Tigers took an 8-6 lead at the break. There were three more lead changes in the second quarter and there was one tie as the Wambdi led at half time, 20-16.

Groton Area had an 11-point run that spanned the second and third quarters to take a 25-20 lead early in the third quarter. The Tigers had another 11-point run that spanned the third and fourth quarters to take a 39-24 lead. Groton Area led at the end of the third quarter, 34-24 and went on to win, 54-41.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Locke Electric and the South Dakota Army National Guard.

Gracie Traphagen led the Tigers with 14 points, nine rebounds and one steal. Allyssa Locke had 13 points, nine rebounds, six assists and two steals. Brooke Gengerke had 12 points, six rebounds, one assist and two steals. Alyssa Thaler had six points, two rebounds, three assists and four steals. Kaycie Hawkins had five points and one rebound. Maddie Bjerke had four points and one rebound. Madeline Flihs had seven rebounds and three assists. Trista Keith had four rebounds and two assists and Shallyn Foertsch had two rebounds.

Groton Area made 17 of 42 two-pointers for 40 percent, three of 15 three-pointers for 20 percent, was 11 of 17 from the line for 65 percent off of Tiospa Zina's 18 team fouls, the Tigers had 41 rebounds, 17 turnovers, 15 assists, nine steals and 16 team fouls.

Omariya Bernard led the Wambdi with 17 points followed by Kennadee Bissonette with seven, Zaylise Rainbow six, Brendalyn Barse five, Maria Gallardo three and Grace Gill added two points.

The Wambdi made 13 of 42 field goals for 31 percent and had 11 turnovers.

Allyssa Locke had a perfect night from the free throw line as she made five of five in both the varsity and the junior varsity game. She led the scoring in the junior varsity game with seven points while Trista Keith had six, Maddie Bjerke had five, Alyssa Thaler five, Marlee Tollifson three, Lydia Meier and Madeline Flihs each had two points and Sydney Leight and Emma Schinkel each had one point.

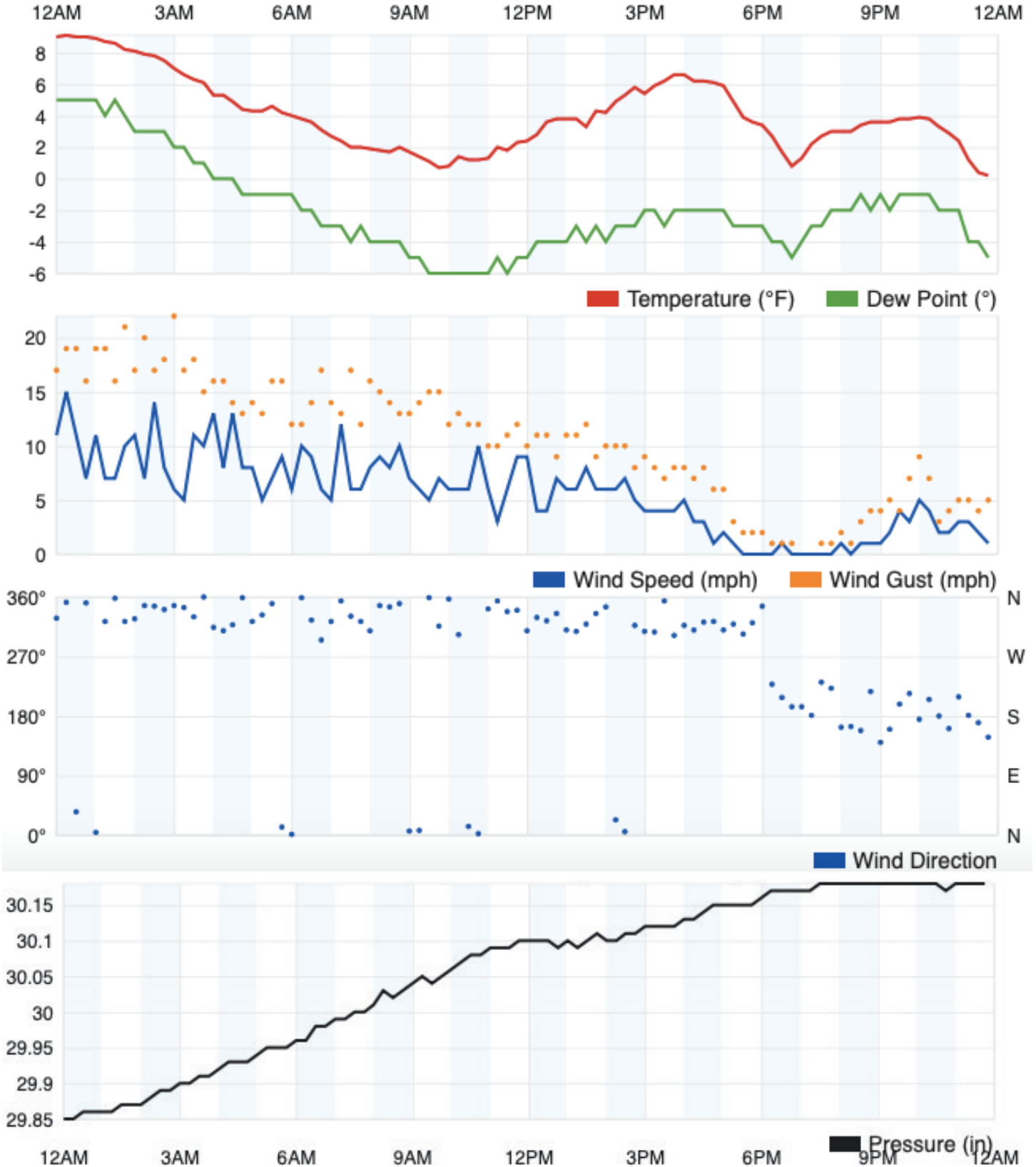
Between the two teams in the fourth quarter, 19 free throws were attempted with only one being made. Alexia Quinn led the Wambdi with 10 points.

The game was broadcast live on GDILIVE.COM, sponsored by Olson Development.

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Sunday

Sunday
Night

Monday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 23 °F



Snow and
Blustery

Low: 12 °F



Chance Snow
then Mostly
Sunny

High: 20 °F



Mostly Clear

Low: 13 °F



Partly Sunny

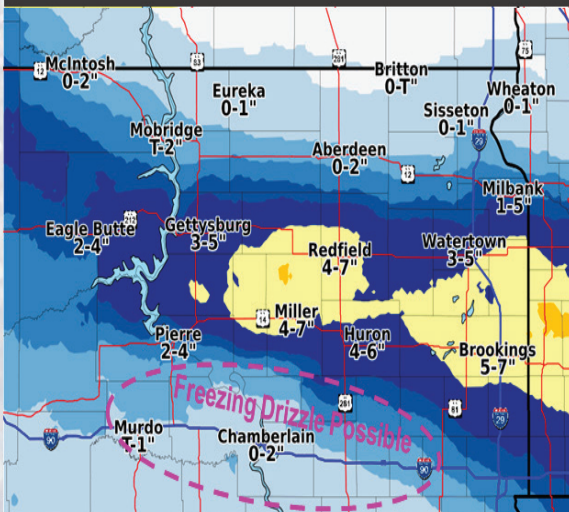
High: 32 °F

Moderate to Heavy Snow Sat PM – Sun AM

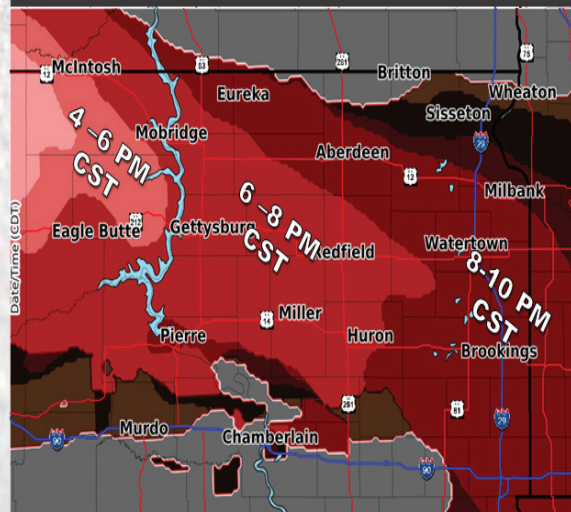


- A swath of 2 to 6 inches of snow, with locally higher amounts, appears likely across central and east central South Dakota mainly this evening into Sunday morning.
- Breezy north winds Sunday morning and afternoon will lead to patchy blowing snow.
- **Travel will be impacted.** Keep an eye on the forecast, plan ahead, drive to conditions!

Forecast Snowfall From Noon Sat – Noon Sun



Forecast Begin Time of Moderate to Heavy Snow



Visit www.weather.gov/abr for a detailed local forecast

Updated: 2/8/2020 5:23 AM CT

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

An area of snow, heavy at times, will move into the area this afternoon and then exit Sunday morning. The heaviest snow will take place from 6pm through 6am, most likely across central and east central South Dakota. Breezy conditions will mean less than ideal travel through the afternoon on Sunday as well.

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Today in Weather History

February 8, 2000: A very warm airmass was over central and northeast South Dakota where record highs were set in Aberdeen, Pierre, and Sisseton. Aberdeen rose to 62 degrees, Sisseton rose to 53 degrees, and Pierre rose to a warm 69 degrees.

1835 - A severe cold wave gripped the southeastern U.S. The mercury dipped to 8 above at Jacksonville FL, and to zero at Savannah GA. Orange trees were killed to the roots. (David Ludlum)

1936 - The temperature at Denver CO plunged to a record 30 degrees below zero. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1956: From February 1-8, heavy snow fell over the Panhandle of Texas. Snowfall amounts include 43 inches in Vega, 24 inches in Hereford, and 14 inches in Amarillo. This storm caused 23 deaths and numerous injuries. It snowed continuously for 92 hours in some locations.

1968: The highest 1-day snow at the Savannah Airport in South Carolina occurs on this date when 3.6 inches of snow fell.

1985 - Blue Canyon, CA, set a 24-hour February snowfall record by receiving 42 inches of snow from February 7th-8th.

1987 - A powerful storm produced blizzard conditions in the Great Lakes Region. Winds gusted to 86 mph at Janesville WI and Cleveland OH received 12 inches of snow. North winds of 50 to 70 mph raised the water level of southern Lake Michigan two feet, and produced waves 12 to 18 feet high, causing seven million dollars damage along the Chicago area shoreline. It was the most damage caused by shoreline flooding and erosion in the history of the city of Chicago. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Arctic air invaded the north central U.S. Hibbing MN reported a morning low of 30 degrees below zero. (The National Weather Summary)

1989: Mammoth traffic jams in Los Angeles area as freak snow struck California. Snow was reported from the beaches of Malibu to the desert around Palm Springs.

1989 - A winter storm over California produced snow from the beaches of Malibu to the desert canyons around Palm Springs, and the snow created mammoth traffic jams in the Los Angeles Basin. Sixteen cities in the western U.S. reported record low temperatures for the date. Marysville CA reported an all-time record low reading of 21 degrees above zero. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Unseasonably mild weather prevailed across the south central and eastern U.S. Twenty-two cities, including five in Michigan, reported record high temperatures for the date. The afternoon high of 53 degrees at Flint MI surpassed their previous record by ten degrees, and the high of 66 degrees at Burlington IA exceeded their old record by eight degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2009 - Snow falls at levels above elevations of 11,000 feet on the Big Island's Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea in Hawaii. The Weather Doctor

2013: A nor'easter produced heavy snowfall over the New England states. Total snowfall in Boston, Massachusetts, reached 24.9 inches, the fifth-highest total ever recorded in the city. New York City officially recorded 11.4 inches of snow at Central Park, and Portland, Maine, set a record of 31.9 inches. Hamden, Connecticut recorded the highest snowfall of the storm at 40 inches. Many surrounding cities picked up at least 1 foot. In addition to the significant snowfall totals, hurricane-force wind gusts were recorded, reaching 102 mph in Nova Scotia, 89 mph at Mount Desert Rock, Maine, and 84 mph off the coast of Cuthunk, Massachusetts. Boston experienced a storm surge of 4.2 ft. The storm affected Atlantic Canada after hitting the Northeastern United States.

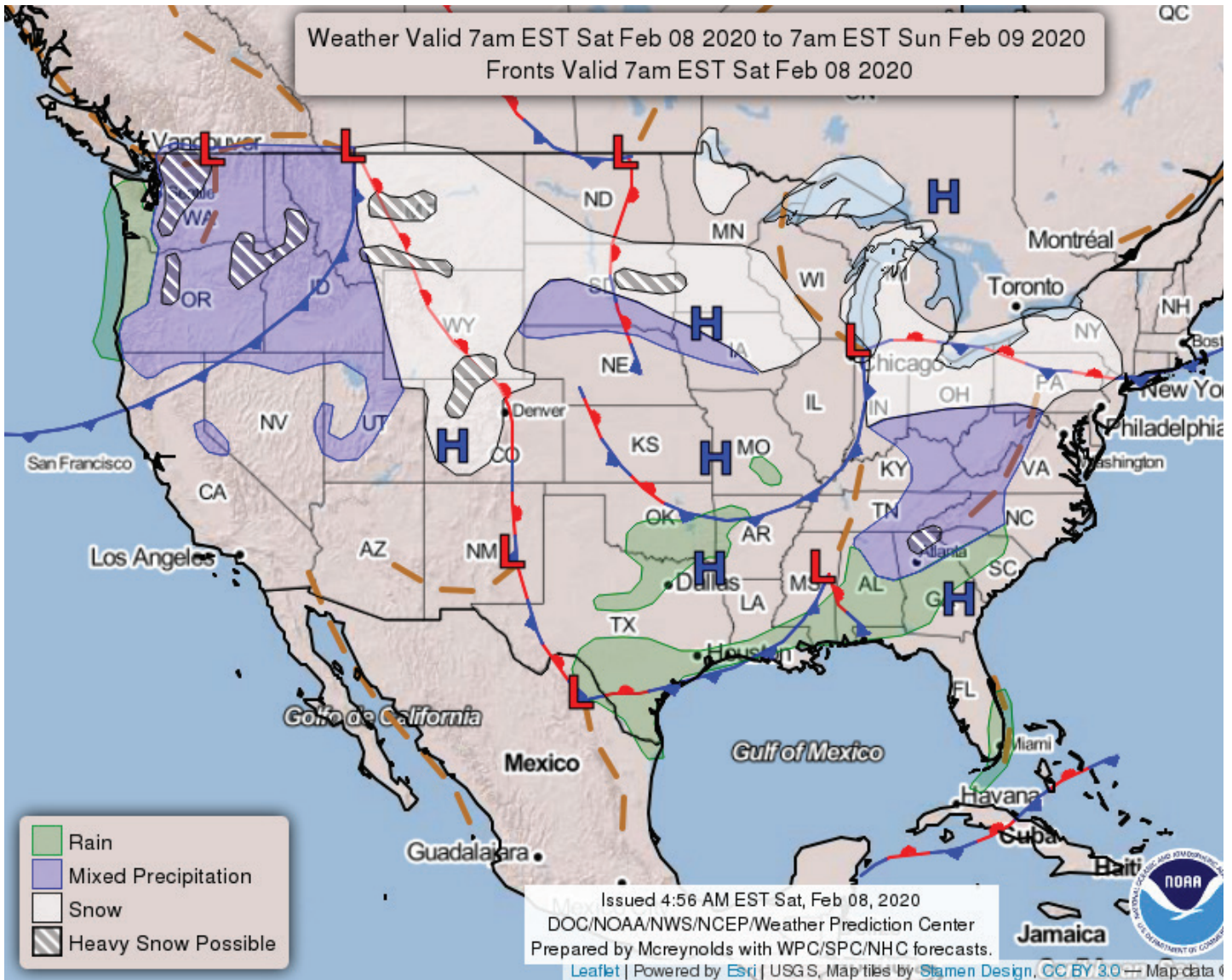
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 9 °F at 12:00 AM
Low Temp: 0 °F at 11:48 PM
Wind: 22 mph at 2:57 AM
Snow

Record High: 62° in 2000
Record Low: -46° in 1895
Average High: 26°F
Average Low: 5°F
Average Precip in Feb.: 0.11
Precip to date in Feb.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 0.58
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 5:50 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:45 a.m.



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"GRACE"

In 1918 a salesman traveling door to door selling "foot scrapers" stopped at the door of Eric Enstrom, a Minnesota photographer. He looked into the eyes of the salesman and noticed their kindness and was so impressed by the gentleness of the man that he invited him in to eat.

"Come in," said Enstrom, "I'm ready to sit down to dinner. Join me." As he walked to the table, an idea struck the photographer. He asked, "Will you please pose for a picture for me?"

"Yes," answered the salesman and sat down at the table. There was a pair of glasses on a Bible, a bowl of food and a piece of bread. "Would you please bow your head," and as he did, "the peddler," without giving thought to what he was doing, immediately began to thank God for what he had been given.

The photograph was taken in 1918 during World War I. Enstrom said he wanted to take the picture to remind people that even though they had to do without many things, they still had much to be thankful for. Enstrom wrote: "Though poor in earthly goods, this man has more of life's greatest treasures than most." He called the picture Grace.

Prayer: Help us, Father, to be grateful for all that we have. May we understand and realize that whatever we have, much or little, is because of Your goodness and grace. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: 1 Thessalonians 5:18 Give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

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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)

News from the Associated Press

Rights of accused drive efforts of ND defense attorneys

By TRAVIS SVIHOVEC The Bismarck Tribune

BISMARCK, N.D. (AP) — They get handed cases on short notice. They don't have the option of refusing them. They don't get to pick their clients. And people sometimes wonder how they can do what they do, especially when the court of public opinion can muster strong emotions.

But of all the obstacles a defense attorney can face, the biggest might be that of perception.

"The idea that we're 'just public defenders' and not going to try our hardest, sometimes that exists," said Travis Finck, deputy director of the North Dakota Commission on Legal Counsel for Indigents.

A person accused of a crime has the right to an attorney but may not be able to afford one. That's when a public defender is appointed.

Public defenders represented defendants in about two-thirds of the felony cases and in about one-fourth of all criminal cases in North Dakota last year, The Bismarck Tribune reported. The state's caseload has been somewhat level in the last couple of years, but there were 2,158 more felony filings last year than in 2012, according to data from the North Dakota court system. And it's getting harder to find attorneys to handle cases, according to Finck.

"It's just more difficult to find people to take cases because of what we pay versus what they can make in private practice," he said.

Providing those services has been eye-opening for Josh Weatherspoon, of Bismarck, who joined the North Dakota Bar in the fall of 2018. He does contract defense work and practices family law, and like many law school students envisioned himself becoming a prosecutor. Starting his career as a defense attorney has been beneficial for him and something he's "more than happy to do," he said.

"I feel like we have to ensure (defendants') constitutional rights are being attended to," he said.

He sees the defense attorney's role being less about getting an acquittal and more about getting the defendant the best deal possible. That sometimes means putting personal feelings aside and presenting a client with some hard truths. For example, a client who represents himself or herself -- especially one with substance abuse issues -- can be tempted to eye the short-term goal of getting out of jail. To accomplish that, they might agree to two years on probation.

"They're never going to succeed," Weatherspoon said. "They won't check in with their probation officer. They're not responsible."

A better solution, he said, might be a 60-day jail sentence that includes treatment.

Other times, though, it's better if a person isn't in jail. He or she may have landed there because of a bad day, Weatherspoon said. A person in custody isn't home with children and runs the risk of losing a job. That's when an attorney can help address pretrial issues that might keep the person out of jail. Bond issues can be "a crapshoot" from case to case and judge to judge, he said.

"I didn't think I'd deal with that every single week," he said. "I've had people sit on \$100 because they can't pay it."

Seeing both sides

One attorney who sees both sides of the aisle is Grant Walker.

He's worked as a prosecutor in South Dakota, as a special assistant U.S. attorney, and as chief prosecutor on the Standing Rock Reservation. He served a term as state's attorney in Walworth County, South Dakota, and now holds that position in Grant County. But he's also in private practice in Mandan and is under a half-time contract in the South Central Judicial District -- 150 cases per year -- as a public defender.

His philosophy of crime prevention has changed since his first job as a prosecutor. He was tough, seeking jail time for offenders "to clean up crime and never have crime in the community," Walker said.

"That's never the way," he said. "Rehab is a smarter approach."

Some offenders, maybe 25%, he said, deserve to spend time behind bars. But a first-time DUI offender,

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for example, could lose his or her job, home and family if the case isn't handled properly. Prosecutors often don't get to see that side of a case, Walker said.

"As a defense attorney, you get the opportunity to tell that story," he said.

He once took up the cause of a young man who had represented himself in a misdemeanor case for failing to produce proof that he had car insurance, even though he had insurance. The man's family counted on him to run errands and give his siblings a ride to school every day. They met with Walker after learning the boy would lose his license.

"The mom was in tears; the kid thinks his life is in ruins," Walker said. He contacted the state's attorney in that county, who was willing to work with him on a solution.

"Without an attorney, that family would have been traumatized by the repercussions," he said.

Pitfalls and perceptions

Representing one's self is similar in some ways to a person attempting his or her own plumbing, electrical or accounting work, according to South Central District Judge John Grinsteiner.

If a person doesn't have the skills, "important things may be missed, and there are pitfalls to any process," he said.

