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Chicken Soup
for the Soul

“THE
DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN THE
DIFFICULT AND
THE IMPOSSIBLE
IS THAT THE
IMPOSSIBLE
TAKES A LITTLE
LONGER TIME.”
-LADY ABERDEEN

Congratulations Groton Area Graduates and Families from the Groton Lions & Leos Clubs... To help you celebrate this milestone, we invite you to Summer Fest 2020 in the Groton City Park, Sunday, July 12th. Summer Fest may help you with a fun place for your guests to spend some time between graduation events. See our flyer below or go to Summer Fest 2020 on Facebook.

4th Annual SUMMER FEST
9am-4pm Sunday, July 12, 2020
Groton City Park  Groton, SD Lions Club

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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#121 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

We're going to try switching up the approach to analysis tonight. I may like this and continue or hate it and try something entirely different; time will tell. This takes longer than what I've been doing (of course), so we'll see how sustainable it is in the long run.

Things do not look great tonight. We're at 2,356,000 cases, which reflects 35,400 new case reports today, an increase of 1.5%. That's a bad number, back over 30,000 and well up from yesterday. The seven-day average of new cases increased more than 30% in the past week; there are 26 states with 5% or greater increases in new cases. This is not going in a good direction at all.

I have 19 states/territories showing percentage increases in total cases greater than the figure for the country as a whole; I'm going to say those are states that bear watching. I'll list them with their percentage increases: AZ (6.6), TX (4.3), AR (3.7), NV (3.6), SC (3.5), CA (3.4), ID (3.4), FL (3.3), GA (3.0), LA (2.7), OK (2.7), OR (2.7), UT (2.3), TN (2.2), MO (2.2), AL (2.1), NC (1.8), KY (1.8), PR (1.8).

I had a look at estimated R_e for each state; this data set includes DC and PR, but none of the other territories, so I don't have figures for GU, VI, or MP. None of the territories is worrying at the moment except for PR, so this isn't a big problem for now. If you recall from our earlier discussions of R_e , this is reproduction number, the number of people to whom each case will, on average, transmit the infection. When R_e is over 1, the number of new infections will continue to grow; when it is at 1, the number will remain steady; when it is below 1, the number of new infections will decline with time.

The first thing I'll note is that every one of the states listed above except for KY (at 0.98) has an R_e at or over 1. At present, 26 states show R_e above 1; but it should be noted a few of these are states with very small numbers of cases, where small changes unduly influence the computation of R_e . For example, WV, WY, VT, AK, HI, and MT all show R_e at or over 1, but these are also the six states with the lowest total numbers of cases to date. I'm not going to worry about them unless there gets to be a trend of big increases relative to population, and I'm not seeing that now.

The states that concern me at present are those with large percentage increases relative to the US as a whole plus an $R_e > 1$. I'm not an epidemiologist, so I am not 100% sure of the soundness of this approach, but it seems reasonable to me, so I'm going to go with it for a while. If I'm far off base, we'll see that in the next week or two, and I'll adjust my thinking. I will also note that not a single one of the states now showing R_e at or higher than 1 was there two months ago; they were all below 1 at that time. In fact, two months ago, there were only 6 states over 1 at all. This gives us an idea of the shift that has occurred in where the hot spots are, as well as the overall worsening situation that has been obscured in the totals by the huge case numbers in just two states, NY and NJ. Now that their situations have stabilized, we need to set them aside and dig around underneath the totals to see current trends, and that's what I hope we'll be able to accomplish with this new focus. We'll see how that goes.

We are hearing that, as the EU is making decisions about reopening its borders, it is pretty seriously considering a travel ban for the US because we have failed to control Covid-19. The benchmark they're considering as a criterion is the EU's average number of new infections over the past 14 days, which is 16 per 100,000 people. The US is now at 107 per 100,000, far above that benchmark. I can't say that I blame them for their caution; if I were deciding, I believe I'd put us on the banned list too. This virus is

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nothing to mess with.

The eight states showing the greatest increases over the last fourteen days are CA, TX, FL, GA, AZ, NC, LA, and OH. The eight states showing the most least change in new case numbers over the last fourteen days are NY, NJ, MA, CT, CO, IA, NE, and SD. And the eight states showing the greatest decreases over the last fourteen days are IL, PA, MI, MD, VA, IN, MN, and WI.

We're at 121,167 deaths in the US. This means 861 deaths were reported today from Covid-19, a considerable increase from yesterday's 327. That number has been on a fairly steady decline since early this month with many days under 500, but we've been expecting it to increase at some point. As we've discussed before, deaths are a lagging indicator, and it looks like they're starting to reflect recent increases in cases. None of this is what we've been wanting to see. I've been very concerned lately about the trends, and nothing I see here relieves that concern.

Seven states are reporting new highs for hospitalizations; these are California, Arizona, Texas, Arkansas, Tennessee, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Arizona leads the nation in new case increases and is running out of ICU beds. New case reports were over 5000 in California and Texas; and three other states, Nevada, Arizona, and Missouri, reported one-day highs. Arizona has doubled its number of cases in the last two weeks. 33 states and territories have a seven-day average higher this week than last. For Texas, this rolling average has increased 70% from last Tuesday's average and sets a record for the 11th consecutive day, so the state has set a record for seven-day average, one-day new case reports, and hospitalizations, as well as a test positivity rate of 9%. This is a state in trouble. Against this backdrop, the administration has declared that federal support for testing sites will end on June 30.