Grinsteiner sees another perception — more outside the courtroom than inside — that some defendants don't deserve any representation. Though he notices it more in high-profile cases, attorneys like Walker and Weatherspoon can run into it as they handle their day-to-day caseload. For Weatherspoon, it came up when he defended a person accused of robbery. The robbery occurred in a business he and friends frequented, but he couldn't let that be a detriment to a solid defense.

"They have rights too, like you, me, mom and dad," he said.

That's another perception — that an allegation is the same as a conviction — that Finck said defense attorneys have to just roll with.

"It's not my job to judge. Everyone is entitled to their day in court," he said. "I'm still a firm believer that constitutional rights mean something."

It's not a glamorous job and it's not for everyone, Finck said. But it's an opportunity to help make a positive change in someone's life, to lend an ear, find a solution.

"Victory for a public defender is measured so much differently because we don't get to pick our cases," he said.

Music mentor Kempf has played at Zion Lutheran for 50 years

By **KELDA J.L. PHARRIS** Aberdeen American News

ABERDEEN, S.D. (AP) — It's Jan. 28 and rich, breathy tones fill Zion Lutheran Church's sanctuary, spilling over into every other office and room.

Sonya Kempf dons her newest pair of organ shoes, setting aside her red boots and scooching up to the church's organ, just as she has since Dec. 10, 1969. It was here that she earned her first paycheck as a musician.

Kempf's feet and fingers push air through the organ's mechanisms — that means three rows of piano-like keys and a bit of a soft-shoe routine on the pedals, which work just like the keys. She's continued performing at regular services, funerals, weddings and other church events for more than 50 years now. She'll be celebrated at an open house Feb. 15 from 2 to 4 p.m. at the church.

"It's addicting once you get used to (an) organ like that," Kempf told the Aberdeen American News.

She's less confident of her piano playing but that's a likely exaggeration of imperceptible flaws to the appreciative listener. She piles accolades on her 30-plus year partner in music at the church, Sue Gates. Gates is a piano phenom, as Kempf describes her, and a very dear friend.

Kempf grew up in Leola and was very active in church. She took to the organ organically, somewhere around the sixth grade, first teaching herself, then getting guidance from her mother and a couple aunts who played. Pretty much every girl in her family wound on those keys and pedals, breathing life into a musical machine with origins dating back to the 3rd century.

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She furthered her music education at Northern State University. And then began teaching piano and organ. In the prime of her career she was teaching upwards of 75 lessons a week, and mornings generally got going around 6:30 a.m. It would be a couple decades before she'd get to eat dinner with her husband at a reasonable time again. She eventually backed off lessons and began her Kindermusik program. It focuses on getting kids and their parents involved in the communication of music and sound.

"I like the younger kids — soft, cuddly, squishy kids absorbing everything," she said, finishing with, "They aren't mouthy yet."

That continued until about 2017 when she sold Kindermusik to one of her former pupils, Emily Sternhagen.

If you've never met Kempf, it's likely you've heard her. Aberdeen is a small community with just a few organists. That means Kempf has coaxed music from most of the city's organs, filling in for others here and there through the years. There's only one organ she knows of that she hasn't played.

"At Presentation Convent, the pipe organ they have. I've never played that one little organ," she said.

Her cheerful demeanor brightens even more at a recollected surprise — for a long time she didn't know it existed. She still finds her expertise challenged every now and then. Her most intense piece was just a few weeks ago. She had to fill in for a funeral at Bethlehem Lutheran Church and a seemingly standard piece — "On Eagle's Wings" — had been selected.

"Barb Papke was singing 'On Eagle's Wings,' and she gives me this piece with five flats — D-flat key. I was, like, blown away. It had a lot of accidentals. It was 1:15 (p.m.), the funeral was at 2. I kept thinking, 'OK, I'm going to pray a lot, just try to think of chords and stuff. All of the sudden I remember, 'Oh, yeah, I'm in front of all the people here, too.'"

Kempf pulled it off, playing a little softer and asking the singer to keep it slow.

"I don't remember any of it. I've never been so freaked out. I said, 'This baby is not easy,'" Kempf said.

If the memory of playing isn't there, the adrenaline rush is still crystal clear. She'd rather keep her challenges to adding more classical pieces to her repertoire, furthering her skills on the piano and polishing the piano/organ duets she and Gates perform, much to parishioners' delight.

Through the years Kempf has come to the conclusion that her soft spots are for hymns and little kids. She loves the tradition of hymns, especially ones the congregation is familiar with. Then she gets to flex her talents and improvise a bit, pulling buttons, switching octaves or pitch and chord. Every fifth Sunday in a month — when they happen — the congregants get to pick the hymns.

As for children, an extension of their openness is also getting to know their parents and seeing them develop new ways to connect with their progeny.

At 3:15 p.m., like clockwork, Kempf's granddaughters Zoe, 12, and Ella, 10, arrive after school. It's Kempf's turn to pass along her family's quintessential mothers' skill. The girls find their organ shoes — pulling them on over mismatched socks. Grandma chuckles and they set about a lesson.

Each time Kempf says she's cut back, she mentions another student, another project, another service. Each is mentioned with a sincere delight. The seven organists she's trained performed a concert at Zion Lutheran in January. Some traveled from as far as Pierre and Onaka. They were there to celebrate their benefits through the Esther Schumacher Scholarship Program for Organists. The fund was established in February 2005 after the Long Lake resident's death. Schumacher is one of the aunts who taught Kempf, and she gets to teach those beneficiaries about one of her first mentors — the musician's path, come full circle.

Sculptor's work displayed at stock show leads to commission

By KENT BUSH Rapid City Journal

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Both of Fritz Hoppe's parents were artists, so it is no surprise that he developed an interest in art.

Hoppe graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln with a business degree. But he said art has always been a passion.

"I have been around art and artists since I was a little kid," Hoppe said. He sold his first cast piece when

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he was 19.

He said cast pieces appeal to him in many ways.

"These pieces are all done by hand right here in America," Hoppe told the Rapid City Journal. "From making the molds, to pouring the wax, to casting the bronze, sometimes it is more science than art."

But nothing in business school or his artistic training could have prepared him for where a booth at the Black Hills Stock Show & Rodeo would take him.

At the 2019 show, Hoppe was approached by an Aberdeen family about making an exact cast replica of one of their Angus bulls. It will be Hoppe's biggest piece yet.

"I was commissioned at last year's show to do an Angus bull bust," Hoppe said. "It is in clay now and should be ready this summer."

Art intersected with real life when he worked on that project, making a bust of a John Kippley Angus Bull.

"I love creating art from memory," Hoppe said. "But for this piece, I was standing next to the bull making precise measurements. At one point I even had to hold his nose to get it right."

You can see the work in clay at his booth at this year's show in the Rushmore Plaza Civic Center. He has many more pieces on display as well.

His favorite is a cast of a Native American hunter chasing a bison full speed on horseback.

"A lot of people say that it is my best work," he said.

After the show, Hoppe will focus on his work as he tries to secure a spot on the Sioux Falls Sculpture Walk .

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press

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

Mega Millions

09-14-27-36-52, Mega Ball: 4, Megaplier: 3

(nine, fourteen, twenty-seven, thirty-six, fifty-two; Mega Ball: four; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$187 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$60 million

Friday's Scores

By The Associated Press

BOYS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 47, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 36

Bon Homme 57, Avon 39

Bridgewater-Emery 83, Gayville-Volin 61

Britton-Hecla 54, Waverly-South Shore 49

Chamberlain 76, Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 56

Custer 56, Hot Springs 23

Ethan 71, Kimball/White Lake 36

Hamlin 58, Webster 48

Huron 67, Spearfish 44

Ipswich 66, Miller 50

Kadoka Area 60, Wall 51

Lennox 66, Sioux City, North, Iowa 53

Marty Indian 73, Tripp-Delmont/Armour 61

McCook Central/Montrose 66, Garretson 35

Milbank 77, Redfield 62

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Moorcroft, Wyo. 54, Edgemont 41
Oelrichs 60, Crazy Horse 52
Parkston 89, Gregory 82
Rapid City Stevens 69, Rapid City Central 51
Sisseton 67, Aberdeen Roncalli 45
Sully Buttes 64, Potter County 57, OT
Sunshine Bible Academy 49, Hitchcock-Tulare 42
Viborg-Hurley 59, Freeman Academy/Marion 48
Watertown 54, Brookings 49
Waubay/Summit 80, Centerville 54
White River 110, Bennett County 28
Winner 77, Tri-Valley 63
Little Moreau Conference Tournament=
Consolation Semifinal=
McIntosh 79, Dupree 41
Tiospaye Topa 77, Bison 29
Semifinal=
Faith 75, Harding County 69
Lemmon 57, Timber Lake 40

GIRLS BASKETBALL

Aberdeen Central 46, Sioux Falls Roosevelt 38
Andes Central/Dakota Christian 58, Colome 28
Arlington 42, Lake Preston 33
Belle Fourche 44, Douglas 31
Beresford 56, Alcester-Hudson 26
Bridgewater-Emery 57, Gayville-Volin 23
Castlewood 79, Deuel 41
Chadron, Neb. 61, Rapid City Christian 39
Colman-Egan 55, Deubrook 29
Custer 31, Hot Springs 22
DeSmet 65, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 18
Dell Rapids St. Mary 47, Centerville 40
Estelline/Hendricks 45, Elkton-Lake Benton 26
Ethan 48, Kimball/White Lake 41
Flandreau 66, Sioux Valley 41
Florence/Henry 61, Tri-State, N.D. 42
Hitchcock-Tulare 60, Sunshine Bible Academy 8
Huron 59, Spearfish 48
Ipswich 48, Miller 43
Mitchell 47, Sturgis Brown 33
Moorcroft, Wyo. 63, Edgemont 42
Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 39, Chamberlain 29
Oelrichs 49, Crazy Horse 48
Parkston 51, Gregory 25
Red Cloud 86, St. Francis Indian 31
Sioux Falls O'Gorman 66, Harrisburg 58
Sully Buttes 64, Potter County 57, OT
Tea Area 80, Hanson 68
Tripp-Delmont/Armour 47, Marty Indian 35

Viborg-Hurley 67, Freeman Academy/Marion 13
Wall 49, Kadoka Area 37
West Central 64, Madison 46
Wilmot 52, Great Plains Lutheran 41
Winner 54, St. Thomas More 40

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

Lawmakers will weigh gender-change treatment ban for kids

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The South Dakota Legislature will address several closely-watched issues this week, starting with a ban on gender-change treatments for children under 16.

GENDER-CHANGE TREATMENT BILL

A Senate committee is scheduled to consider the bill that would make it illegal for physicians to administer puberty blockers, hormone therapy or surgeries to children under 16 who want to change their gender. The bill passed the House in January, but its sponsor said it will be more difficult to convince the Senate to approve the proposal.

LGBT groups are planning to protest at the Capitol on Monday morning during the committee meeting. They say the bill targets transgender children.

UPDATED BUDGET PROJECTIONS

The Legislature will receive updated information on how much money they can expect in the state budget. Lawmakers have said they want to find a way to fund pay increases for teachers, state employees and service providers.

Gov. Kristi Noem has told lawmakers she wants them figure out the pay increases. But the budget is tight. The state will lose about \$20 million in revenue after a tax on internet service expires.

HEMP

The House is set to vote on a bill that would legalize industrial hemp in the state. A House committee approved the proposal last week, marking progress on an issue that split Noem and legislators last year.

Funding for the issue may still prove to be a sticking point. The governor wants legislators to find \$3.5 million to start up and run the program.

GOP-dominated House bars tribal IDs for voter registration

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Democrats called foul on Friday after the Republican-dominated House shot down their efforts to allow Native Americans use their tribal IDs to register to vote.

The defeat Thursday evening prompted several Democrats to level accusations of voter suppression. Republicans say their resistance is all about keeping voter registration secure.

"The way our voting system is set up does disenfranchise in particular Native American voters," said Rep. Ryan Cwach, a Yankton Democrat.

In the 2018 general election, tribal communities reported some of the lowest voter turnout figures in the state. Native Americans make up 9% of the state's total population.

On Thursday, the House considered an amendment to a voter registration bill that would have allowed tribal IDs to be used for voter registration, alongside state drivers' and nondrivers' licenses and social security numbers. Republicans defeated the measure, arguing that the secretary of state could not verify the information on the IDs, which are issued by the tribes. They were also concerned that not every tribal ID provides an address, which could allow people who live outside the state to vote in South Dakota elections.

Rep. Shawn Bordeaux, a Mission Democrat who is a member of the Rosebud Sioux Tribe, said tribes in the state have improved the quality of their IDs in recent years. They now include addresses, holographics and other security measures. They are recognized by federal agencies and can be used to take flights.

Standards for IDs and membership vary from tribe to tribe, said Rep. Tamara St. John, a Sisseton Re-

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publican who is a member of the Sisseton-Wahpeton Tribe. She opposed the amendment but called for a measure similar to Washington's Native American Voting Rights Act that would comprehensively address the issue.

Cwach said state laws don't recognize the needs of Native Americans and unintentionally hamper voting. He pointed to people who move frequently and may not receive mailed notifications on their voter status.

Secretary of State Steve Barnett is asking the Legislature to pass a proposal this year to allow people to register to vote online. The House passed that bill on Thursday, but several Republicans said they were worried about fraudulent voter registrations.

A Senate committee will consider a bill on Tuesday that would make tribal IDs valid for banking and other business transactions.

Lawmakers: Social issues grabbing 'lots of air' this session

By **STEPHEN GROVES** Associated Press

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — There's one thing Republicans and Democrats in South Dakota agree on this legislative session: Social issues are getting a lot of attention.

The Republican-dominated Legislature has seen a string of bills favored by social conservatives in the first three weeks of the legislative session, including proposals to ban gender-change medical treatments for children under 16 as well as commercial surrogacy agents, and that would stop the state from recognizing gay marriage.

Republicans hold every state-wide office and a super-majority in the Legislature. State laws mandate that every bill gets a hearing.

"It's unfortunate that it seems like the social issues just do grab a lot of air," said House Majority Leader Lee Qualm, a Platte Republican. "It's just the nature of the subject."

But hot-topic issues can wear legislators out and take energy from other issues that are important but less controversial, said Qualm, who has introduced a bill that would stop schools and colleges from requiring students to get vaccinations. Some of the bills this session may represent a "backlash" to the liberal leanings of popular culture, he said.

House Minority Leader Jamie Smith, a Sioux Falls Democrat, said upcoming state elections could be compelling some legislators to propose bills that touch on social issues that are important to their constituents.

Democrats would prefer to focus on expanding health care, preschool education and mental health services in the state, he said.

"There are so many things that we could be talking about and these are the things that are sucking up our time," Smith said.

Qualm pointed to other issues Republicans are working on such as proposals to legalize industrial hemp and create online voter registration.

Democrats have expressed frustration with the speed at which the bills are passing through the Legislature. Several addressing social issues have been passed by the House and are being considered by the Senate. The bill to ban gender-change treatments for children will be considered by a Senate committee Monday morning.

Sen. Craig Kennedy, a Yankton Democrat, said national groups see the state as a "test state" for new proposals that get national attention. Conservative lawmakers in other states have introduced similar proposals in the wake of South Dakota's bill that addresses gender-change treatments for children.

Smith said the proposals threaten Gov. Kristi Noem's initiative to attract new business to the state. He said they send a message that South Dakota is not welcoming.

The Republican governor has said she has "concerns" with the bill banning gender-change treatments for kids, but has not indicated if she will support or oppose it.

Senate Assistance Majority Leader Jim Bolin, a Canton Republican, said the social issues may distract from other topics, but that he was proud of the "open process" in the Legislature. Republicans and Democrats both have a chance to get their issues heard before a committee.

No bond for man accused of fatal hit-run in Rapid City

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — A man accused in a hit-and-run crash that killed a 1-year-old child in Rapid City has been ordered held without bond.

Prosecutors say George Matousek was the driver who caused the October 2018 crash that killed Mack-ayla Dillion.

KOTA-TV reports Matousek finally made his first court appearance Thursday when Seventh Circuit Magistrate Judge Marya Tellinghuisen ordered Matousek held without bond.

After a long investigation, Matousek was finally arrested in Washington state late last year. He was extradited back to South Dakota and booked into the Pennington County Jail Wednesday.

Matousek is charged with second-degree manslaughter, hit and run with injury and driving with a suspended license.

Police say Matousek was speeding in a Pontiac Bonneville "at an extremely high rate of speed" before hitting two cars at a Rapid City intersection. Dillon died after she and two adults in one of the vehicles were taken to the hospital with life-threatening injuries.

Man given 38 years for fatal Sioux Falls park shooting

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The man who fired fatal gunshots at a wedding celebration in a Sioux Falls park has been sentenced to 38 years in prison.

Abraham Garnawu Darsaw earlier pleaded guilty to manslaughter in the death of 25-year-old Moses Cole, who was shot at Falls Park in August 2018. Another man also shot in an altercation at the park, 23-year-old Bwengbugal Matembera, survived his injuries.

Prosecutors say an argument broke out and Darsaw pulled out a gun and shot into a group of people. Police say the argument was part of an ongoing dispute.

Judge Natalie Damgaard also gave Darsaw an additional 37 years suspended Thursday.

Damgaard told Darsaw she didn't think he went to that party with the intention to harm anyone, but said he shouldn't have had a gun or been around a group that was a "bad influence."

The Argus Leader says Darsaw apologized to Cole's family when given the chance to address the court.

Payback: Trump ousts officials who testified on impeachment

By **DEB RIECHMANN, COLLEEN LONG and NANCY BENAC Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Exacting swift punishment against those who crossed him, an emboldened President Donald Trump ousted two government officials who had delivered damaging testimony against him during his impeachment hearings. The president took retribution just two days after his acquittal by the Senate.

First came news Friday that Trump had ousted Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, the decorated soldier and national security aide who played a central role in the Democrats' impeachment case. Vindman's lawyer said his client was escorted out of the White House complex Friday, told to leave in retaliation for "telling the truth."

"The truth has cost Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman his job, his career, and his privacy," attorney David Pressman said in a statement. Vindman's twin brother, Lt. Col. Yevgeny Vindman, also was asked to leave his job as a White House lawyer on Friday, the Army said in a statement. Both men were reassigned to the Army.

Next came word that Gordon Sondland, Trump's ambassador to the European Union, also was out.

"I was advised today that the President intends to recall me effective immediately as United States Ambassador to the European Union," Sondland said in a statement.

The White House had not been coy about whether Trump would retaliate against those he viewed as foes in the impeachment drama. White House press secretary Stephanie Grisham said Thursday that Trump was glad it was over and "maybe people should pay for that."

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House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said in a statement that Vindman's ouster was "a clear and brazen act of retaliation that showcases the President's fear of the truth. The President's vindictiveness is precisely what led Republican Senators to be accomplices to his cover-up."

Rep. Jackie Speier, D-Calif., called it "the Friday Night Massacre," likening the situation to President Richard Nixon's so-called Saturday night massacre, when top Justice Department officials resigned after refusing to do his bidding by firing a special prosecutor investigating the Watergate scandal. (The prosecutor himself was fired anyway.)

Speier added in her tweet, "I'm sure Trump is fuming that he can't fire Pelosi."

Senate Republicans, who just two days prior acquitted Trump of charges he abused his office, were silent Friday evening. Many of them had reacted with indignation during the Senate trial when Democratic Rep. Adam Schiff, the lead prosecutor, suggested Trump would be out for revenge against the lawmakers who crossed him during impeachment.

Since his acquittal, Trump has held nothing back in lashing out at his critics, including Sen. Mitt Romney of Utah, the only Republican to vote against him. On Friday, he also took after Sen. Joe Manchin, a moderate Democrat from West Virginia who Trump had hoped would vote with the Republicans for his acquittal but who ended up voting to convict.

Trump tweeted that he was "very surprised & disappointed" with Manchin's votes, claiming no president had done more for his state. He added that Manchin was "just a puppet" for the Democratic leaders in the House and Senate.

It was Alexander Vindman who first told the House that in America "right matters" — a phrase repeated in the impeachment trial by lead prosecutor Schiff.

Sondland, too, was a crucial witness in the House impeachment inquiry, telling investigators that "everyone was in the loop" on Trump's desire to press Ukraine for politically charged investigations. He told lawmakers how he came to understand that there was a quid pro quo connecting a desired White House visit for Ukraine's leader and an announcement that the country would conduct the investigations Trump wanted.

Sondland "chose to be terminated rather than resign," according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official had not been authorized to discuss the matter publicly.

Alexander Vindman's lawyer issued a one-page statement that accused Trump of taking revenge on his client.

"He did what any member of our military is charged with doing every day: he followed orders, he obeyed his oath, and he served his country, even when doing so was fraught with danger and personal peril," Pressman said. "And for that, the most powerful man in the world — buoyed by the silent, the pliable, and the complicit — has decided to exact revenge."

The White House did not respond to Pressman's accusation. "We do not comment on personnel matters," said John Ulliot, spokesman for the National Security Council, the foreign policy arm of the White House where Vindman was an expert on Ukraine.

The Democrats angling to replace Trump took notice of Vindman's ouster during their evening debate in Manchester, New Hampshire. Former Vice President Joe Biden asked the audience to stand and applaud the lieutenant colonel.

Vindman's status had been uncertain since he testified that he didn't think it was "proper" for Trump to "demand that a foreign government investigate" Biden and his son's dealings with the energy company Burisma in Ukraine. Vindman's ouster, however, seemed imminent after Trump mocked him Thursday during his post-acquittal celebration with Republican supporters in the East Room and said Friday that he was not happy with him.

"You think I'm supposed to be happy with him?" Trump told reporters on the South Lawn of the White House. "I'm not. ... They are going to be making that decision."

Vindman, a 20-year Army veteran, wore his uniform full of medals, including a purple heart, when he appeared late last year for what turned out to be a testy televised impeachment hearing. Trump supporters raised questions about the immigrant's allegiance to the United States — his parents fled the Soviet

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Union when he was a child —and noted that he had received offers to work for the government of Ukraine, offers Vindman said he swiftly dismissed.

In gripping testimony, Vindman spoke of his family's story, his father bringing them to the U.S. some 40 years ago.

"Dad, my sitting here today in the U.S. Capitol, talking to our elected officials, is proof that you made the right decision 40 years ago to leave the Soviet Union and come here to United States of America in search of a better life for our family," he testified. "Do not worry, I will be fine for telling the truth."

Hillary Clinton, the 2016 Democratic presidential nominee, recalled Vindman's testimony that he would be fine and tweeted, "It's appalling that this administration may prove him wrong."

Some of Trump's backers cheered Vindman's removal.

Rep. Lee Zeldin, R-N.Y., tweeted that Vindman "should not be inside the National Security Council any longer. It's not about retaliation. It's because he cannot be trusted, he disagrees with the President's policies, & his term there is coming to an end regardless."

News that both Vindman twins had been ousted led Rep. Paul Gosar, R-Ariz., to tweet, "The White House is running a two for one special today on deep state leakers."

Defense Secretary Mark Esper was asked what the Pentagon would do to ensure that Vindman faces no retribution. "We protect all of our service members from retribution or anything like that," Esper said. "We've already addressed that in policy and other means."

Alexander Vindman is scheduled to enter a military college in Washington, D.C., this summer, and his brother is to be assigned to the Army General Counsel's Office, according to two officials who were not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and so spoke on condition of anonymity.

Several career diplomats whose testimony during the impeachment hearings also helped Democrats build their case against Trump remain in their posts, in Washington and in Kyiv. The former ambassador to Ukraine, Marie Yovanovitch, whose ouster in spring 2019 was a focus of the hearings and who testified herself, has recently retired from government service.

AP writers Lisa Mascaro, Matthew Lee, Zeke Miller, Eric Tucker and Bob Burns contributed to this report.

Thai soldier kills more than 10 people, holes up in mall

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Police in northeastern Thailand said a soldier shot multiple people on Saturday, killing more than 10, and was holed up at a popular shopping mall.

Royal Thai Police spokesman Krissana Pattanacharoen said more than 10 people had been killed. The total number of wounded was not immediately known.

The shooter appeared to be armed with an assault rifle, based on security camera video aired on Thai Rath television.

Thai Rath said the incident began at about 3:30 p.m. It appeared to be unresolved five hours later.

A police officer contacted by phone in the city of Nakhon Ratchasima said the soldier initially shot dead another soldier and a woman and wounded a third person, apparently over a land dispute.

City and neighborhood police officers, who asked not to be identified because they were not authorized to release information, said the man took a gun from his base and drove to the Terminal 21 mall, shooting along the way. Several Thai media reported that he traveled in a military vehicle. Nakhon Ratchasima is also known as Korat.

Video taken outside the mall and shared on social media showed people taking cover in a parking lot as gunshots were fired.

The mall was shut down and the street outside was closed while the authorities tried to arrest the gunman and rescue shoppers inside.

Defense Ministry spokesman Lt. Gen. Kongcheep Tantrawanich identified the suspect as Sgt. Jakrapanth Thomma. He said police and military units had locked down the mall and the surrounding area.

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The man believed to be the gunman posted updates to his Facebook page during the rampage with statements including "No one can escape death" and "Should I give up?" In a later post, he wrote, "I have stopped already."

His profile picture shows him in a mask and dressed in military-style fatigues and armed with a pistol. The background image is of a handgun and bullets.

In a photo circulated on social media that appeared to be taken from his Facebook page, the suspect can be seen wearing a green camouflaged military helmet while a fireball and black smoke rage behind him. The Facebook page was made inaccessible after the shooting began.

Nakhon Ratchasima is approximately 250 kilometers (155 miles) northeast of the Thai capital, Bangkok. The Terminal 21 shopping mall is located on a major road near the center of the city, which is a hub for Thailand's relatively poorer and rural northeastern region.

Many malls in Thailand, including Terminal 21's namesake in Bangkok, have metal detectors and security cameras at entrances manned by uniformed but unarmed security guards. Checks on those entering are often cursory at best.

Gun violence is not unheard of in Thailand. Firearms can be obtained legally, and many Thais own guns. Mass shootings are rare, however, apart from the far south of the country, where authorities have for years battled a long-simmering separatist insurgency.

The incident came just a month after another high-profile mall shooting, in the central Thai city of Lopburi. In that case, a masked gunman carrying a handgun with a silencer killed three people, including a 2-year-old boy, and wounded four others as he robbed a jewelry store. A suspect, a school director, was arrested less than two weeks later and reportedly confessed, saying he did not mean to shoot anyone.

<https://newsroom.ap.org/detail/Syriantroopsgainterritoryinpushtocontrolkeyhighway/6cbf4ec4ebfcbdc1dbc2231ac447ff1a/text?hpSectionId=8b012cffa0df4fdb4bb50e8a8d38d54&st=hpsection&mediaType=text&sortBy=arrivaldatetime:desc&dateRange=Anytime&totalCount=707¤tItemNo=2>

China virus cases increase as more preventive measures taken

BEIJING (AP) — The rate of increase in new cases of the virus in China rose again after a brief respite, as the death toll rose to 722 on the mainland and countries around the world enforced stricter measures to contain its spread.

A U.S. citizen died of the virus in Wuhan, the city at the center of the outbreak, in what was apparently the first American death. A Japanese being treated in Wuhan who was a suspected case also died.

Almost all of the new fatalities were in and around Wuhan in central Hubei province. Another 3,399 cases were reported, bringing the total to 34,546, although some of those have recovered. More than 320 cases have been confirmed outside mainland China, including two deaths in Hong Kong and the Philippines.

Three more cruise ship passengers were diagnosed with the virus in Japan for a total of 64 on board the ship.

China's ruling Communist Party faces continuing anger and recriminations from the public over the death of a doctor who was threatened by police after trying to sound the alarm about the disease over a month ago.

A look at the latest developments:

AMERICAN, JAPANESE SUCCUMB IN WUHAN, CRUISE SHIPS QUARANTINED

The U.S. Embassy in Beijing said a 60-year-old U.S. citizen diagnosed with the virus died in Wuhan on Wednesday. The patient was apparently the first American fatality. The embassy did not identify the person.

Japan's Foreign Ministry said a Japanese man in his 60s being treated in Wuhan also died. It said the patient had been suspected of having the coronavirus, but that it had not been confirmed.

Cruise ship passengers faced more woe as Japan reported three more cases for a total of 64 on one quarantined vessel and turned away another. The three are among 3,700 passengers and crew on the quarantined Diamond Princess. They must remain on board for 14 days.

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Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said foreign passengers on another ship, Holland America's Westerdam, won't be allowed into Japan. He said suspected virus patients were on board. The ship, with more than 2,000 people, was near Okinawa and was seeking another port, said Overseas Travel Agency official Mie Matsubara.

"We are getting desperate," she said. "We hope we can go somewhere so that passengers can land."

Hong Kong began enforcing a 14-day quarantine for arrivals from mainland China on Saturday.

Hong Kong has refused to completely seal its border but hopes the quarantine will dissuade travelers from the mainland.

PUSH TO ENSURE FOOD SUPPLY IN QUARANTINE ZONES

China's leaders are trying to keep food flowing to crowded cities despite anti-disease controls and to quell fears of possible shortages and price spikes following panic buying after most access to Wuhan and nearby cities was cut off.

Employees at the Wushang Mart wore masks and protective suits. Customers washed their hands with disinfectant and were checked for the virus's telltale fever, said the manager, who would give only her surname, Lu.

"It is normal for people to worry about supply, but we explain there will be enough," Lu said by phone.

Food stocks in supermarkets ran low shortly after Beijing imposed travel curbs and extended the Lunar New Year holiday to keep factories, offices and other businesses closed and the public at home in an attempt to prevent the virus from spreading.

That also kept trucks off the road, disrupting supplies of food to markets, feed to farmers and poultry to slaughterhouses. As the shutdown of Wuhan expanded to cover cities with a total of 60 million people, villagers set up their own roadblocks to keep outsiders and possible infection away.

A Cabinet official acknowledged vegetable supplies were uneven and some "daily necessities" were sold out.

Even getting out to shop is a challenge in some cities that are under almost total quarantine.

Only one member of each household is allowed out each day to shop for food in Hangzhou, an industrial metropolis of 10 million people southwest of Shanghai, and in Huanggang, a city of 1 million near Wuhan.

ANGER SIMMERS OVER DEATH OF DOCTOR THREATENED BY POLICE

Public anger continued to simmer over the authorities' treatment of a young doctor who was reprimanded by police for issuing a warning about the virus before being infected and dying this week.

In death, 34-year-old Li Wenliang became the face of anger at the ruling Communist Party's controls over information and complaints that officials lie about or hide disease outbreaks, chemical spills, dangerous consumer products or financial frauds.

The 34-year-old ophthalmologist died overnight at Wuhan Central Hospital, where he worked and likely contracted the virus while treating patients in the early days of the outbreak.

Police in December had reprimanded eight doctors including Li for warning friends on social media about the emerging threat. China's supreme court later criticized the police, but the ruling Communist Party has tightened its grip on information about the outbreak.

Users of China's Weibo microblogging service have left hundreds of thousands of messages mourning Li's death and criticizing the authorities over their treatment of him and other whistleblowers.

Following the criticism, the government announced a team from Beijing would be sent to Wuhan to investigate "issues reported by the masses involving Dr. Li Wenliang."

AFRICAN COUNTRIES WITH CLOSE CHINA TIES CAUGHT UNPREPARED

The virus has yet to be confirmed in Africa, but global health authorities are increasingly worried about the threat to the continent, where an estimated 1 million Chinese now live, as some health workers warn they are not ready to handle an outbreak.

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Countries are racing to take precautions as hundreds of travelers arrive from China every day. Safeguards include stronger surveillance at ports of entry and improved quarantine and testing measures across Africa, home to 1.2 billion people and some of the world's weakest systems for detecting and treating disease.

But the effort has been complicated by a critical shortage of testing kits and numerous illnesses that display symptoms similar to the flu-like virus.

"The problem is, even if it's mild, it can paralyze the whole community," said Dr. Michel Yao, emergency operations manager in Africa for the World Health Organization.

Associated Press writers Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo, Eileen Ng in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, By Dake Kang in Beijing, Noel Sichelwe, and Cara Anna in Johannesburg contributed to this report.

The number of fatalities has been corrected to 722 in the first paragraph.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump, Dems and the state of disunion

By HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says the world is witnessing a great American economic revival that he brought on by reversing course from the Obama years. Yet the economy is not so different from the robust one he inherited and disparages at every turn.

Trump's State of the Union speech came packed with assertions tailor-made for his reelection bid, during a week when his acquittal in his Senate impeachment trial emboldened him. The leading Democrats vying to replace him tangled in a debate Friday night before New Hampshire voters try to give shape to a nomination race mangled in Iowa.

A sampling of rhetoric of the past week:

ECONOMY

TRUMP: "From the instant I took office, I moved rapidly to revive the U.S. economy — slashing a record number of job killing-regulations, enacting historic and record-setting tax cuts, and fighting for fair and reciprocal trade agreements. ... If we had not reversed the failed economic policies of the previous administration, the world would not now be witness to America's great economic success." — State of the Union address Tuesday.

THE FACTS: The U.S. economy indeed is healthy. But gains have largely followed along the same lines of an expansion that started more than a decade ago under President Barack Obama. And Trump never quite managed to achieve the liftoff he promised during the 2016 election.

Total economic growth last year was 2.3%. That is roughly in line with the average gains achieved after the Great Recession, and a far cry from growth of as much 3%, 4% or more that Trump told voters he could deliver. The president has also claimed that the U.S. added factories during his presidency after nearly 60,000 manufacturing establishments were shuttered during the previous two administrations. But increases in the number U.S. factories began in 2013, more than four years before the start of Trump's presidency, according to Labor Department figures.

The tax cuts did temporarily boost growth in 2018 as deficit spending increased. But the administration claimed its tax plan would increase business investment in ways that could fuel lasting growth. For the past three quarters, business investment has instead declined.

It's too soon to judge the impact of the updated trade agreement with Mexico and Canada as well as the pact with China. But Trump premised his economic policy on wiping out the trade gap. Instead, the trade deficit has worsened under Trump.

IMMIGRATION

TRUMP: "Before I came into office, if you showed up illegally on our southern border and were arrested, you were simply released and allowed into our country, never to be seen again. My administration has ended catch-and-release. If you come illegally, you will now be promptly removed." — State of the Union.

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THE FACTS: Not true. Under previous administrations, Mexicans were quickly returned back over the U.S.-Mexico border, while others were held in detention until they were deported. Some migrants from other countries were released into the United States to wait out their immigration cases.

Despite Trump's claims that all migrants are now "promptly" removed, there is a 1 million immigration court case backlog, which means many migrants wait up to three years before a court hearing in front of a judge who will determine whether someone is deported. After a judge rules a migrant deported, travel papers must be obtained, which often leads to further delays.

As for ending "catch and release," Trump actually expanded that policy last year during a surge in migrants, releasing thousands of migrants who flooded shelters along the border. The surge has since passed, so fewer people are being held and fewer would need to be released. Because an effort by immigration officials to detain children indefinitely was blocked by a judge, children are still released into the country.

OIL AND GAS

TRUMP: "Thanks to our bold regulatory reduction campaign, the United States has become the number one producer of oil and natural gas, anywhere in the world, by far." — State of the Union.

THE FACTS: Trump is taking credit for a U.S. oil and gas production boom that started under Obama. The U.S. Energy Information Administration says the U.S. has been the world's top natural gas producer since 2009, the top petroleum hydrocarbon producer since 2013, and the top crude oil producer since 2018.

That's owing to a U.S. shale boom that has driven production up since 2011, not to deregulation or any other new effort by the Trump administration.

JOBS and TRADE

TRUMP: "The USMCA will create nearly 100,000 new high-paying American auto jobs, and massively boost exports for our farmers, ranchers and factory workers." — State of the Union.

THE FACTS: Don't count on that.

The U.S. International Trade Commission examined the U.S.-Mexico-Canada deal in an April report. The report estimated that the deal would add only 28,000 auto industry jobs six years after the deal is put in place. Separately, government officials are quoted in the report saying they believe the sector would add 76,000 jobs based on their methodology.

It's still not the 100,000 jobs claimed by Trump.

TRUMP: "In eight years under the last administration, over 300,000 working-age people dropped out of the workforce. In just three years of my administration, 3.5 million working-age people have joined the workforce." — State of the Union.

THE FACTS: Trump is being misleading with numbers to tarnish his predecessor's record. It's not clear what he means by "working-age." But the total size of the U.S. labor force shows that the president is wrong.

During the eight years of Obama's presidency, the labor force rose by 5.06 million, according to the Labor Department. The improvement reflected a rebounding economy from the Great Recession and population growth.

As the unemployment rate has fallen, more people are finding it attractive to work and are joining the labor force. This has enabled the labor force to climb by an impressive 4.86 million in just three years under Trump.

DRUG PRICES

TRUMP: "For the first time in 51 years, the cost of prescription drugs actually went down." — State of the Union.

THE FACTS: Prices for prescription drugs have edged down, but that is driven by declines for generics. Prices for brand-name medications are still going up, although more moderately.

Nonpartisan government experts at the Department of Health and Human Services reported last year that prices for pharmacy prescriptions went down by 1% in 2018, the first such price drop in 45 years.

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The department said the last time retail prescription drug prices declined was in 1973, when they went down by 0.2%.

HEALTH CARE

TRUMP: "We will always protect patients with preexisting conditions." — State of the Union.

THE FACTS: That's a promise, not a guarantee.

The Trump administration is backing a lawsuit by conservative-led states that would overturn the entire Obama health law, including the Affordable Care Act's guarantees that people cannot be turned down or charged more for insurance because of preexisting medical problems.

Trump and congressional Republicans have pledged they will protect people with preexisting conditions, but they have not specified how they would do that.

Estimates of how many people could potentially be affected if the law's protections for preexisting conditions are eliminated range from about 54 million working-age adults, in a study last year from the Kaiser Family Foundation, to as many as 133 million people, according to a 2017 government study that also included children.

DEMOCRATIC DEBATE

Sen. AMY KLOBUCHAR of Minnesota, on rival Pete Buttigieg's evolution on health care: "And Pete, while you have a different plan now, you sent out a tweet just a few years ago that said henceforth, forthwith, indubitably, affirmatively, you are for 'Medicare for All' for the ages."

BUTTIGIEG: "Just to be clear, the truth is that I have been consistent throughout in my position on delivering health care for every American."

THE FACTS: Klobuchar Is right. Before he launched his presidential campaign, Buttigieg sounded supportive of "Medicare for All." He isn't now.

In February 2018, he was involved in a Twitter exchange as liberals were pressing Democratic politicians to back a government health plan.

"When/where have you ever heard me oppose 'Medicare for All?'" he asked in a Feb. 17, 2018, response to an activist's query. A day later, he tweeted out a column he wrote as a Harvard University senior, saying he'd "been on record on this one since 2004."

On the same day, he sent out a separate tweet: "Gosh! Okay ... I, Pete Buttigieg, politician, do henceforth and forthwith declare, most affirmatively and indubitably, unto the ages, that I do favor 'Medicare for All,' as I do favor any measure that would help get all Americans covered. Now, if you'll excuse me, potholes await."

FORMER VICE PRESIDENT JOE BIDEN, saying Obama asked him to get 156,000 troops out of Iraq: "I did that."

THE FACTS: True, but that's not the end of the story. Obama asked Biden to take the lead in efforts to withdraw troops and coordinate efforts to maintain stability in Baghdad. What Biden did not mention was that some of the troops had to go back.

Obama and Biden failed to win agreement from the Iraqi government to keep a limited number of U.S. troops there after December 2011. That was the deadline for a complete U.S. pullout under a deal negotiated by the Bush administration in late 2008. Biden was still vice president when Obama was compelled to return American troops to Iraq in 2014 after the rise of the Islamic State extremist group.

ANDREW YANG, tech entrepreneur: "We have record high corporate profits in this country right now."

THE FACTS: Corporate profits are high, but they're not at record levels.

Companies earned \$1.84 trillion in profits in 2018, slightly below the \$1.86 trillion earned in 2014, according to the U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis. But as a share of national income, corporate profits were 6.6% in 2018. That's down from 7.6% in 2012 and significantly below the peak of 8.9% in 1929.

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TRUMP ON PELOSI

TRUMP, on House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., ripping up his State of the Union remarks: "I thought it was a terrible thing when she ripped up the speech. First of all, it's an official document. You're not allowed. It's illegal what she did. She broke the law." — remarks Friday.

THE FACTS: No laws were broken, legal experts say. That's because it was not an original government document, but Pelosi's copy of the speech.

Steven Aftergood, a records expert at the private Federation of American Scientists, said: "Legally, this is a nonissue. Pelosi was expressing contempt for the president's speech, and her views are constitutionally protected." He said her torn-up pieces of the speech might themselves be considered a new record of historical value.

Laurence Tribe, a constitutional law professor at Harvard University, said Pelosi did not violate 18 U.S. Code Section 2071. That's the federal law defining the deliberate destruction of an official record that has been filed with a court or other government agency — a felony punishable by a prison term and by forfeiture of office.

Heidi Kitrosser, a law professor at the University of Minnesota, said: "This is not an archival document. ... This is one of many, many, many copies of President Trump's speech and Nancy Pelosi is free to do with it whatever she will."

Kitrosser added that any disagreement with Trump's speech is protected by the First Amendment "and in Pelosi's case, under the speech and debate clause of the Constitution."

Associated Press writers Josh Boak, Colleen Long, Ellen Knickmeyer, Ricardo Alonso-Zaldivar and Deb Riechmann in Washington, Arijeta Lajka in New York, Amanda Seitz in Chicago and Michelle L. Price in Las Vegas contributed to this report.

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

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Actor-comedian Orson Bean, 91, hit and killed by car in LA

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Orson Bean, the witty actor and comedian, was hit and killed by a car in Los Angeles, authorities said. He was 91.

The Los Angeles County coroner's office confirmed Bean's Friday night death, saying it was being investigated as a "traffic-related" fatality. The coroner's office provided the location where Bean was found, which matched reports from local news outlets.

A man was walking in the Venice neighborhood when he was clipped by a vehicle and fell, Los Angeles Police Department Capt. Brian Wendling initially told local stations. A second driver then struck him in what police say was the fatal collision. Both drivers remained on the scene. Police were investigating and didn't identify the pedestrian to local outlets, which named Bean based on eyewitness accounts.

Bean enlivened such TV game shows as "To Tell the Truth" and played a crotchety merchant on "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman."

He appeared in a number of films — notably, "Anatomy of a Murder" and "Being John Malkovich" — and starred in several top Broadway productions, receiving a Tony nod for the 1962 Comden-Green musical "Subways Are for Sleeping." But fans remembered him most for his many TV appearances from the 1950s onward.

"Mr. Bean's face comes wrapped with a sly grin, somewhat like the expression of a child when sneaking his hand into the cookie jar," The New York Times noted in a review of his 1954 variety show, "The Blue Angel." It said he showed "a quality of being likable even when his jokes fall flat."

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Born in Burlington, Vermont, in 1928 as Dallas Frederick Burrows, he never lost the Yankee accent that proved a perfect complement to the dry, laconic storytelling that established him as popular humorist. He had picked the stage name Orson Bean "because it sounded funny."

His father, George, was a founding member of the American Civil Liberties Union and Bean recalled later that his "house was filled with causes." But he left home at 16 after his mother died by suicide.

In a 1983 New York Times interview, he recalled his early career in small clubs where the show consisted of "me — master of ceremonies, comedian and magician — maybe a dog act, and a stripper." It was a piano player in one such club, he said, who suggested replacing Dallas Burrows with some funny name like "Roger Duck" — or Orson Bean.

Bean's quick wit and warm personality made him a favorite panelist for six years on "To Tell the Truth." The game required the panelists to quiz three contestants to figure out which one was a real notable and which two were impostors. The dramatic outcome inspired a national catchphrase as the host turned to the three and said: "Will the real (notable's name) please stand up?"

Bean's style appealed to both Jack Paar and Johnny Carson, and he appeared on "The Tonight Show" more than 200 times.

But his early career was hobbled for a time when he found himself on the Hollywood blacklist in the early years of the Cold War.

"Basically I was blacklisted because I had a cute communist girlfriend," he explained in a 2001 interview. "I stopped working on TV for a year."

The blacklist didn't stop him in the theater. Bean starred on Broadway as a timid fan magazine writer in George Axelrod's 1955 Hollywood spoof "Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?" alongside Jayne Mansfield and Walter Matthau. He also starred on Broadway with Maureen O'Sullivan in "Never Too Late" and with Melina Mercouri in "Ilya Darling," based on her hit film "Never on Sunday."

Bean took a break from his career for a time in the 1970s when he dropped out and moved to Australia, where he lived a hippie lifestyle. But he returned to the U.S. and — after a period as a self-described "house-husband" — resumed his career.

"I got sick of contemplating my navel and staring up at the sky and telling myself how wonderful it was not to be doing anything," he explained in a 1983 interview with The New York Times.

In the 1990s, he played the shopkeeper Loren Bray on the long-running drama "Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman." He remained active on the screen in recent years with guest shots in such shows as "Desperate Housewives," "How I Met Your Mother" and "Modern Family."

Meanwhile, his politics turned more conservative. He became related to a leading right-wing commentator, Andrew Breitbart, when his daughter, Susannah, married him. Breitbart died in 2012 and Steve Bannon, later a top adviser to Donald Trump, took over Breitbart's eponymous website, for which Bean had penned occasional columns.

Bean wrote a memoir called "Too Much Is Not Enough" and a book about a non-traditional therapy called "Me and the Orgone."

He had already shown his interest in non-traditional thinking in 1964 when he bought a building in Manhattan and opened up a school based on the philosophy of Summerhill, the progressive British school founded by A.S. Neill.

"I said to myself, we have to start with the children. Why not start a school?" he told The New York Times.

That same year, he co-founded the Sons of the Desert, an organization dedicated to comedians Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy, with chapters around the world.

More recently, income from "Dr. Quinn" and other voice and acting work allowed Bean to finance the Pacific Resident Theater Ensemble in Venice, where he appeared with his third wife, actress Alley Mills.

He had a daughter, Michele, from his first marriage to Jacqueline de Sibour, and sons Max and Ezekiel and daughter Susannah from his marriage to Carolyn Maxwell.

Bob Thomas, a longtime and now deceased staffer of The Associated Press, was the principal writer of this obituary.

Key takeaways from Democratic debate in New Hampshire

By HUNTER WOODALL and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Three days before the critical New Hampshire Primary, seven Democratic presidential candidates debated, with many of them fighting to survive in the race to challenge President Donald Trump.

Here are some key takeaways.

MAYOR PETE MAKES HIS CASE

Pete Buttigieg, the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Ind., was the candidate of the moment Friday. All eyes were on him Friday night to see if he could make his case.

And he did — with one significant stumble.

Attacked for his thin resume, Buttigieg shot back, "If you're looking for the person with the most years of Washington, D.C., experience under their belt, that candidate is not me." He promoted his youth compared with the lawmakers onstage talking their achievements from decades ago.

"We cannot solve the problems before us by looking back," Buttigieg said. "We have to be ready to turn the page."

A former military intelligence officer, Buttigieg seemed comfortable discussing foreign affairs, such as the Trump administration's killing of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani. "There is no evidence that that made our country safer," he said, adding later, "This is not an episode of '24.'"

But Buttigieg's trouble spot has long been race. Asked about a spike in arrests of black people for marijuana possession in his city after he became mayor, Buttigieg began to decry systemic racism but seemed to acknowledge he couldn't escape it in the city that he ran.

SANDERS UNDER ATTACK

It didn't take long for the candidates to make clear whom they saw as the front-runner. Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont was piled on by competitors fighting to become the moderate alternative to the self-declared democratic socialist.

There were two lines of attack -- Sanders' uncompromising liberal positions and, specifically, his proposal to immediately have the federal government take over the entire health care system.

The most notable punch was thrown by Buttigieg, who said Democrats will have a problem working to "unite this country at a moment when we need unification when our nominee is dividing people." Asked if he meant Sanders, he said yes.

Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar scoffed at Sanders' health care proposal. Former Vice President Joe Biden noted that Sanders says he has no idea how much his proposal could cost, though experts have put it at at least \$30 trillion.

But he showed a characteristic durability. In the deeply divided field, Sanders is now leading in many polls by virtue of that following.

BIDEN BOUNCE BACK?

After his disappointing showing in Iowa, Biden was fighting to survive. Sometimes it didn't seem like it, but Biden also displayed flashes of the fire and emotion that have traditionally endeared him to Democratic voters.

Offered a chance early to swing at his two main rivals — Sanders and Buttigieg — Biden opened by basically admitting he was going to lose New Hampshire.

"Bernie won by 20 points last time," Biden said softly. His criticisms of Sanders and Buttigieg weren't nearly as sharp as those offered by other candidates. Biden's had difficulty talking about the GOP investigation into his own son that triggered Trump's impeachment and that has coincided with the former vice president's slide in the polls.

The former vice president was left asking the crowd to give a standing ovation to Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, who was led out of the White House hours earlier. Vindman had testified in December before Democrats investigating Trump's dealings with Ukraine.

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Biden, 77, was more energized in the later hours of the debate. He was visibly enraged at Trump's dismissive comments on U.S. casualties during the Iranian retaliation for the U.S. killing of an Iranian general. He sharply attacked Sanders over the Vermont senator's prior support for gun rights, defended his long record on the Supreme Court and promoted his historic support from African-Americans.

But it's not clear whether his performance will quell worries.

WARREN DIDN'T HAVE A PLAN FOR BREAKING THROUGH

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren invested deeply in neighboring New Hampshire as a key part of her 2020 run, but she struggled to find a standout moment as she begins to make her final case to the state's voters.

Warren skipped a chance to differentiate herself more from Sanders, a fellow progressive whom she calls a longtime friend. Given the chance to create some distance, Warren said, "We have a lot of things in common, we have a lot of things that we differ on."

She quickly shifted to making a party unity plea and echoing her stump speech lines about big money in politics and corruption.

"We bring our party together, it's an issue we can all agree on and fight to end the corruption," Warren said. "We're the Democrats. We should be the party on the side of hardworking people and we can bring in independents and Republicans on that. They hate the corruption as well."

Warren also did little to explicitly come to Sanders defense as her Vermont rival was attacked by the more moderate candidates over his prized Medicare for All policy goal, an idea Warren supports.

KLOBUCHAR MADE A MARK

Klobuchar was quick with the quips as she tried gain an edge in the primary's moderate lane. She repeatedly made a virtue of her ability to compromise and work with Republicans. There was an urgency to her presentation, with good reason: She needs an upset in New Hampshire.

She hit familiar notes of criticizing Medicare for All as she touted her Midwestern appeal and legislative success in the Senate. Klobuchar's plea boiled down to making a case for Democratic sensibility as a break from the smash-mouth nature of Trump's presidency.

"I didn't come from money," Klobuchar said, insisting voters "want to have someone that they can understand" in the White House.

STEYER'S FIERY PLAY ... FOR SOUTH CAROLINA

Billionaire activist Tom Steyer does not have much of a chance in New Hampshire. So he used the debate to make a strong appeal to African American voters in South Carolina, where his campaign has invested heavily and black voters make up two-thirds of the primary electorate.

The billionaire noted that well into the debate, "we have not said one word tonight about race."

"Are you kidding me?" he asked as a discussion of race ensued.

He added later, "I am for reparations to African Americans in this country and anyone who thinks that racism is a thing of the past and not an ongoing problem is not dealing with reality."

YANG NOT BURDENED

Businessman Andrew Yang was not burdened by low expectations. He was at ease and having fun on the debate stage Friday night, even though his chances to win New Hampshire, let alone the Democratic nomination, are minuscule.

He bounced onto the stage without a tie, in stark contrast to his more buttoned-up male rivals.

But Yang was largely left out of the heated exchanges that simmered through the debate, focusing instead on stepping back and looking at the larger picture.

"Donald Trump is not the cause of all of our problems," Yang said. "And we are making a mistake when we act like he is. He is a symptom of a disease that has been building up in our communities for years and decades."

THE ELEPHANT NOT IN THE ROOM

Two words were spoken Friday night that have rarely come up on the trail or in prior debates: Mike Bloomberg.

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The former New York mayor and multibillionaire is skipping the early nominating states and instead spending hundreds of millions on Super Tuesday states with far more delegates at stake.

A viewer-submitted question asked why the candidates were better than Bloomberg.

"I don't think anyone ought to be able to buy their way into a nomination or to be president of the United States," Warren said.

"I just simply don't think people look at the guy in the White House and say, 'Can we get someone richer?'" Klobuchar said.

"There are millions of people who can desire to run for office but I guess if you're worth \$60 billion and you can spend several hundred millions of dollars on advertising you have a slight advantage," Sanders said.

The responses were clear signals that they take Bloomberg seriously.

NH campaigns expected to shift into overdrive after debate

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and HUNTER WOODALL Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — The final stretch before the New Hampshire primary is typically a frenetic period for White House hopefuls eager to make their mark early in the nomination process. But with just a few days left before the next contest, the scene in New Hampshire is downright calm.

Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders made a morning appearance Friday, and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren made an impromptu stop in a cafe to meet winners of a contest. But otherwise, most major candidates were off the trail before Friday night's debate.

It was a fitting end to a week in which the fallout from the chaotic Iowa caucuses, the climax of President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, the need to replenish campaign coffers and the demands of national television appearances have distracted candidates from the traditional New Hampshire glad-handing. The pace will pick up this weekend, but Ray Buckley, the chairman of the New Hampshire Democratic Party, acknowledged Friday that the nature of politics has changed as campaigns prioritize TV hits and digital outreach.

"There's a lot of people who make a lot of money on TV ads and a lot of money on other things that convince the campaigns to do everything flashy versus good old shoe leather," he said, adding that he thought the candidates and campaigns have done a good job connecting with voters in New Hampshire.

Scott Spradling, the former political director for WMUR-TV, New Hampshire's major TV station, said campaigns are "running more of a controlled exercise where access ... is limited.

"This is a far more carefully choreographed primary cycle," said Spradling, who reported on the 2000, 2004 and 2008 primaries.

The lighter-touch campaigning style comes as the stakes of Tuesday's primary have risen. The AP is unable to declare a winner of Iowa's Democratic caucuses earlier this week because of the tight margin between Sanders and Pete Buttigieg and irregularities in the caucus process. That means New Hampshire may offer Democrats their first opportunity to select a clear winner, who could emerge with momentum in later contests that will decide who takes on Trump in the fall.

New Hampshire's primary took a backseat to Iowa from the beginning, partly because Sanders and Warren have long been considered the dominant contenders in New Hampshire, in part because they hail from neighboring states. For weeks leading into the primary, few of the campaigns set explicit expectations of victory here.

"You've got two neighboring states with senators in the race, you've got a vice president in the race and you've got this guy who seems to have electrified a lot of listeners," said Deb Bacon Nelson, who is chairwoman of the Hanover/Lyme town Democrats and supports Warren. "For any one of them to say, 'I have to win,' I mean, who wants to do that to their campaign? That doesn't make sense."

But the campaigns' calculations may now be changing.

"I'm counting on New Hampshire. We're going to come back," former Vice President Joe Biden said during an event on Wednesday after declaring the results of Iowa, where he's in fourth place, a "gut punch."

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That comes despite his campaign's long belief that Nevada and South Carolina, the states that vote after New Hampshire and are far more diverse, are more important to Biden's candidacy.

Still, his schedule has been slim. Biden held just three public events since Iowa and had nothing public planned on Thursday and Friday, instead sending his wife, Jill Biden, and former Gov. John Lynch out on his behalf. In addition to debate prep, he was doing interviews with local media on Friday. When Biden does hold events, he rarely takes audience questions like his competitors do. Some Democratic observers expected that U.S. Sen. Maggie Hassan would endorse Biden, but she still hasn't.

Voters have had a "bounty of riches," said Judith Kaufman, chairwoman of the Sullivan County Democrats. But she noted as a candidate, Biden has done little in her county.

"He really isn't reaching out that much to the voters," Kaufman said. "He hasn't been doing very many events."

While Buttigieg held seven events the day after Iowa, he held just one in the days after that, instead decamping for New York and New Jersey to raise cash and appear on a daytime television show. At his one event on Thursday, at an American Legion hall, the campaign was forced to turn away voters as the room quickly hit capacity.

Warren, who most observers say has the strongest campaign organization here, has done three rallies in southern and western New Hampshire. She has also done smaller stops that weren't widely announced, like at the Bagel Mill in Peterborough, where she took questions from a small group of voters there. Warren also visited Great Bay Kids' Company child care center in Exeter to tout her support for "Medicare for All." She spoke to 4- and 5-year-olds there, kids in groups of two to four who were playing or working on art projects.

Sanders was the lone top-tier candidate to hold an event on Friday, speaking at "Politics and Eggs," a breakfast event for business leaders that is customary for presidential candidates. Some of his time in New Hampshire has also been spent responding to what happened in Iowa; he declared himself the winner at a news conference on Thursday. He's held just a handful of events as he tries to maintain the energy that gave him a blowout victory here in 2016.

Indeed, the candidates engaging most in the traditional New Hampshire style are lower-tier candidates who didn't compete in Iowa at all and will not be on the debate stage. Deval Patrick, the former Massachusetts governor, launched a bus tour last week, and Colorado Sen. Michael Bennet planned seven events across the state on Thursday and Friday.

That dynamic troubled Bennet as he left a house party in Manchester late last month.

"I'm worried about the transition between these face-to-face conversations and the nationalized social media environment that we're in because they're two different things completely," he said.

For the New Hampshire voters who are still making up their minds, an in-person event can a difference.

Cathy Joaquim, a 63-year-old retired college administration, said at a Sanders event on Wednesday that she hadn't made up her mind. She saw Warren on Tuesday, Sanders on Wednesday and Biden on Thursday. She's hoping to see Buttigieg, as well, but couldn't find any events on his website.

"I'm cramming them all in because I need to make a final decision, and I don't know what to do," she said.

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

AP FACT CHECK: Dems skew health care, Iraq facts in debate

By CALVIN WOODWARD, RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR and JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic presidential contenders stretched beyond the facts on policy and sometimes on their own records Friday in their New Hampshire debate.

Amy Klobuchar called out Pete Buttigieg for an evolution on health care that he didn't acknowledge. Joe Biden told only part of the story when he boasted about a success as vice president in getting troops home from Iraq.

A look at how some of their claims from Manchester, New Hampshire, compare with the facts:

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KLOBUCHAR, on Buttigieg's evolution on health care: "And Pete, while you have a different plan now, you sent out a tweet just a few years ago that said henceforth, forthwith, indubitably, affirmatively, you are for 'Medicare for All' for the ages."

BUTTIGIEG: "Just to be clear, the truth is that I have been consistent throughout in my position on delivering health care for every American."

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A day later, he tweeted out a column he wrote as a Harvard University senior, saying he'd "been on record on this one since 2004."

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BIDEN, saying President Barack Obama asked him to get 156,000 troops out of Iraq: "I did that."

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Associated Press writers Hope Yen in Washington and Michelle Price in Las Vegas contributed to this report.

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

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FDA crackdown on vaping flavors has blind spot: disposables

By MATTHEW PERRONE AP Health Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government on Thursday began enforcing restrictions on flavored electronic cigarettes aimed at curbing underage vaping. But some teenagers may be one step ahead of the rules.

Parents, researchers and students warn that some young people have already moved on to a newer kind of vape that isn't covered by the flavor ban.

These disposable e-cigarettes are sold under brands like Puff Bar, Stig and Fogg in flavors such as pink

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lemonade, blueberry ice and tropical mango.

The Food and Drug Administration's crackdown narrowly targets reusable vaping devices like Juul, the blockbuster brand that helped trigger the teen vaping craze in the U.S. Under the new policy, only menthol and tobacco flavors are allowed for those devices.

Critics of the FDA policy fear teens will simply switch to the cheaper disposables, which are widely available at convenience stores and gas stations.

"They are very accessible and seem to be the new buzzy product," said Dr. Karen Wilson, a tobacco researcher and pediatrician at Mount Sinai's medical school in New York.

The FDA confirmed that the flavor restriction won't apply to "self-contained, disposable products," but only to rechargeable ones that use pods or cartridges prefilled with a nicotine solution.

The agency's rationale: Reusable vaping devices are far and away the most popular with underage users, preferred by more than 60% of high schoolers who vape, according to survey data collected last year.

The FDA's top tobacco regulator said it can still go after any vaping product that appeals to teenagers. "If we see a product that is targeted to kids, we will take action," Mitch Zeller, who heads the agency's tobacco center, said in a statement.

Thursday was the deadline for makers of reusable e-cigarettes to stop selling fruity and candy flavors. Juul was already in compliance. It dropped its best selling mint and most other flavors before the ban was announced in early January and only sells tobacco and menthol.

At a congressional hearing Wednesday, the head of Fontem U.S., which makes blu vapes, was pressed to drop its vivid vanilla and cherry crush disposable e-cigarettes.

Fontem chief Antoine Blonde countered that its customers are adults, not children. Less than 3% of high school students who vape reported blu as their preferred brand, according to 2019 government data.

"We're not aware of any issue caused by our disposable flavors," Blonde said.

Sales of disposable e-cigarettes and all other tobacco and vaping products are prohibited to teenagers under the government's new age limit, which went from 18 to 21 late last year.

High school student Philip Fuhrman says most of his New York classmates who vape have ditched Juul for disposables like Stig, a tiny e-cigarette sold in flavors like mighty mint and mango bomb.

They're easier to hide because "they're smaller and when you're done you can just throw it away," said the 16-year-old Fuhrman, who says he no longer vapes. He's now an anti-vaping activist and his mother is one of the founders of a parents' group opposed to youth vaping.

At \$20 for a three-pack, Stig may not seem cheap. But Fuhrman and other teens say it's a smaller investment than the \$40 or \$50 needed to buy a Juul device and a four-pack of pods. Fuhrman says teens will instead buy a pack of Stigs "for the weekend and then just be done with it."

The makers of Stig, Puff Bar and Fogg disposables did not respond to requests for comment.

Analysts report that disposables are still just 5% of the nearly \$15 billion global vaping market, according to the firm ECigIntelligence.

Researchers who study e-cigarette trash around high schools say they have noticed a shift in what teens are vaping. Jeremiah Mock, of the University of California, San Francisco, has been finding discarded Puff Bars in local school parking lots over the last three months.

Vape shop owners also say the market is changing.

Since the FDA announcement, distributors and manufacturers have ramped up their disposable offerings, according to Vapewerks owner Jeremy Gardner in Cumberland, Maryland.

"How do disposables get a free pass when they're essentially the same thing as a Juul or anything else that comes with a prefilled pod?" he asked.

Gardner doesn't stock his most requested brand, Puff Bar, but sells a rival disposable. Most of his business comes from larger, tank-based vapes, which are more popular with adults and allow users to customize flavors and nicotine concentrations. Those products are exempt from government flavor restrictions.

E-cigarettes, which heat a nicotine solution into a vapor, are often promoted as a less harmful alternative to traditional cigarettes but the FDA has not approved any vaping product to help smokers quit. The makers

of all vaping products face a May deadline to submit applications for government health and safety review.

Mike Chang, owner of Master Piece Smoke Shop in New York City, says most of his customers who buy disposables switched from Juul after the company pulled its mint, mango and dessert flavors last fall. The company took that voluntary step under pressure from multiple federal investigations and lawsuits from state and local authorities.

The San Francisco company's retail sales have fallen 35% since their peak last July, driven by the loss of flavors, according to Wall Street research firm Piper Sandler. Juul does not sell disposable e-cigarettes.

In a government survey last year, more than 1 in 4 high school students reported using e-cigarettes in the prior month. The next federal study begins this spring.

AP videojournalist Marshall Ritzel in New York contributed to this report.

Follow Matthew Perrone on Twitter: @AP_FDWriter

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Air Force suicides surged last year to highest in 3 decades

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Suicides in the active-duty Air Force surged last year to the highest total in at least three decades, even as the other military services saw their numbers stabilize or decline, according to officials and unpublished preliminary data.

The reasons for the Air Force increase are not fully understood, coming after years of effort by all of the military services to counter a problem that seems to defy solution and that parallels increases in suicide in the U.S. civilian population.

According to preliminary figures, the Air Force had 84 suicides among active-duty members last year, up from 60 the year before. The jump followed five years of relative stability, with the service's yearly totals fluctuating between 60 and 64. Official figures won't be published until later this year and could vary slightly from preliminary data.

Air Force officials, who confirmed the 2019 total, said they knew of no higher number in recent years. Data and studies previously published by the Pentagon and Air Force show that 64 suicides in 2015 had been the highest total for the Air Force in this century. A 2009 Air Force study said suicides between 1990 and 2004 averaged 42 a year and never exceeded 62.

"Suicide is a difficult national problem without easily identifiable solutions that has the full attention of leadership," Lt. Gen. Brian Kelly, the Air Force's deputy chief of staff for manpower, personnel and services, said in a statement. He said the Air Force is focused on immediate, midterm and long-range solutions to a problem faced throughout the military.

Suicide risk factors are often thought to include stress related to deployment to combat zones in Iraq and Afghanistan. But a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 2013 concluded, based on an assessment of current and former military personnel over a seven-year period, that combat experience and other deployment-related factors were not associated with increased risk of suicide. Instead the study's results pointed to numerous other factors, including being male, engaging in heavy or binge drinking, and bipolar disorder.

Although only the Air Force saw a major increase last year, all the services have struggled with higher suicides since about 2005-2006, which coincided with a cycle of exceptionally stressful deployments to Iraq for the Army and Marine Corps. The Pentagon encourages service members and veterans in need of help to contact the Military Crisis Line.

The Navy last year saw its active-duty suicides rise by four, to 72, and the Marine Corps total dropped by 10, to 47. All the 2019 numbers include confirmed and suspected suicides and are subject to revision

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based on further medical review. It is not uncommon for a service's total to get adjusted up or down after further review, but any changes are slight.

The Army declined to reveal its 2019 preliminary total, but The Associated Press determined it was little changed from the previous year's 139. The Army's figure is typically the highest in the military because it is by far the biggest service, with about 480,000 soldiers on active duty this year, compared with about 332,000 in the Air Force.

The Air Force in the mid-1990s pioneered a suicide prevention program that was seen as effective, and at various times since the U.S. became entangled in combat in Iraq and Afghanistan the other services have seen troubling increases in their suicide numbers. The Marine Corps, for example, saw its numbers jump from 37 to 57 between 2016 and 2018.

Maj. Craig W. Thomas, a Marine Corps spokesman, said the Marines want further progress after recording 10 fewer active-duty suicides last year. He said unit leaders are encouraged to speak openly with their Marines about stress, mental wellness and suicide.

"When leaders and mental health programs and resources acknowledge that 'everybody struggles with life, trauma, shame, guilt and uncertainty,' it helps make asking for assistance more acceptable," Thomas said.

Last year, the Air Force went public with its concerns as it saw its suicide numbers rising. Last summer, Gen. David Goldfein, the Air Force chief of staff, ordered a "resilience tactical pause" across the force to foster open discussion within the service about suicide prevention. In a July 31 letter, he wrote: "Hopeful to hopeless. What is going on? It is our job to find out."

Answers are elusive, but the Air Force says the Goldfein "pause" jump-started an effort to promote "connectedness" among airmen.

The military, whose population is generally younger and more fit than America as a whole, is quick to note that suicide is a problem throughout society. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, from 1999 through 2017, the nation's suicide rates increased for both men and women, with bigger percentage increases occurring after 2006.

Front-runners Buttigieg and Sanders beat back debate attacks

By STEVE PEOPLES, KATHLEEN RONAYNE and HUNTER WOODALL Associated Press

MANCHESTER, N.H. (AP) — Democratic presidential front-runners Bernie Sanders and Pete Buttigieg beat back a barrage of attacks during a debate as rivals raised persistent questions about their ideology and experience, hoping to sow doubts about their ability to defeat President Donald Trump.

Reeling from a weak finish in this week's Iowa caucuses, former Vice President Joe Biden was a chief aggressor throughout Friday night. He questioned Sanders' status as a democratic socialist and said Buttigieg, the 38-year-old former mayor of South Bend, Indiana, doesn't have the background to lead in a complicated world. Sen. Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota, who is struggling to break into the top tier, voiced similar criticisms.

But Sanders and Buttigieg, who are essentially tied in Iowa, largely brushed off the broadsides.

"Donald Trump lies all the time," Sanders said in response to suggestions that Trump would use his self-described identity as a democratic socialist to brand him — and all Democrats — as radical.

Buttigieg sought to turn skepticism of his resume into a positive, portraying himself as a fresh face from outside Washington with experience in dealing with real-life problems and ready to lead a weary nation in a new direction.

"I'm interested in the style of the politics we need to put forward to actually finally turn the page," Buttigieg said. He added a jab at Biden: "I freely admit that if you're looking for the person with the most years of Washington establishment experience under their belt, you've got your candidate, and of course it's not me."

Friday marked the eighth and perhaps most consequential debate in the Democratic Party's yearlong quest for a presidential nominee. The prime-time affair came just four days after Iowa's chaotic caucuses

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-- and four days before New Hampshire's primary -- with several candidates facing pointed questions about their political survival. While several candidates had strong moments, it was unclear the event would change the trajectory of the campaign.

Biden was especially explicit about the state of his candidacy during the opening moments, predicting he would "take a hit" in New Hampshire next week before the contest moves into more diverse states where he hopes to perform better.

He faced criticism on stage as someone too steeped in the ways of Washington to represent the change many Democratic voters say they are seeking. He responded by once again aligning himself with former President Barack Obama.

"The politics of the past I think were not all that bad," Biden said. "I don't know what about the past about Barack Obama and Joe Biden was so bad."

But Biden had to defend his long record as the candidates sparred over the decision nearly two decades ago to send U.S. troops to Iraq.

Biden acknowledged anew that his vote in favor of the war authorization as a senator was a mistake, while Sanders said his Senate vote against deploying troops was proof of his judgment on national security issues. Buttigieg, who was in college at the time and later served in Afghanistan, said he would have opposed the war, too.

While the debate was heated at times, there were moments of unity with candidates aware that Democratic primary voters have little desire to see an all-out intraparty brawl. When a moderator asked Klobuchar to respond to Hillary Clinton's comments that no one likes Sanders, Biden walked over and gave him a hug. Klobuchar, meanwhile, joked that Sanders is "just fine" and noted times when they had worked together on policy.

A somber Biden was appreciative when Buttigieg defended him and his son, Hunter Biden, against attacks from Trump in the impeachment inquiry.

And while Biden challenged Sanders' embrace of a version of socialism, most of his rivals seemed willing to overlook that political identity. When the moderator asked whether any of the candidates would have a problem with a democratic socialist as their party's presidential nominee, only Klobuchar raised her hand.

Warren avoided any direct criticism of her rivals and repeatedly pivoted to her core anti-corruption message. As Biden, Sanders and Klobuchar fought about the best way forward on health care, Warren did not engage, instead speaking broadly about the need to lower prescription drug costs.

Billionaire activist Tom Steyer and New York entrepreneur Andrew Yang, meanwhile, were fighting to prove they belong in the conversation.

Traditionally, the knives come out during this phase in the presidential primary process.

It was the pre-New Hampshire debate four years ago on the Republican side when then-New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie devastated Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's presidential ambitions with a well-timed take-down. Rubio never recovered, making it easier for Donald Trump to emerge as his party's presidential nominee.

The stakes were particularly high for Biden, who has played front-runner in virtually every one of the previous seven debates but left Iowa in a distant fourth place. While reporting problems have blunted the impact of the Iowa contest, Biden's weakness rattled supporters who encouraged him to take an aggressive tack Friday night.

Klobuchar made a passionate pitch to moderate-minded voters unhappy with Biden and Buttigieg.

"I'm not a political newcomer with no record, but I have a record of fighting for people," she said. "I know you and I'll fight for you."

The seven-person field highlighted the evolution of the Democrats' 2020 nomination fight, which began with more than two dozen candidates and has been effectively whittled down to a handful of top-tier contenders.

There are clear dividing lines based on ideology, age and gender. But just one of the candidates on stage, Yang, was an ethnic minority.

Campaigning in one of the whitest states in the nation, Steyer repeatedly highlighted his support for

reparations for African-Americans to make up for the impacts of slavery. His steady focus on race Friday was a reminder that he's invested heavily in South Carolina, where black voters are expected to play a deciding role and are central to Biden's strategy for success in later states.

Mike Bloomberg was not onstage Friday night, but the New York billionaire was referenced repeatedly as the candidates took turns bashing the the rich.

The former New York City mayor is bypassing New Hampshire, among the four states that vote this month, in favor of the delegate-rich states that hold primary contests in March and beyond. While no one has ever won the nomination with such a strategy, Bloomberg has caught the attention of establishment-minded Democrats concerned about Biden's viability and Buttigieg's thin resume.

Bloomberg is also poised to spend \$1 billion on his presidential ambitions.

"I don't think anyone ought to be able to buy their way into the nomination or be president of the United States," Warren said in one of her few aggressive moments. "I don't think any billionaire ought to be able to do it and I don't think people who suck up to billionaires in order to fund their campaigns ought to do it."

Associated Press writers Will Weissert in Manchester, New Hampshire, and Thomas Beaumont in Des Moines, Iowa, contributed to this report.

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

Top Brazilian soccer club struggles to get past deadly fire

By **DIANE JEANTET** and **MAURICIO SAVARESE** Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP) — When Marília de Barros Silva heard reports that the widely popular Brazilian soccer club Flamengo was signing a player for almost 17 million euros (\$18.6 million), she felt sadness — but also resentment.

For a year, she has been trying in vain to reach a settlement with the Rio de Janeiro club after her teenage son Arthur Vinicius died in a fire that engulfed his dormitory at the team's academy for young players.

De Barros Silva says she was incredulous over the amount being paid for the team's new star. She says it dwarfs the amount that she and the public defender's office had been trying to get Flamengo to pay in compensation for the loss of her son, a promising defender who had played for Brazil's under-17 team.

Saturday is one year since the fire killed 10 of Flamengo's academy players, all between 14 and 16 years old. It was "the worst tragedy" in the team's 124-year history, club president Rodolfo Landim has repeatedly said since.

Against that grim backdrop, Flamengo turned in one of its best seasons in decades. The team won the Rio state championship, its first Brazilian national league championship since 2009 and the prestigious Copa Libertadores in a nail-biting final against Argentina's River Plate. Flamengo hadn't won the South American crown for 38 years.

But while its 2019 success helped the club sign several million-dollar deals for players, it has reached compensation agreements with just four of the 10 victims' families. Negotiations with the others seem stalled as the police investigation into possible homicide charges concluded Friday.

In a country where one of every five Brazilians is a Flamengo fan, de Barros Silva and other parents wonder when justice, and peace, will come.

"It's Flamengo's insensitivity, of turning that page," she said at her humble home in Rio de Janeiro state.

She and other parents were emotionally destroyed by the club's lack of empathy, she said. Some didn't even receive a phone call from top executives.

"One person came to my house to bring me a Flamengo T-shirt, gave me (Arthur's) passport and the Flamengo flag, but didn't even know Arthur's name," she recalled.

Documents that emerged shortly after the fire showed that for years the club had flouted city regulations at the training facility, accumulated fines and was targeted by state prosecutors who questioned the treatment given to academy players and the container-like structure in which they were housed. Lawyers

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for the academy players' families and fire experts have said that the polyurethane used in the construction of the temporary dorms could have fueled the fast-moving blaze.

Flamengo executives say the conditions at the academy have been improved since the tragedy. The club also stresses that it has been making a court-ordered monthly payment of 10,000 reais (\$2,300) to families.

"Flamengo is an immeasurable force. We feel like ants fighting giants," Mariju Maciel, a lawyer representing the family of one of the victims, said Friday during a hearing at Rio's state legislature.

In 2019, Flamengo saw gross revenues soar to 857 million reais (\$200 million) — the most a Brazilian club has earned in a single year — thanks to sponsors and TV rights. It is also making big money with its players — recent transfers of strikers Vinicius Júnior and Reinier to Spain's Real Madrid reportedly brought the club some 75 million euros (\$82 million).

Such sums allowed the most popular club in Brazil to spend big on obtaining new players.

Just days ago, the club reportedly agreed to pay Inter Milan nearly 17 million euros to sign top scorer Gabriel Barbosa, known as Gabigol, who came last year on a loan. Flamengo's most expensive signing in 2019 was Uruguayan midfielder Giorgian de Arrascaeta, who cost nearly 20 million euros (nearly \$22 million).

The team's windfall has, paradoxically, subjected victims' families to accusations of opportunism. Some Flamengo fans have claimed the families are using the tragedy to try to cash in, staining the image of their beloved team in the process.

Flamengo, too, has been targeted. On at least three occasions, fans of rival clubs have shouted things such as "murderous team" during games. The latest incident, during a match in Rio's historic Maracana stadium last month, triggered an investigation by Rio's sports court.

On Thursday, police investigating the Flamengo fire sent their conclusions -- in 13 volumes -- to the state prosecutors' office for review. Prosecutors will evaluate whether to bring charges for homicide or manslaughter, local media reported.

Flamengo's president, Rodolfo Landim, says the club's financial success and compensations for the victims' families shouldn't be conflated.

"These are two entirely distinct processes. One has to do with the damage that we caused to the families, and the other is the economic result of the club," Landim said in a Sunday interview that was organized by the club and released on its own YouTube channel.

Landim was joined by one of Flamengo's vice presidents, Rodrigo Dunshee, who said he believed the amount they offered families was satisfactory. "We have a limit," he added.

At the state legislature, where Flamengo CEO Reinaldo Belotti appeared before with lawmakers only after they threatened him with a "bench warrant," lawyers for victims' families insisted they hadn't managed to sit down with the club since rejecting their compensation offer months ago.

Lawyers said Friday that the parents haven't sued the club because they don't have access to the police investigation.

As Flamengo looks for another sterling season, the relatives are waiting impatiently for prosecutors to conclude their review of the investigation, and they are learning to live with their loss.

De Barros Silva misses her son most in the evenings, when she usually found time to speak with him by phone.

"My gaze goes directly to my watch at 8:50 p.m. — the time I used to catch up with him," she said. "Interesting that, a mother's heart."

Associated Press videographers Lucas Dumphreys and Diarlei Rodrigues contributed to this report.

Kobe Bryant helicopter had nearly cleared blinding clouds

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — The pilot of the helicopter that crashed and killed Kobe Bryant and eight others was almost out of blinding clouds when he suddenly plunged and crashed into a Southern California hillside, investigators and aviation experts indicated.

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Ara Zobayan had told air traffic control he was climbing to 4,000 feet (1,219 meters) and he rose to 2,300 feet (701 meters), according to an investigative update released Friday from the National Transportation Safety Board.

The helicopter was just 100 feet (30 meters) from the cloud tops and conceivably would have broken through into clear air in a matter of seconds. Air traffic controllers had advised Zobayan that the cloud tops were at 2,400 feet (731.5 meters.) Camera footage later reviewed by the NTSB showed nearby clouds at that estimated height.

The NTSB update didn't make any conclusion about what caused the Jan. 26 crash in Calabasas, northwest of Los Angeles, because the investigation remains underway and a final report isn't expected for a year or so. However, the update did say there was no sign of mechanical failure based on wreckage examined by experts at the scene.

Investigators also believe that since a tree branch at the crash site was cut, the twin engines were working and the rotors turning at the time of impact. All four of the helicopter's blades had similar damage, the update stated.

An unidentified witness told the NTSB the hillside where the crash occurred was shrouded in mist when he heard the helicopter approaching. It sounded normal and he then saw the blue-and-white aircraft emerge from the fog moving forward and down. It started to roll to the left, and he caught a glimpse of the aircraft's belly. Within 2 seconds, it slammed into the hillside just below him.

Veteran pilots have suggested that Zobayan became disoriented in the thick atmosphere.

The pilot's last maneuvers suggest he tried to pop up above the clouds, and he did ascend for perhaps a minute before turning left, said Mike Sagely, a helicopter pilot in the Los Angeles area with 35 years of flying experience.

When pilots inadvertently enter clouds and try to turn instead of still ascending, "probably in the neighborhood of 80 to 90 percent of the time, it's catastrophic," Sagely said.

"When he went into the clouds, he had a full-on emergency," Sagely said.

The helicopter was descending at 4,000 feet (1,219 meters) per minute and slammed into the hillside at more than 180 mph (290 kph).

Air safety consultant Kipp Lau said the speed of the aircraft's descent indicated "you've certainly lost control of the aircraft."

The crash occurred as Bryant and the other passengers were flying from Orange County to Ventura County to attend a girls basketball tournament at Bryant's Mamba Sports Academy. He coached his 13-year-old daughter Gianna's team. She and two teammates died.

A public memorial for Bryant and the other victims is scheduled for Feb. 24 at the Staples Center, where Bryant starred for the Lakers. The date 2/24 corresponds with the No. 24 jersey he wore and the No. 2 worn by Gianna.

Zobayan was a regular pilot for Bryant and the chief pilot for Island Express Helicopters, with more than 8,200 hours of flight time. He was certified to fly solely using instruments — a more difficult rating to attain that allows pilots to fly at night and through clouds when the ground isn't visible — and was a pilot to other celebrities including Los Angeles Clippers star Kawhi Leonard and Kylie Jenner.

During the flight with Bryant's group, Zobayan did not report any equipment problems and sounded calm while communicating to air traffic controllers. His final transmission said he was going to climb above the clouds. Eight seconds after reaching peak altitude, he started the fateful descent.

Former Island Express pilot Kurt Deetz, who regularly flew Bryant to games at the Staples Center, said reading the NTSB's report reinforced how dangerously fast the helicopter was traveling in conditions that had prompted the Los Angeles Police Department and the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department to ground their smaller copters.

"Normally in those conditions, you're pretty cautious. You're proceeding slowly," Deetz said.

The impact tore the helicopter apart. All aboard died from blunt force trauma.

The 50-year-old Zobayan's most recent flight review included training on inadvertently flying into bad

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weather conditions. It covered how to recover if the aircraft's nose is pointed too far up or down and what to do if the helicopter banks severely to one side. He earned satisfactory grades in the review, which took place in May 2019.

Deetz said Zobayan previously had told him that he did not have actual experience flying in clouds, despite being certified. Deetz said that isn't uncommon.

Bryant's helicopter did not have a device called the Terrain Awareness and Warning System, known as TAWS, that signals when an aircraft is in danger of hitting ground. The NTSB has recommended the system be mandatory for helicopters, but the Federal Aviation Administration only requires it for air ambulances. U.S. Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Brad Sherman, both California Democrats, have called for the FAA to mandate the devices.

The others killed included Orange Coast College baseball coach John Altobelli, his wife, Keri and daughter Alyssa; Bryant's friend and assistant coach, Christina Mauser; and Sarah Chester and her daughter Payton, 14. A public memorial for the Altobelli family will be held Monday at Angel Stadium in Anaheim.

Associated Press Writers John Antczak and Justin Pritchard in Los Angeles, Bernard Condon in New York and David Koenig in Dallas and Business Writer Tom Krisher in Detroit contributed.

Haitian president lays out terms for deal with opposition

By MICHAEL WEISSENSTEIN Associated Press

PORT-AU-PRINCE, Haiti (AP) — President Jovenel Moise said Friday that he is optimistic that negotiations with a coalition of his political opponents will succeed in forging a power-sharing deal to end months of deadlock that have left Haiti without a functioning government.

In an interview with The Associated Press, Moise laid out his bargaining position in the talks that began last week in the mission of the papal envoy to Haiti with political opponents and some civil society groups. He said he would accept an opposition prime minister and a shortened term in office, but only after adoption of a constitutional reform strengthening the presidency.

Moise said his efforts to improve living conditions for Haiti's 11 million people had been thwarted during his first three years in office by the constitutional requirement that the National Assembly must approve virtually all significant presidential actions.

He said he would serve only a single term in office so he would not personally benefit from the powers of a stronger presidency.

"It makes me optimistic to see my brothers and sisters from the political opposition, civil society and religious groups," he said. "I think we're at a crossroads."

Moise is a former banana farmer who won 56% of the vote against three opponents in the 2016 election. He made some progress on rural infrastructure projects during his first two years in office. Then the end of subsidized Venezuelan oil aid to Haiti fueled chaos in the Western Hemisphere's poorest nation.

Without the help, the economy shrank, and investigations found questionable spending of hundreds of millions of dollars over the years in aid from the Petrocaribe program run by Venezuela. Protests began over the Petrocaribe misspending and protests snowballed until Moise's opponents waged a near-total lockdown of Haiti's capital for three months last fall.

Protests were accompanied by a constant blocking of Moise's agenda in the National Assembly. A small group of opposition legislators blocked Moise proposals with tactics ranging from filibusters to throwing furniture inside the Senate chamber or calling supporters to block governing party senators access to the building.

The country was unable to organize legislative elections and the National Assembly shut down last month, leaving Moise without a constitutionally recognized government. He says the constitution allows him to rule by decree with legislative approval but he is choosing not to in order to forge national unity.

Observers say developed nations that provide Haiti with most of its state budget are highly reluctant to keep funding a government that could be accused of moving toward dictatorship.

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Haiti's 1987 constitution was drafted after the end of three decades of dictatorship and aims in part to prevent the emergence of another strongman by sharply limiting presidential powers.

"The 1987 constitution took all the power out of the president's hands. The president has zero power and the people demand everything from the president of the republic," Moise told AP in the foyer of his home in the hills above Port-au-Prince.

Moise said he wants a new constitution to stipulate that presidential proposals automatically pass if the National Assembly does not vote them up or down within 60 days.

He also wants all political terms to last five years. Senate terms currently range from two to six years, depending on a variety of factors, leading to constant churn and campaigning in a country where widespread insecurity and corruption make elections difficult to organize.

Convening a constitutional assembly to rewrite the charter would almost certainly take most of Moise's remaining two years in office.

Most of the political opposition has demanded that Moise significantly cut his time in office, with some demanding his immediate resignation and others asking for him to hand over power early next year.

He said negotiations would succeed "if there's good will on the part of the people involved to find a way forward with a realistic calendar."

"You can't say you're going to carry out these reforms in two months," he said.

A coalition of relatively moderate opponents and civil society groups were unable to reach a deal with Moise's representatives last week at the papal nunciature. Another group of hard-line opponents did not participate.

Moise said he thinks he can reach a deal with enough opponents to move the country forward.

"We need to all get together and forge a deal, even if that deal isn't accepted by everyone," he said. "You'll have radicals, extremists who won't sign, who won't accept it, but that won't kill the republic.

"I'm not hung up on finishing my term. I'm hung up on making reforms," he said.

Judge strikes blow to US immigration enforcement tactics

By ELLIOT SPAGAT Associated Press

SAN DIEGO (AP) — A federal judge has prohibited U.S. immigration authorities from relying on databases deemed faulty to ask law enforcement agencies to hold people in custody, a setback for the Trump administration that threatens to hamper how it carries out arrests.

The ruling applies only to the Central District of California, where state law already sharply limits the extent to which state and local law enforcement agencies can honor requests from U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement. But the district encompasses ICE's Pacific Enforcement Response Center in Laguna Niguel, which makes requests around-the-clock to law enforcement agencies in 42 states and two U.S. territories.

The ruling, issued Wednesday, applies even if ICE moves the operation from Laguna Niguel, south of Los Angeles.

U.S. District Judge Andre Birotte Jr. in Los Angeles said the databases are unreliable for people who are not already deported or in removal proceedings before an immigration judge. The best way to confirm legal status is through an interview, immigration records or other documents, he wrote.

During Barack Obama's presidency, immigration authorities dramatically increased requests to prisons and jails to hold people an additional 48 hours if they are suspected of being in the country illegally. The practice, which has continued under President Donald Trump, often gives immigration authorities time to arrest people before they are released.

The White House issued a statement that said an unnamed judge in California issued "a legally groundless and sweeping injunction that — if not immediately lifted — will guarantee the release of innumerable criminal illegal aliens into our communities putting citizens at dire risk."

"This ruling undermines the pillars of immigration enforcement and blocks traditional and vital law enforcement cooperation that has occurred for decades," the statement read.

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ICE said it is reviewing the decision to determine its impact and decide on any next steps.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Southern California filed the case on behalf of Gerardo Gonzalez, a U.S. citizen who was subject to a hold request in 2012 when in custody of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department.

From May 2015 to February 2016, 771, or 6%, of 12,797 requests that ICE issued were either for U.S. citizens or people who were not subject to deportation, according to records introduced at trial last year.

The judge ruled in September that the databases ICE uses "often contain incomplete data, significant errors, or were not designed to provide information that would be used to determine a person's removability."

The decision comes as Trump ramps up criticism of state and local governments, including California, that limit cooperation with immigration authorities, often referred to as "sanctuary" jurisdictions.

Earlier this week, the administration said New York state residents will be cut off from "trusted traveler" programs that speed their re-entry into the country, blaming a new state law that prohibits immigration agents from accessing motor vehicle records.

Tens of thousands of New Yorkers will face the inconvenience of slower re-entry because of a law that administration officials say puts public safety at risk. New York state officials and other administration critics dismissed the Department of Homeland Security's action as a political stunt.

'Serious discussions' about DNC changes, top Democrat says

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — A top Democrat in Congress said Friday the party's future under Tom Perez is under scrutiny amid fallout from the Iowa caucuses and the winnowing of the presidential primary field to the exclusion of candidates of color.

Rep. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, the third-ranking House Democrat, stopped short of saying Perez must go as leader of the Democratic National Committee.

"That's a decision for him," he said.

But the highest-ranking African American lawmaker in the House said during an interview with C-SPAN's "Newsmakers" that Iowa shouldn't play such an outsized role as an early vote state and that debate rules left "very raw feelings" within the Congressional Black Caucus after the exit of black presidential hopefuls Kamala Harris and Cory Booker.

"There are some serious discussions taking place here on Capitol Hill as to what ought to happen at the DNC," Clyburn said in the interview.

"Iowa should be in the mix, but we shouldn't launch the entire campaign with such a small sampling with what the country's all about," he said.

Perez didn't immediately comment on Clyburn's remarks Friday.

Previously, the DNC chairman has defended the rules setting minimums for polling and the number of individual donors, noting that the party started at a low threshold last June and gradually raised the requirements over time. All 20 slots were filled in the first two debates, and two stages were required for much of the fall.

Perez argued throughout that any candidate unable to meet the progressively higher marks like wasn't likely to defeat President Donald Trump in November. Some party officials also have noted that minority voters are still represented on the stage via their support for candidates like Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and former Vice President Joe Biden. The two white men have consistently drawn strong support among non-white voters, according to most polls of Democratic voters nationally.

Clyburn, who fought for years to push South Carolina onto the early primary calendar, signaled he may make his own endorsement ahead of the Feb. 29 primary.

Close with Biden, Clyburn is worried about the impact that Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist, would have on down-ballot races for Congress as a presidential nominee, particularly in more conservative areas.

Clyburn also suggested that Democratic candidate Pete Buttigieg, a former mayor in Indiana, still faces

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“significant challenges” with South Carolina’s black voters, who make up a sizable section of the primary electorate in the Palmetto state. At the same time, he said he’s proud of his grandson, a Buttigieg supporter who appeared in an ad for the campaign. A photo of Clyburn himself also flashed in the ad, which Clyburn said he didn’t mind.

As Sanders and Buttigieg surged in Iowa, Biden’s hopes could rest on South Carolina, which votes fourth among the early states. The candidates face off Tuesday in New Hampshire’s primary and Feb. 22 in Nevada’s caucuses before heading to South Carolina.

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow contributed to this report.

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

Roger Kahn, elegant ‘Boys of Summer’ author, dies at 92

By The Associated Press undefined

MAMARONECK, N.Y. (AP) — Roger Kahn, the writer who wove memoir and baseball and touched millions of readers through his romantic account of the Brooklyn Dodgers in “The Boys of Summer,” has died. He was 92.

He died Thursday at a nursing facility in Mamaroneck, a Westchester County suburb, son Gordon Kahn said.

“Roger Kahn loved the game and earned a place in the pantheon of baseball literature long ago. He will be missed, but his words will live on,” Major League Baseball said in a statement.

The author of 20 books and hundreds of articles, Kahn was best known for the 1972 best-seller that looked at his relationship with his father through their shared love of the Dodgers, an object of nostalgia for the many fans who mourned the team’s move to Los Angeles after the 1957 season.

“At a point in life when one is through with boyhood, but has not yet discovered how to be a man, it was my fortune to travel with the most marvelously appealing of teams,” Kahn wrote.

“The Boys of Summer” was a story of lost youth, right down to its title, later borrowed for a hit Don Henley song about a man longing for his past. Kahn’s book moved back and forth between the early 1950s, when he covered the Dodgers for the New York Herald Tribune, and 20 years later, when some were ailing (Jackie Robinson), embittered (Carl Furillo) or in a wheelchair (Roy Campanella).

The book was an instant hit, although Kahn was criticized for sentimentalizing his story.

“Here is a book that succeeded for me despite almost everything about it,” wrote Christopher Lehmann-Haupt, a late book critic for The New York Times.

Retired Dodgers broadcasting great Vin Scully knew Kahn well from their days with the team — Kahn was a beat writer covering the club, and the same age as Scully.

“You couldn’t travel with them without getting emotionally involved. Roger captured that familial spirit of the players in those days,” Scully told The Associated Press on Friday. “The feeling in Brooklyn was always us against the world — the world would be the lordly pinstripers in the Bronx and almost lordly Giants in Manhattan.”

Scully said Kahn singularly distilled the essence of what it was like to be a Brooklyn player and fan of the team.

“He got it right,” Scully said. “Every year in Brooklyn it was wait till next year. It was only right that in all their years they wound up winning only one World Series and then left.”

Among those featured in the book was Carl Erskine, a star pitcher for those Dodgers.

“I turned 93 in December and for a lot of us who played with Brooklyn then and were in that book, I wouldn’t say it gave us eternal life, but it certainly enhanced our careers,” Erskine told the AP from his home in Anderson, Indiana.

Erskine said he and Kahn bonded over their love for poetry. That once came in particularly handy.

“It was still the early days of airplane travel for teams, and we were on one of those piston planes, flying

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over Pittsburgh on the way from Cincinnati back to New York," Erskine recalled. "It was pretty bumpy, and we were sitting next to each other. To calm our nerves, I started reciting a poem from Robert Service, it was 'The Cremation of Sam McGee.' That was able to distract us from the anxiety of that rough plane ride."

Many years later, Erskine said they were together at a banquet in New York and Kahn mentioned he needed to talk to the pitcher about something.

"So we went over to Toots Shor's and he told me a sad story. He told me he was dry, that he was working on a book but couldn't finish it and didn't know whether anyone would read it," Erskine said.

Hearing what the book was about — it was "The Boys of Summer" — Erskine spurred Kahn by invoking the name of a prominent New York newspaper writer from the Brooklyn era.

"How'd you like to wake up and find out that Dick Young had written your story?" Erskine prodded.

Erskine said he and Kahn stayed in touch over time, from letters in past days to emails in more recent times.

Kahn began his prolific career in 1948 as a copy boy for the Tribune, and soon became a baseball writer, working under famed sports editor Stanley Woodward. He recalled Woodward as "a wonder" who once cured a writer of using the cliché "spine-tingling" by telling him to "go out in the bleachers and ask every one of those fans if his spine actually tingled."

He started writing about the Dodgers in 1952, and by age 26 was the newspaper's prominent sports reporter, earning a salary of \$10,000, and also covering the city's other teams, the Giants and the Yankees.

In 1956, he was named sports editor at Newsweek magazine, and served at the Saturday Evening Post from 1963 to 1969 as editor at large. He also wrote for Esquire, Time and Sports Illustrated.

Kahn's sports writing often drew on social issues, particularly race. He wrote at length about Robinson and his struggles in breaking baseball's color line, and the two formed a long friendship.

"By applauding Robinson, a man did not feel that he was taking a stand on school integration, or on open housing. But for an instant he had accepted Robinson simply as a hometown ball player," Kahn once wrote. "To disregard color, even for an instant, is to step away from the old prejudices, the old hatred. That is not a path on which many double back."

When Kahn was inducted into the National Jewish Sports Hall of Fame in 2006, baseball Commissioner Bud Selig called him "an icon of our game."

Among Kahn's other sports books: 2004's "October Men: Reggie Jackson, George Steinbrenner, Billy Martin, and the Yankees' Miraculous Finish in 1978," 1986's "Joe and Marilyn: A Memory of Love," and 1999's "A Flame of Pure Fire: Jack Dempsey and the Roaring '20s."

One book caused lasting embarrassment: Kahn collaborated with Pete Rose on the 1989 authorized autobiography "Pete Rose: My Story." Rose, the major league's all-time hits leader, had recently been barred from baseball for betting on games and the book featured his insistence that the allegations were untrue.

But Rose acknowledged years later, in a subsequent memoir, that he did gamble. Kahn said his "first reaction was to reach for the barf bag."

"I regret I ever got involved in the book," Kahn told the Los Angeles Times in 2007. "It turns out that Pete Rose was the Vietnam of ballplayers. He once told me he was the best ambassador baseball ever had. I've thought about that and wondered why we haven't sent him to Iran."

Kahn also wrote two novels and two nonfiction books not related to sports: 1968's "The Passionate People: What it Means to be a Jew in America," and the 1970's "The Battle for Morningside Heights: Why Students Rebel." He maintained a friendship with the poet Robert Frost, whom he profiled in the Saturday Evening Post.

He later taught writing at several colleges and lectured at Yale, Princeton and Columbia. In 2004, he served a one-semester fellowship as the Ottaway Endowed Professor of Journalism at the State University of New York in New Paltz.

Kahn was born in Brooklyn in on Oct. 31, 1927, and inherited his love of baseball from his father, Gordon, who played third base for City College.

"There was nobody I enjoyed talking baseball with as much as this green-eyed, strong-armed, gentle, fierce, mustached, long-ball hitting, walking encyclopedia who was my father," he wrote in his 1997

"Memories of Summer."

Both of Kahn's parents were teachers in Brooklyn. His mother, Olga, taught English literature and composition in high school. In recalling the influences on his life as a writer, Kahn mentioned how at bedtime his mother would tell him stories of Greek mythology.

Kahn lived in Stone Ridge in New York's Hudson Valley.

In addition to his son, survivors include wife Katharine Kahn Johnson and daughter Alissa Kahn Keenan. Another son, Roger Laurence Kahn, died in 1987.

A funeral service is set for Monday in Katonah, New York.

Former Associated Press writer Jessica M. Pasko wrote this report. Contributing were AP Baseball Writer Ben Walker in New York, AP Sports Writer Beth Harris in Los Angeles and AP researcher Rhonda Shafner.

Healthy US job market: How big a political edge for Trump?

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. hiring jumped last month, and many more people were encouraged to look for work, showing that the economy remains robust despite threats from China's viral outbreak, an ongoing trade war and struggles at Boeing.

The strong job growth gives President Donald Trump more evidence for his assertion that the economy is flourishing under his watch. It may also complicate the argument his Democratic presidential rivals are making that the economy isn't benefiting everyday Americans.

The Labor Department said Friday that employers added a robust 225,000 jobs in January. At the same time, a half-million Americans, feeling better about their job prospects, streamed into the job market. Most found jobs. But those that didn't were newly counted as unemployed, and their numbers raised the jobless rate to 3.6% from December's half-century low of 3.5%.

Seven Democratic presidential candidates were to debate later Friday in New Hampshire. Leading contenders, notably Sens. Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, have built campaigns around the argument that the middle class has been mostly left out of an economic expansion that has disproportionately served the wealthy.

The outcome of the presidential race could hinge in part on whether enough voters agree that inequality and rising costs for services such as health care, housing and college education outweigh the benefits from nearly 11 years of economic growth.

"Democratic primary voters are very open to messages about the economy doing badly," said Jason Furman, a top economic adviser to former President Barack Obama, said.

Furman added, though, "I don't know that that would be consistent for the electorate as a whole."

As the election intensifies, views of the economy remain broadly polarized. According to a Pew Research Center survey released Friday, 81% of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents say the economy is excellent or good. Only 39% of Democrats and those leaning Democratic say so.

The public overall, Pew notes, holds a more positive view of the economy than at any point in the past 20 years. Fifty-seven percent say they think it is excellent or good, up from 32% in 2016.

Trump and his team can point to several positive trends in Friday's jobs report, though his Democratic opponents can cite some evidence for their contrasting views, too.

Robust hiring has picked up from earlier this year, when the trade war with China raged, and is helping remedy one of the economy's key weaknesses: Even as the unemployment rate fell from a peak of 10% in 2009, millions of Americans were discouraged about finding a job and stopped looking for one. Some returned to school or stayed home to care for relatives.

Yet that trend has nearly reversed itself since 2016. The proportion of Americans in their prime working years — ages 25 through 54 — who either have a job or are looking for one has reached its highest point since September 2008, just before the recession intensified. Economists typically focus on the prime-age population because it filters out the effects of retirement among the vast baby boomer generation.

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Trump officials are also stressing that the job market is now benefiting a wider range of demographic groups.

"We have seen Hispanics, African Americans, Asians, young people, women — all ... are either at their all-time employment lows or very nearly so," Larry Kudlow, the White House's top economic adviser, said Friday.

Trump has also been touting a "blue collar boom," though the evidence for that is mixed. Manufacturers lost jobs in January for the third time in four months. The employment report shows that if there is such a boom, it is among construction and transportation and warehouse workers, who accounted for nearly one-third of last month's hiring. These jobs often pay less than factory jobs of the past.

Wages are also a mixed bag. Hourly pay rose 3.1% in January from a year earlier, a decent pace but below a peak of 3.5% reached last summer. The last time the unemployment rate fell below 4%, in the late 1990s, wages were rising much faster — about 4.5% annually.

Still, pay is picking up for many low-income workers, a trend that Trump has repeatedly pointed to. For the poorest one-quarter of workers, wages rose 4.6% year-over-year in December, the most recent month for which data is available, compared with 3% for the richest quarter, according to the Federal Reserve Bank of Atlanta.

Those outsize gains began in 2015 and have been fueled in part by higher minimum wages in many states.

Yet there are many soft spots in the economy that Democrats can work with, Furman said. For example, a Congressional Budget Office report in December concluded that Trump's 2017 tax cuts disproportionately benefited wealthy Americans. The CBO, a nonpartisan institution, forecasts that the richest 1% of Americans will enjoy roughly triple the gains in after-tax income compared with the bottom fifth.

Nor has the economy's growth reversed long-running wealth disparities. Federal Reserve data shows the top 1% owned more than 32% of the nation's housing and financial wealth, up slightly from when Trump was inaugurated.

Despite the economic strength evident in Friday's job report, analysts warn that hiring could slow in the coming months. January's jobs report was compiled before the spread of the coronavirus, which has sickened thousands in China, closed stores and factories there and led many international businesses to suspend operations involving China.

And Boeing's decision to halt production of its troubled 737 MAX appear to has yet to affect overall job growth. But some Boeing suppliers have announced layoffs that could be felt in next month's jobs report.

Winfrey says King not doing well after social media backlash

NEW YORK (AP) — Oprah Winfrey says her friend Gayle King is facing death threats following a social media backlash caused by an interview with retired WNBA star Lisa Leslie that concerned the late Kobe Bryant.

On an appearance on "Hoda & Jenna & Friends" on Friday, Winfrey said King "is not doing well" and has to travel with security because of threats. "She feels very much attacked."

CBS released an excerpt to promote King's interview with Leslie. The clip, distributed online and on CBS News' social media accounts, focused on a portion of the interview where Leslie addressed a Colorado sexual assault case that had been brought against Bryant and dismissed. In the clip, King asks Leslie whether the 2003 case made Bryant's legacy complicated for her. Leslie said that it did not.

Critics lashed out at King on social media for bringing up the old allegations. Actor, rap artist and television executive 50 Cent told The Associated Press he thought it was unfair because Bryant wasn't around to defend himself. Snoop Dogg posted a profane Twitter video that concluded with him urging King to back off "before we come get you." The Twitter account belonging to imprisoned comedian Bill Cosby also was critical.

King said in a video response via Twitter on Thursday that the clip was shared out of context and expressed anger at her network. "I am mortified, I am embarrassed and I'm very angry," King said. CBS later released a statement saying the clip "did not reflect the nature and tone" of the complete interview.

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Winfrey criticized what she called "misogynist vitriol" against King.

"I can see how people would obviously be very upset if you thought that Gayle was just trying to press to get an answer from Lisa Leslie," Winfrey continued. "Obviously all things pass, she will be OK, but she hasn't slept in two days."

After the alleged victim decided not to pursue the case, she and Bryant reached a settlement in 2005. Bryant, who was 24 at the time of the Colorado incident, said he had not committed sexual assault.

Bryant, his 13-year-old daughter Gianna, and seven other people were killed in a January helicopter crash in Southern California. A memorial will be held at the Staples Center in Los Angeles later this month.

China's Communist Party faces recriminations over virus

By **KEN MORITSUGU** and **MARI YAMAGUCHI** Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — China's ruling Communist Party faced public anger and recrimination Friday over the death of a doctor who was threatened by the authorities after trying to sound the alarm about the new coronavirus back in December. The death toll, meanwhile, rose to nearly 640, and the number of people infected worldwide climbed past 31,400.

Cruise ship passengers faced more woe as Japan reported 41 new cases on one quarantined vessel and turned away another. President Xi Jinping spoke with President Donald Trump and urged the U.S. to "respond reasonably" to the outbreak, echoing complaints that some countries are overreacting by restricting Chinese travelers.

A look at the latest developments:

TREATMENT OF WHISTLEBLOWER DOCTOR INVESTIGATED

Following an online uproar over the government's treatment of Dr. Li Wenliang, the Communist Party struck a conciliatory note, saying it is sending a team to "fully investigate relevant issues raised by the public."

Li, a 34-year-old ophthalmologist, contracted the virus while treating patients, and his death was confirmed early Friday. Li, one of eight medical professionals in Wuhan who tried to warn colleagues and others when the government did not, had said that police forced him to sign a statement admitting he spread falsehoods.

Even the staunchly pro-government Global Times newspaper said the whistleblowers' treatment was "evidence of local authorities' incompetence to tackle a contagious and deadly virus."

The episode has raised longstanding complaints that party officials lie about or cover up disease outbreaks, chemical spills, dangerous consumer products or financial frauds. Chinese citizens can be jailed on charges of rumor-mongering or making trouble.

Most of the deaths from the virus have been of older people with existing health problems, but disease specialists said Li's work — eye doctors sit very close to their patients during examinations — may have subjected him to an extra large dose of the virus that made his illness more severe.

CRUISE SHIP WOES

Japan confirmed 41 new cases of the virus on the quarantined Diamond Princess, adding to 20 escorted off the ship earlier. The nearly 3,700 passengers and crew still on board remain under 14-day quarantine.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said foreign passengers on another ship, Holland America's Westerdam, won't be allowed into Japan. He said suspected virus patients were on board. The ship, with more than 2,000 people, was near Okinawa and was seeking another port, said Overseas Travel Agency official Mie Matsubara.

"We are getting desperate," she said. "We hope we can go somewhere so that passengers can land."

XI, TRUMP TALK VIRUS RESPONSE, TRADE

China's state media quoted Xi as saying China has launched "a people's war against the virus."

"We hope the U.S. side can assess the epidemic in a calm manner and adopt and adjust its response measures in a reasonable way," he added.

Beijing has complained that the U.S. is flying its citizens out of Wuhan but not providing any assistance

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to China.

The U.S. announced later Friday that it is prepared to spend up to \$100 million to help China and other countries fight the outbreak. The government also said it helped with the effort to deliver nearly 18 tons of medical supplies donated to the Chinese by the American people, including masks, gowns, gauze and respirators.

All but one the deaths in the outbreak have been in China. China's National Health Commission said about 4,800 of those being treated, or nearly 17 percent, are in serious condition. The vast majority of the infected are in China; roughly 290 others are in about two dozen other countries, including Japan, Thailand, Singapore and South Korea.

The U.S. has reported 12 cases.

Hundreds more Americans evacuated from the stricken zone in China began arriving Friday in the U.S., where they will be quarantined on military bases for two weeks.

WUHAN RESIDENTS SAY GETTING HELP NOT EASY

Wuhan, the epicenter of the outbreak, has added thousands of beds by building two new hospitals and converting gyms and other spaces into places where patients can be held in isolation. Thousands of military and civilian medical workers have been sent in.

Still, those inside the quarantine zone of some 50 million residents speak of a medical system completely overwhelmed.

Chen Jiaxin, 22, said by telephone from Wuhan that his father fell ill on Jan. 28 but had to return home because no hospital would accept him. When he called for an ambulance after his father's fever spiked on Thursday, Chen said, he was told 400 people were ahead of him and "we were just told to wait and wait."

Mother-of-two Rong Qin, 32, said that her 67-year-old father is feeling sick and is awaiting test results, but that she was told by local officials that even those with a positive diagnosis have to wait for beds.

"What I am hoping now is to put my father in a public quarantine facility so that he doesn't pass the infection on to other family members," she said.

Yamaguchi reported from Tokyo. Associated Press writer Foster Klug in Yokohama, Japan, contributed to this report.

Mexico won't really raffle off huge presidential jet

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexicans will no longer have to worry about where to park a Boeing Dreamliner when the government raffles off the luxurious presidential jet: the air force will keep it.

In fact, nobody will win the actual \$130 million Boeing 787 plane in the lottery-style raffle to be held in coming months.

Among the many desperate attempts to get rid of the expensive plane, President Andrés Manuel López Obrador had toyed with the idea of actually awarding the plane to the winner, along with a year's paid maintenance and parking.

But López Obrador had worried that would cause problems for the winner, both because of the greed it could unleash among friends, relatives and acquaintances, and because the idea had been lampooned on social media, with people posting pictures of shacks or taco stands with a jetliner parked outside.

So the president announced Friday that the raffle will actually be symbolic, awarding total prize money of \$100 million, which lottery tickets state is "equivalent to the value of the presidential jet." One hundred winners will divide equal shares of the \$100 million pot.

"We did not want to award a prize that would be a problem," López Obrador said. "You know, the memes, 'where would I park it?'"

Instead, he said, a cash prize winner would be free to use some of their winnings to rent the plane for a few trips, at the current hourly operating price of about \$13,500 per hour.

The latest scheme didn't convince Mexico City graphic designer Antonio Pérez, who had hoped the president could simply sell the white elephant, without hitting up Mexicans to buy lottery tickets.

"I agree with some of the president's initiatives, but on this one, specifically, I don't agree, because the ones who wind up paying for the plane are going to be the people of Mexico," said Pérez.

López Obrador had tried to sell it, but the plane failed to find a buyer after a year on sale at a U.S. airstrip, where it piled up about \$1.5 million in maintenance costs.

Novelist Eric Marváz agreed the whole thing seemed comic, but noted that at least the president was speaking directly to the people, and not trying to hide anything.

"I think it is quite a hilarious situation, but at least for the first time we're laughing, not crying," said Marváz.

The government hopes to sell 6 million tickets at about \$25 apiece, raising \$150 million. The remaining money will pay to keep the airplane in flight condition while López Obrador tries to sell or rent it. Any net proceeds would go to buy medical equipment.

López Obrador flies tourist class on commercial flights and views the jet, bought for more than \$200 million by his predecessor, as wasteful.

The plane failed to find a buyer after a year on sale at a U.S. airstrip, where it piled up about \$1.5 million in maintenance costs.

The jet is expensive to run and is configured to carry only 80 people, with a full presidential suite with a bedroom and private bath. Experts say it would be too expensive to reconfigure back into a commercial airliner that normally carries as many as 300 passengers.

Previously, López Obrador had suggested bartering the plane in exchange for U.S. medical equipment or selling it in shares to a group of businessmen for executive incentive programs. He has also offered to rent it out by the hour, in hopes of paying off the remainder of outstanding loans on the plane.

Doctor's death highlights dangers on front lines of outbreak

By **MARIA CHENG AP Medical Writer**

LONDON (AP) — The death of a doctor who issued an early warning about the new virus in China represents a grim reminder that the first health care workers to recognize new outbreaks are sometimes among their earliest victims.

Dr. Li Wenliang's death underlined the dangers health workers have faced in similar epidemics, including SARS and Ebola.

On Dec. 3, Li wrote on his social media account that he saw a test sample suggesting the presence of a coronavirus similar to SARS. In early January, the 34-year-old eye doctor was visited by police who forced him to sign a statement admitting to having spread falsehoods.

Within days, he developed a cough and fever, began having trouble breathing and was hospitalized. His death was confirmed Friday, prompting a deluge of messages of mourning and outrage at how he was treated.

The death was an all-too-familiar occurrence, said Dr. Michael Ryan, head of the World Health Organization's health emergencies program.

"We're very sorry to hear the loss of any health care worker that's attempted to care for patients," Ryan said Friday. "We have suffered similar losses like the death of Carlo Urbani during SARS."

In 2003, Urbani was an Italian doctor at the U.N. health agency's Hanoi office and investigated the unusual case of a patient suffering respiratory symptoms in a private hospital. Urbani treated patients, took samples and worked to improve infection control policies in Hanoi.

Weeks later, he died of the same disease — severe acute respiratory syndrome — in a Bangkok hospital.

Doctors working at the early stages of any new outbreak are particularly vulnerable, said Dr. Bharat Pankhania, a University of Exeter infectious disease expert.

"At the beginning, doctors are just not aware of what kind of behaviors may be dangerous," he said. When Li was exposed to the new virus, "he didn't know an outbreak was already underway and what precautions he should take," Pankhania said.

Doctors and nurses also were infected in the early stages of multiple Ebola outbreaks, before the lethal

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disease was recognized and proper infection control policies were implemented.

"It's just bad timing," Pankhania said. "Doctors get infected because they are in the wrong place at the wrong time."

Among people infected in the current outbreak, 82% have suffered only mild disease, WHO estimated. Fatal cases have been most common in people aged over 60 and those with other health problems, like diabetes or high blood pressure. Fewer than 2% have died, according to the latest figures.

Li, however, may have been at risk for a more serious illness because he was treating patients before he knew to take any precautions, doctors said. He also may have been exposed to an especially large dose, given that eye doctors tend to work close to patients' faces.

A study published Friday in the Journal of the American Medical Association underscored the dangers faced by health care workers.

The report detailed illnesses in 138 people treated at Zhongnan Hospital in Wuhan, including 40 hospital workers believed to have become infected on the job. More than 10 of them were presumed to have been infected by a single patient who was admitted to the surgical ward with abdominal symptoms.

Patients also apparently infected other patients, the researchers said. The patients were all adults, adding to evidence that suggests cases in children are rare.

On Friday, WHO warned that increased demand for masks and other protective equipment might further jeopardize health workers responding to the outbreak.

WHO's director-general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, noted that prices have skyrocketed and that there were insufficient quantities of masks and respirators to meet the demands of WHO and its partners.

The problem has been exacerbated by inappropriate use of equipment such as masks, gloves and gowns, he said.

"We need to make sure we get it to the people who need it the most," he said. "Our first priority is health workers."

Jamey Keaten in Geneva and Lindsey Tanner in Chicago contributed to this report.

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Syrian advance sends hundreds of thousands fleeing in Idlib

By SARAH EL DEEB and SUZAN FRASER Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Turkey on Friday sent more troops and tanks to bolster its military presence in northwestern Syria, where President Bashar Assad's forces have been advancing in a devastating, Russian-backed offensive that has sparked a massive wave of people fleeing in wet and blustery winter weather.

Syria's Idlib region near the border with Turkey is the last rebel-held bastion in the war-ravaged country. The push by Assad's forces into towns and villages in the province over the past months has uprooted more than a half-million people who fled the advancing troops. Many of them already have been displaced several times in the 8-year-old Syrian war.

The campaign also has angered Turkey, which backs the rebels, and brought the two countries' troops into a rare, direct confrontation: At least eight Turkish troops and civilians and 13 Syrian soldiers have been killed.

As Syrian and Russian warplanes indiscriminately pounded hospitals, clinics and schools in the enclave, civilians packed their belongings in cars, taxis and pickup trucks. They streamed toward the Turkish border with few options left that are outside Syrian government control.

Many end up in tents or sheltering in abandoned buildings during rainy and windy weather, with temperatures hovering around freezing but predicted to fall over the weekend.

"If they stay, they run the risk of falling victim to the indiscriminate violence taking place in urban areas. If they leave, they have nowhere to go," said Lorenzo Redalié, head of the Aleppo office of the Interna-

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tional Committee of the Red Cross. "The shelters can't accommodate everyone, and it is more and more challenging for humanitarians to reach them and meet their needs."

The Syrian offensive appears aimed for now at securing a strategic highway in rebel-controlled territory, as opposed to an all-out campaign to retake the entire province, including the city of Idlib, the densely populated provincial capital.

Earlier this week, Syrian government troops took control of the former rebel town of Saraqeb, which is strategic because it sits on the intersection of two major highways. One of them leads to the capital, Damascus, to the north, and another connects to the country's western and eastern regions.

Turkey, which backs the Syrian opposition and has been monitoring a cease-fire in the rebel enclave, has protested the government assault, calling it a violation of the truce it negotiated with Russia. In recent weeks, Ankara sent in troops and equipment to reinforce monitoring points it set up to observe a previous cease-fire, which has since crumbled, and also deployed forces around towns that are threatened by the Syrian advance.

Associated Press video showed a long line of armored vehicles and trucks, some carrying tanks, filing into rebel-controlled rural areas of the province. The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, which monitors the war, said the new troops were deployed west of the town of Saraqeb. It was fifth known deployment of new troops into Syria over the last week, according to the Observatory and other opposition news outlets.

"It is shocking that civilians continue to bear the brunt of hostilities between all parties to the conflict," U.N. Human Rights spokeswoman Marta Hurtado said.

"It appears foreign powers are battling for territorial and political gains, while blatantly disregarding their obligation to protect civilians," she told reporters in Geneva.

Idlib and nearby rural Aleppo are the last rebel-held areas in Syria. They are home to more than 3 million people, most of them already displaced by violence.

Hundreds of thousands of people have been on the move in recent weeks, fleeing toward areas closer to the Turkish border. Many of them are being housed in temporary shelters.

Of the 580,000 people who have been displaced since Dec. 1, UNICEF estimated that about 300,000 of them are children.

Also on Friday, Russia's Defense Ministry accused Israel of nearly shooting down a Syrian passenger jet with 172 people aboard during a missile strike on the suburbs of Damascus a day earlier. A spokesman for the Israeli prime minister did not respond to a request for comment, and the AP was unable to verify the Russian allegation. Israel rarely acknowledges any strikes carried out in Syria.

Turkish officials say three Turkish observation posts are inside Syrian-controlled areas in Idlib. A security official, speaking on condition of anonymity in line with government rules, insisted the posts would not be evacuated.

Turkey's Defense Ministry warned the army would respond "even more forcefully" to any attack on the observation posts, adding: "Our observation posts will continue carrying out duties."

There was a brief respite Friday from the air campaign, residents and opposition activists said, with almost no bombardment reported. It was not clear whether that was due in part to a storm that battered the area with strong winds and heavy rain.

The violence has also raised tensions between Moscow and Ankara, which have been working together to secure cease-fires and political talks despite backing opposite sides of the conflict.

Turkish Foreign Minister Mevlut Cavusoglu said a Russian delegation is scheduled to arrive in Ankara on Saturday to discuss the situation in Idlib. A meeting between Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Russian President Vladimir Putin could follow, Cavusoglu said.

"We will do whatever is necessary to stop the human drama, the disaster" in Idlib, Cavusoglu said.

Associated Press Writer Jamey Keaten in Geneva, Daria Litvinova in Moscow and Zeina Karam in Beirut contributed.

Trump's acquittal confronts Dems with election year choices

By ALAN FRAM and ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Donald Trump's impeachment ended with a reminder of why House Speaker Nancy Pelosi resisted the idea for so long — an acquittal everyone saw coming, followed by a bombastic presidential victory lap and a bump in his poll numbers just as the 2020 campaign officially began.

Now Democrats have to decide how to navigate the legislative and political landscape that they've helped reshape.

Pelosi's nationally televised ripping of her copy of Trump's State of the Union address Tuesday night underscored the acrid atmosphere that will make partisan cooperation on any issue difficult. Major legislative compromises were always going to be hard this election year, but the impeachment fight only deepened partisan bitterness and made progress less likely.

"Because we have to," No. 2 House Democratic leader Steny Hoyer of Maryland said when asked how Congress and Trump could cooperate on health care and other issues. He added, "I'd be foolish to be optimistic because we have not done that so far."

Democrats must also decide how vigorously to continue investigations, including into impeachment's focus: Trump's effort to pressure Ukraine's leaders to bolster his reelection by seeking dirt on rival Joe Biden. The GOP-controlled Senate acquitted Trump on Wednesday of both articles of impeachment, with Utah Sen. Mitt Romney the sole lawmaker defying party lines.

Former White House national security adviser John Bolton could still have damaging information about Trump and has expressed a willingness to testify if subpoenaed. House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler, D-N.Y., told reporters Wednesday that House panels would likely summon Bolton and pursue other Trump probes as well.

"When you have a lawless president, you have to bring that to the fore, you have to spotlight that," Nadler said.

Speaking to reporters at the White House on Friday, Trump pushed back once again and argued that his impeachment should be expunged from the congressional record. He also claimed that he was willing to work with Democrats, but then accused the party's elected leaders of suffering from "Trump derangement syndrome."

"They've got a bad case of it," Trump said. "That was on display the other night when (Pelosi) ripped up the speech. That was terrible ... so disrespectful to our country." He added that the Democrats were "not constructive people."

Even as they consider the path ahead, neither Pelosi nor Democrats controlling the House are second-guessing their decision to impeach Trump.

Pelosi stood as a bulwark against impeachment for months as pro-impeachment sentiment rose steadily in her caucus, but when Trump's dealings with Ukraine came to light in September, the floodgates were forced open.

"Once Ukraine happened, we had no choice but to proceed," said Rep. Peter Welch, D-Vt.

"And had we not (acted)," Welch added, "there would have been a huge price to pay politically."

While that's a popular view with Democrats' dominant liberal wing, many think an overemphasis on Trump investigations risks feeding the Republican narrative that overreaching Democrats are obsessed with pursuing him. They also worry about detracting from Democrats' focus on pocketbook issues that helped them capture House control in the 2018 elections.

"I'm hoping that's a side show, and the big show is let's work for the American people" on issues like health care and infrastructure," said Rep. Lou Correa, D-Calif., co-chairman of the Blue Dog Coalition, which represents around 25 moderate House Democrats.

Assessing impeachment's political impact ahead of November's elections is at least as fraught.

Democrats say despite Trump's acquittal, the trial trained prolonged attention on his sordid behavior and lashed GOP senators to him with their votes absolving him. They say that will weaken their reelection

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bids of GOP senators in swing states like Colorado, Maine and Arizona.

"This reinforced the view that Trump is unethical and lacking in integrity," said Democratic pollster Geoffrey Garin. "And it's exposed a number of Republican senators as hacks beholden to the president and Mitch McConnell," the Senate majority leader from Kentucky whom Democrats love to target.

Republicans counter that the effort has electrified GOP voters just months before Election Day, citing a Gallup Poll showing Trump with a 49% job approval rating, the highest of his presidency. They say Pelosi made tactical errors that exposed Democrats' impeachment drive as a blatantly political exercise, in the process weakening more than two dozen House Democrats from Trump-won districts.

"The President has his highest approval rating since he's been in office," said Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. "I can tell you as a poll watcher who's looking at polls in certain Senate races every one of our people in tough races, every one of them, is in better shape today than they were before the impeachment trial started."

Republicans were especially critical of House Democrats' decision to not fight more in the courts to obtain testimony and documents. Democrats said they dropped such efforts because Trump could have forced legal battles lasting months, effectively derailing the impeachment effort. Republicans said that decision made it easy to portray Democrats as caring less about a serious investigation than politics.

"You didn't even bother to pull all the levers," said Scott Jennings, a longtime political adviser to McConnell.

Many Democrats say there would have been no way to prevent Republicans from complaining that the investigation was political and lacked sufficient evidence.

"They'd have said that if you'd produced volumes more evidence," said John Lawrence, Pelosi's chief of staff for eight years ending in 2013.

And while Democrats collected compelling evidence against Trump, they made the mistake of thinking they'd win by appealing broadly to voters, said Brendan Buck, a GOP consultant who's advised congressional leaders. Republicans prevailed by aiming their arguments at the GOP's core conservative supporters, a tactic that has driven Trump's presidency.

"Democrats seemed to play by the old rules and the president played by the new rules," Buck said.

One moderate House Democrat said Democrats facing difficult reelection fights from Trump-leaning districts think Pelosi made tactical decisions that could jeopardize them.

That includes her one-month delay in formally sending the House's impeachment articles to the Senate. That fed the GOP argument that the effort was political, said the Democrat, who spoke on condition of anonymity to describe private conversations.

This Democrat said lawmakers also recoiled at Pelosi's decision to sign the impeachment articles and distribute pens as mementos to colleagues. The Democrat said voters in their districts often cited that televised ceremony as evidence that impeachment was politically motivated.

"They ran as, 'I'm not just a regular Democrat, I'll reach across party lines,'" said former Rep. Tom Davis, R-Va., who once ran the House GOP's campaign organization. "And here they are impeaching the president like this."

One thing many from both parties agree on: By November, impeachment could well be superseded by other issues and will likely be conflated into an overall referendum on Trump.

"My honest guess is that the public will very rapidly turn to kitchen table issues," said former Rep. David Obey, D-Wis.

Ireland's two-party system shaken by Sinn Fein surge

By JILL LAWLESS and NICOLAE DUMITRACHE Associated Press

DUBLIN (AP) — Ireland's elections are usually two-horse races. But this time there's a third contender, as a party with historic links to the Irish Republican Army soars in the polls.

As Irish voters prepare to choose a new parliament on Saturday, a restive electorate is rattling the two parties that have dominated the country's politics since it won independence from Britain a century ago, Fianna Fail and Fine Gael.

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Polls show a surprise surge — maybe even a lead — for Sinn Fein, the party historically linked to the IRA and its violent struggle for a united Ireland.

Sinn Fein is a major force in Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., but has long been a minor political player in the Republic, shunned by the bigger parties because of its ties to the IRA. But the party's left-wing proposals for tackling Ireland's housing crisis and creaking healthcare system are striking a chord, especially with young voters.

Sinn Fein President Mary Lou McDonald said this week that there was a "thirst for change" in Ireland. "The people were ahead of the curve in real terms in articulating the kind of profound change that they want. People were telling us 'We want change and by the way you are it, so get ready and serve us well,'" she said on Friday, the final day of campaigning.

The two big parties, whose origins lie on opposing sides of Ireland's 1920s civil war, are fierce rivals but share a broadly center-right outlook. For decades power has alternated between them.

Ireland's next Taoiseach, or prime minister, is highly likely to be either current Prime Minister Leo Varadkar of Fine Gael or Fianna Fail leader Micheal Martin.

But support for the two parties has fallen since the 2008 global financial crisis, which hit the debt-fueled "Celtic Tiger" economy particularly hard. Ireland was pushed to the brink of bankruptcy and forced to seek a humiliating international bailout that was followed by years of austerity.

The last election, four years ago saw voters shift in big numbers to protest parties and independents. It produced a Fine Gael minority government propped up by Fianna Fail votes.

Varadkar took office after becoming Fine Gael leader in 2017. The son of an Indian doctor and an Irish nurse, he was Ireland's youngest-ever Taoiseach and its first openly gay leader. For many, he was the face of a confident, modern Ireland that has loosened the grip of the Roman Catholic church, legalized abortion and same-sex marriage, revitalized a long-stagnant economy and built up a thriving high-tech sector.

Internationally, Varadkar was the face of Ireland during Britain's lengthy divorce negotiations with the European Union. The outcome of those talks was crucial to Ireland, the only EU country to share a land border with the U.K.

Most people think Varadkar and his party handled Brexit well, securing guarantees that people and goods will continue to flow freely between Ireland and the north. But that's unlikely to bring him an electoral reward. Polls suggest Fine Gael is trailing both Sinn Fein and Fianna Fail, though the margins are narrow.

Jonathan Evershed, a postdoctoral researcher in government and politics at University College Cork, said Varadkar wasn't getting much credit for his leadership on Brexit because Britain's exit from the now 27-nation bloc, which became official on Jan. 31, is widely seen as "mission accomplished — there will be no hard border on the island of Ireland."

That has left an election dominated by domestic problems, especially a growing homelessness crisis, house prices that have risen faster than incomes and a public health system that hasn't kept up with demand.

Both Fine Gael and Fianna Fail say they will build more houses, ease hospital overcrowding and cut waiting times for medical treatment. But their proposals look like tinkering compared to Sinn Fein's more radical — and costly — plans to raise taxes on the wealthy, freeze rents, build tens of thousands of new homes and lower the state pension age.

The big parties say Sinn Fein's socialist plans would hurt businesses and hit economic growth. And they have tried to remind voters of the party's ties to past violence.

Sinn Fein's links with the IRA, which disarmed after Northern Ireland's 1998 peace accord, became an issue late in the election, when the mother of a Northern Ireland man who was beaten to death in 2007 — a killing the family blames on the IRA — accused party members of slandering her son as a criminal and failing to reveal what they knew about his death.

Fianna Fail's Martin said Sinn Fein was not fit to govern because "they have not cleansed themselves of their bloody past."

Sinn Fein denied Irish republicans were involved in the killing, but the party was put on the defensive. McDonald — a capable, 50-year-old Dubliner who has helped the party shed its hard-line Troubles-era image — condemned the murder as "barbaric."

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Sinn Fein's struggle for a united Ireland has been on the back burner during the election, but it is calling for a referendum on Northern Ireland rejoining the south within five years. That's not something an Irish government could deliver without the support of Britain and Northern Ireland — highly unlikely in the short term.

But Brexit looks likely to nudge Northern Ireland's economy closer to that of its southern neighbor, and could yet increase pressure for a poll on unification.

Under Ireland's proportional representation system, no party is likely to get the 80 seats they need for a majority in the 160-seat Dail, parliament's lower house, so some form of coalition government is likely.

Sinn Fein is running only 42 candidates, too few to win outright, but could hold the balance of power. Fianna Fail and Fine Gael both say they won't form a coalition with Sinn Fein — but their resolve could be tested if the party does well.

Evershed said that, whatever the result, the election "has demonstrated the extent to which Sinn Fein has moved into the political mainstream."

"They play the long game," he said of the nationalist party. "If they don't get into government this time, I think that they will view whatever happens as nonetheless a success, because it becomes a staging post for the next time."

Varadkar, battling to keep his job, made a plea for voters to think before casting their ballots.

"Bear in mind that all change isn't change for the better," Varadkar said Tuesday during a televised leaders' debate. "We saw in Britain with Brexit, people voting for change and they got Brexit. We saw Donald Trump being elected in the U.S. — that's not the kind of change we want."

Jill Lawless reported from London.

Cyborgs, trolls and bots: A guide to online misinformation

By DAVID KLEPPER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Cyborgs, trolls and bots can fill the internet with lies and half-truths. Understanding them is key to learning how misinformation spreads online.

As the 2016 election showed, social media is increasingly used to amplify false claims and divide Americans over hot-button issues including race and immigration. Researchers who study misinformation predict it will get worse leading up to this year's presidential vote. Here's a guide to understanding the problem:

MISINFORMATION VS. DISINFORMATION

Political misinformation has been around since before the printing press, but the internet has allowed falsehoods, conspiracy theories and exaggerations to spread faster and farther than ever.

Misinformation is defined as any false information, regardless of intent, including honest mistakes or misunderstandings of the facts. Disinformation, on the other hand, typically refers to misinformation created and spread intentionally as a way to confuse or mislead.

Misinformation and disinformation can appear in political ads or social media posts. They can include fake news stories or doctored videos. One egregious example of disinformation from last year was a video of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that was slowed down to make her sound as if she were slurring her words.

Research indicates that false claims spread more easily than accurate ones, possibly because they are crafted to grab attention.

Scientists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology analyzed more than 126,000 stories, some true and some false, that were tweeted millions of times from 2006 through the end of 2016. They found that misleading or incorrect stories traveled six times faster — and reached more people.

Online misinformation has been blamed for deepening America's political polarization and contributing to distrust in government. The risks were highlighted in 2016 when Russian trolls created fake accounts to spread and amplify social media posts about controversial issues.

WAR OF THE BOTS AND CYBORGS

The disposable foot soldiers in this digital conflict are bots. In the social media context, these auto-

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mous programs can run accounts to spread content without human involvement.

Many are harmless, tweeting out random poems or pet photos. But others are up to no good and designed to resemble actual users.

One study by researchers at the University of Southern California analyzed election-related tweets sent in September and October 2016 and found that 1 in 5 were sent by a bot. The Pew Research Center concluded in a 2018 study that accounts suspected of being bots are responsible for as many as two-thirds of all tweets that link to popular websites.

While flesh-and-blood Twitter users will often post a few times a day, about a variety of subjects, the most obvious bots will tweet hundreds of times a day, day and night, and often only on a specific topic. They are more likely to repost content rather than create something original.

And then there's the cyborg, a kind of hybrid account that combines a bot's tirelessness with human subtlety. Cyborg accounts are those in which a human periodically takes over a bot account to respond to other users and to post original content. They are more expensive and time consuming to operate, but they don't give themselves away as robots.

"You can get a lot from a bot, but maybe it's not the best quality," said Emilio Ferrara, a data science researcher at the University of Southern California who co-wrote the study on Twitter bots. "The problem with cyborgs is they are much harder to catch and detect."

SPOT THE BOTS

Bots can be hard to spot, even for the best researchers.

"We have 12 ways that we spot a bot, and if we hit seven or eight of them we have pretty high confidence," said Graham Brookie, director of the Atlantic Council's Digital Forensic Research Lab, a Washington, D.C.-based organization that studies connections between social media, cybersecurity and government.

Nonetheless, Brookie recalled the case of a Twitter account from Brazil that was posting almost constantly — sometimes once per minute — and displayed other bot-like characteristics. And yet, "It was a little grandma, who said, 'This is me!'"

Their prevalence and the difficulty of identifying them has made bots into a kind of digital bogeyman and transformed the term into an insult, used to dismiss other social media users with different opinions.

Michael Watsey, a 43-year-old New Jersey man who often tweets his support for President Donald Trump, said he has been repeatedly called a Russian bot by people he argues with online. The accusations prompted Twitter to temporarily suspend his account more than once, forcing him to verify he is a human.

"All I'm trying to do is uses my First Amendment right to free speech," he said. "It's crazy that it's come to this."

TROLLS AND SOCK PUPPETS

The word troll once referred to beasts of Scandinavian mythology who hid under bridges and attacked travelers. Now it also refers to people who post online to provoke others, sometimes for their own amusement and sometimes as part of a coordinated campaign.

Sock puppets are another oddly named denizen of social media, in this case a type of imposter account. While some users may use anonymous accounts simply to avoid identifying themselves, sock-puppet accounts are used by the owner to attack their critics or praise themselves. In October, Utah Sen. Mitt Romney acknowledged operating a secret Twitter account under the name "Pierre Delecto," which he used to defend himself against criticism.

FAKED VIDEOS: DEEP, CHEAP AND SHALLOW

Deepfakes are videos that have been digitally created with artificial intelligence or machine learning to make it appear something happened that did not. They are seen as an emerging threat, as improvements in video editing software make it possible for tricksters to create increasingly realistic footage of, say, former President Barack Obama delivering a speech he never made, in a setting he never visited. They are expensive and difficult to create — especially in a convincing way.

Facebook announced last month that it would ban deepfake videos — with exceptions for satire. Beginning in March, Twitter will prohibit doctored videos, photography and audio recordings "likely to cause harm." Material that is manipulated but isn't necessarily harmful may get a warning label. And YouTube

bans “deceptive uses of manipulated media” that could pose serious risk of harm.

By contrast, shallowfakes, cheapfakes or dumbfakes are videos that have been doctored using more basic techniques, such as slowing down or speeding up footage or cutting it.

Examples include a doctored video posted by Britain’s Conservative Party before December’s U.K. election that made it seem like a Labour Party official was struggling to respond to a question about Brexit.

Because they’re easy and inexpensive to make, cheapfakes can be every bit as dangerous as their fancier cousin, the deepfake.

“Deepfakes are getting more realistic and easier to do,” said John Pavlik, a journalism professor at Rutgers University who studies how technology and the internet are changing communication habits. “But you don’t have to have special software to make these simpler ones.”

Researchers who study Americans’ changing media habits recommend that people turn to a variety of sources and perspectives for their news, use critical thinking when evaluating information on social media, and think twice about reposting viral claims. Otherwise, they say, misinformation will continue to flow, and users will continue to spread it.

“The only solution,” Ferrara said, “is education.”

High water wreaks havoc on Great Lakes, swamping communities

By JOHN FLESHER AP Environmental Writer

MANISTEE, Mich. (AP) — Rita Alton has an unusual morning routine these days: Wake up. Get dressed. Go outside to see if her house is closer to tumbling down an 80-foot (24.4-meter) cliff into Lake Michigan.

When her father built the 1,000-square-foot (93-square-meter), brick bungalow in the early 1950s near Manistee, Michigan, more than an acre of land lay between it and the drop-off overlooking the giant fresh-water sea. But erosion has accelerated dramatically as the lake approaches its highest levels in recorded history, hurling powerful waves into the mostly clay bluff.

Now, the jagged cliff top is about eight feet from Alton’s back deck.

“It’s never been like this, never,” she said on a recent morning, peering down the snow-dusted hillside as bitter gusts churned surf along the shoreline below. “The destruction is just incredible.”

On New Year’s Eve, an unoccupied cottage near Muskegon, Michigan, plunged from an embankment to the water’s edge. Another down the coast was dismantled a month earlier to prevent the same fate.

High water is wreaking havoc across the Great Lakes, which are bursting at the seams less than a decade after bottoming out. The sharp turnabout is fueled by the region’s wettest period in more than a century that scientists say is likely connected to the warming climate. No relief is in sight, as forecasters expect the lakes to remain high well into 2020 and perhaps longer.

The toll is extensive: homes and businesses flooded; roads and sidewalks crumbled; beaches washed away; parks were rendered unusable. Docks that boats previously couldn’t reach because the water was too shallow are now submerged.

At one point last year, ferry service was halted in the Lake Erie island community of Put-In-Bay after the vessels’ landing spot disappeared beneath the waves. On Mackinac Island in Lake Huron, portions of the only paved road washed away.

Homeowners and agencies are extending battered seawalls, constructing berms and piling stones and sandbags. Some are elevating houses or moving them farther inland. Even shanties in a historic Michigan fishing village dating to 1903 are being raised. The state’s environment department has issued more than 400 permits for such projects.

The situation is inspiring soul-searching over how to cope with a long-term challenge unique to this region. While communities along ocean coasts brace for rising seas, experts say the Great Lakes can now expect repeated, abrupt swings between extreme highs and lows.

“It wasn’t long ago they were worried about Lake Michigan drying up. Now it’s full,” said Rich Warner, emergency services director for Muskegon County. “All these ups and downs — I don’t know if that’s something you can truly plan for.”

Levels are always changing in the Great Lakes, which together hold about 90% of the surface fresh water

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in the U.S. They typically decline in fall and winter, then rise in spring and summer as melting snow and rainfall replenish them. Broader fluctuations take place over longer periods. Levels surged in the 1980s before dropping sharply in the 2000s.

But increasingly, the highs are higher and the lows lower — and the variations happen faster. Lakes Superior, Huron and Michigan had bigger jumps between 2013-14 than during any comparable period. It took just seven years to go from record slumps to all-time peaks.

Lakes Ontario and Erie last year reached their highest points since record keeping began in 1918. Superior surpassed several all-time monthly averages and did so again in January. Lakes Huron and Michigan did likewise last month, according to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Detroit.

Even Ontario, where a hydropower dam provides more stability, has experienced record highs twice in the past three years.

“That’s not supposed to happen,” said Drew Gronewold, a University of Michigan hydrologist. “That lake is carefully regulated.”

Climate change is believed to influence water temperatures and precipitation, which wage a constant tug-of-war with lake levels. Warmer water boosts evaporation, which pushed levels downward about 20 years ago. But as the atmosphere warms, it sucks up more moisture from other regions and dumps it into the lakes, filling them back up.

“Those two forces are increasing in intensity at the same time,” suggesting the up-and-down shifts may become more extreme, Gronewold said.

How long before the waters recede is anyone’s guess. The Army Corps predicts the lakes will exceed their long-term averages through June. Michigan and Huron already are 17 inches (43 centimeters) higher than a year ago.

Another ominous sign: Ice cover is light this winter. Shoreline ice provides a buffer against pounding waters. In its absence, Chicago’s Lake Michigan waterfront was battered by waves reaching 23 feet (7 meters) high during a mid-January storm.

That means the potential for further damage will increase as spring snowmelt and rains arrive, said Ethan Theuerkauf, a Michigan State University geologist.

“This would include extensive beach, dune and bluff erosion, but also damage to coastal infrastructure and more lakefront homes falling in,” he said.

Members of Congress from the region are seeking federal funds for barrier construction, dredging and restoring shorelines. State lawmakers in Michigan are pushing to expand the criteria for declaring emergencies that could trigger government assistance for people struggling to protect their homes.

But local officials acknowledge a need for innovative approaches to the lakes’ increasing fickleness.

In South Haven, Michigan, consultants have developed a \$16.3 million list of infrastructure projects, including installing structures to absorb and dispel energy from Lake Michigan waves.

The Lake Erie town of Luna Pier, Michigan, is considering spending millions to replace dikes built nearly a half-century ago — a steep price for a village of only 1,500 residents. A waterfront hotel on Mackinac Island has hired specialists from Finland to revise its drainage.

“The climate is doing some weird and crazy things and we need to be prepared with stronger and more flexible infrastructure instead of just covering cracks,” said Herasanna Richards, legislative associate with the Michigan Municipal League.

The recent surge also has rekindled longstanding debates over what government can do to control levels — particularly on Lake Ontario, where they’re partially regulated by outflows to the St. Lawrence River through a hydropower dam. A U.S.-Canadian commission oversees how much water leaves the lake, based on the needs of competing interests such as shoreline homeowners, commercial shippers and wetlands.

Meanwhile, some people living along Lake Huron and Lake Michigan are demanding that Canada stop releasing water from two hydro projects into Lake Superior, even though it has elevated levels only by a few inches since the 1940s.

“Every inch counts,” said Don Olendorf, a leader of a property owners’ group pushing for the change. His house is about 30 feet (9 meters) from the edge of an eroding Lake Michigan bluff.

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Alton, whose house is precariously close to the Manistee-area cliff, says she can't afford to move it. She has pleaded for help from local officials without success.

"At some point I'm going to have to leave," she said, "because it's going to go over."

Follow John Flesher on Twitter at @johnflesher.

Today in History By The Associated Press

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Feb. 8, the 39th day of 2020. There are 327 days left in the year.

Today's Highlights in History:

On Feb. 8, 1924, the first execution by gas in the United States took place at the Nevada State Prison in Carson City as Gee Jon, a Chinese immigrant convicted of murder, was put to death.

On this date:

In 1587, Mary, Queen of Scots was beheaded at Fotheringhay Castle in England after she was implicated in a plot to murder her cousin, Queen Elizabeth I.

In 1862, the Civil War Battle of Roanoke Island, North Carolina, ended in victory for Union forces led by Gen. Ambrose E. Burnside.

In 1910, the Boy Scouts of America was incorporated.

In 1922, President Warren G. Harding had a radio installed in the White House.

In 1952, Queen Elizabeth II proclaimed her accession to the British throne following the death of her father, King George VI.

In 1968, three college students were killed in a confrontation between demonstrators and highway patrolmen at South Carolina State University in Orangeburg in the wake of protests over a whites-only bowling alley. The science-fiction film "Planet of the Apes," starring Charlton Heston, had its world premiere in New York (it went into general release the following April.)

In 1971, NASDAQ, the world's first electronic stock exchange, held its first trading day.

In 1973, Senate leaders named seven members of a select committee to investigate the Watergate scandal, including its chairman, Sen. Sam J. Ervin, D-N.C.

In 1976, Martin Scorsese's violent urban drama "Taxi Driver," starring Robert De Niro, was released by Columbia Pictures.

In 1989, 144 people were killed when an American-chartered Boeing 707 filled with Italian tourists slammed into a fog-covered mountain in the Azores.

In 1992, the XVI Olympic Winter Games opened in Albertville (AL'-bur-vihl), France.

In 1993, General Motors sued NBC, alleging that "Dateline NBC" had rigged two car-truck crashes to show that 1973-to-87 GM pickups were prone to fires in side impact crashes. (NBC settled the lawsuit the following day and apologized for its "unscientific demonstration.")

Ten years ago: Endeavour and six astronauts rocketed into orbit, hauling a new room and observation deck for the International Space Station. Michael Jackson's personal physician, Dr. Conrad Murray, pleaded not guilty to involuntary manslaughter in the death of the pop superstar in Los Angeles Superior Court. (Murray was convicted in 2011 and served two years in jail.) The Nielsen Co. estimated that 106.5 million people watched the New Orleans Saints upset the Indianapolis Colts in the Super Bowl, beating the 1983 "M-A-S-H" finale, which had 105.97 million viewers. U.S. Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., died at a hospital in Arlington, Virginia, at age 77.

Five years ago: A riot erupted outside a major soccer stadium in Egypt, with a stampede and fighting between police and fans killing at least 19 people. At the Grammy Awards in Los Angeles, Sam Smith won best new artist, record of the year, song of the year for "Stay with Me" and best pop vocal album; Beck won album of the year for "Morning Phase."

One year ago: A fire swept through the sleeping quarters of an academy for a Brazilian professional soc-

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cer club, killing 10 teenage players. A second woman accused Virginia Democratic Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax of sexual assault, saying he had raped her 19 years earlier while they were both students at Duke University. Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam made it clear that he would not resign, defying the demands of fellow Democrats after a racist photo from his 1984 medical school yearbook surfaced and he acknowledged wearing blackface in the 1980s. (State Attorney General Mark Herring, also a Democrat, had also acknowledged wearing blackface at a college party.)

Today's Birthdays: Composer-conductor John Williams is 88. Newscaster Ted Koppel is 80. Actor Nick Nolte is 79. Comedian Robert Klein is 78. Actor-rock musician Creed Bratton is 77. Singer Ron Tyson is 72. Actress Brooke Adams is 71. Actress Mary Steenburgen is 67. Author John Grisham is 65. Retired NBA All-Star and College Basketball Hall of Famer Marques Johnson is 64. Actor Henry Czerny is 61. The former president of the Philippines, Benigno Aquino III, is 60. Rock singer Vince Neil (Motley Crue) is 59. Rock singer-musician Sammy Llanas (YAH'-nus) (formerly w/The BoDeans) is 59. Former Environmental Protection Agency administrator Lisa P. Jackson is 58. Movie producer Toby Emmerich is 57. Actress Missy Yager is 52. Actress Mary McCormack is 51. Rock musician Keith Nelson is 51. Basketball Hall of Famer Alonzo Mourning is 50. Actress Susan Misner is 49. Dance musician Guy-Manuel de Homem-Christo (Daft Punk) is 46. Actor Seth Green is 46. Actor Josh Morrow is 46. Rock musician Phoenix (Linkin Park) is 43. Actor William Jackson Harper is 40. Actor Jim Parrack is 39. Folk singer-musician Joey Ryan (Milk Carton Kids) is 38. Actress-comedian Cecily Strong is 36. Rock musician Jeremy Davis is 35. Hip-hop artist Anderson.Paak is 34. Rock musician Max Grahm (Carolina Liar) is 32. Actor Ryan Pinkston is 32. NBA star Klay Thompson is 30. Professional surfer Bethany Hamilton is 30. Actress Karle Warren is 28.

Thought for Today: "Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; an argument an exchange of ignorance."
— Robert Quillen, American journalist (1887-1948).

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