Ohio is one state where an upward trend in cases is difficult to interpret at the moment. The trend began last week. New case reports had been running close to 400 per day, then starting last Wednesday, the new case numbers have been over 500 every day and at or over 700 on two days. The seven-day average, which smooths out day-to-day fluctuations in testing and reporting, was 381 on June 12 and has increased every day since, reaching 566 yesterday.

There are a few things operating here: Ohio has been reopening, there has been a large increase in testing from 76,000 three weeks ago and 80,000 two weeks ago to 102,000 last week, and they've added some old cases from May, April, and earlier to the totals. I don't have their positivity rate trend to add to this assessment; that would be instructive. It can be helpful to look at hospitalization rates to sort out what's going on in a situation like this one, and there we haven't seen the same spike. The numbers of hospitalizations and of ICU patients are slightly up the past couple of days, but are, overall, well below the numbers from April through early June. Now hospitalizations tend to lag new case reports because a patient frequently is ill for a number of days before showing up as a hospital patient, so this bears watching; but it's probably too early to panic. Reopening, though, does present its risks, so we'll see what happens in the next week or so.

A disturbing trend was noted by Dr. Anthony Fauci in his testimony to the House Energy and Commerce Committee today. He told members, "We're seeing more and more complications in young people." Florida's governor also noted a trend in new cases in his briefing today, saying, "What we've seen, particularly over the last week, is a real explosion in new cases amongst our younger demographic," noting that the median age of new cases has dropped from 65 years of age early on and the mid-50s more recently to 35—and even younger in some locations—in the past week. This could be a concern as young people seem to be leading the charge to abandon precautions and socialize.

The company that makes remdesivir, which must be given intravenously, so is limited to hospital use, is preparing to test an inhaled version of the drug which could be taken by nebulizer at home. There's been

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some thinking it would be more effective if used earlier in the course of infection, which presupposes administration outside the hospital setting, so phase 1 trials to test for safety are scheduled to begin soon. It is believed, if the virus can be attacked early before lung damage or a damaging immune response occur, there will be better clinical outcomes. Key will be how well it is absorbed via a different administration route and determining what dose is helpful, especially if we're thinking of inhalation of a drug by lungs which may already be damaged. Not all drugs are well-absorbed when inhaled, and there may be toxicity issues as well. But if this works, it would be an addition to our arsenal of tools.

We need to talk about asymptomatic individuals, not the presymptomatic who are not currently experiencing symptoms before they get sick, but the truly asymptomatic who never get sick at all. We've known for a fair time that these folks disseminate detectable virus, but not whether the virus they shed is infectious. We don't yet know for sure, but the evidence is stacking up to show that these folks can, indeed, transmit infectious virus. Patterns of spread in close populations like nursing homes and ships show there is a fair number of people who remain asymptomatic and who may well represent a threat to others. There is also work from Japan and South Korea which indicates some of those without symptoms have lung abnormalities similar to those in people who are sick, some of them very sick; this raises the specter of undetected damage in those asymptomatic folks.

What each of us can take from this is the possibility we are right now infected and infecting others. It is essential to go out into the world behaving as though we are infected and taking steps to protect others. It also points up the necessity to spread our testing efforts to those who do not have symptoms so we can get a handle on how many of us may be shedding virus to others. Knowing this may be key to gaining control over this pandemic.

I read a piece by Tom Frieden, director of the CDC from 2009 to 2017. He wrote about areas which need our focus in order to bring the pandemic under control.

He talked first about case counts and the need to pay attention to who gets tested and how intensive testing is. He pointed out that we need to give more attention to the positivity rate of tests done than to the raw number of tests that are done and to the need to test soon after patients feel sick, intensively in congregate living situations like nursing homes and prisons, as well as to isolate and trace contacts of diagnosed cases. He explained that R_e , reproduction number, is going to lag by a week or more and should not necessarily be relied upon as a basis for making day-to-day decisions. He also made the point that shifting recommendations do not necessarily result from errors in judgement, but rather from new, better information; new recommendations represent progress. He wrote that contact tracing is the essential step in bringing the pandemic under some control.

Dr. Frieden then recommended we make some changes. He suggested we track the number of unlinked infections, those without an identified source case or event; reducing these will enable us to improve contact tracing and other control measures. He mentioned that testing the right people, getting results quickly, and isolating infected people rapidly stops spread, saying there should be no more than three days from symptom onset to isolation. He also pointed out that the "fundamental outcome indicator of a contact tracing program" is the proportion of cases arising among quarantined contacts because, if we can get to a point where all new cases arise from among known, quarantined contacts, the disease stops spreading. He recommended tracking and reducing the number of infections among health care workers and giving attention to excess mortality as an indicator of how this infection is moving through the population so that we can appropriately target interventions. The way to save lives and restore livelihoods is to understand and stop this virus through careful tracking of these indicators.

A concern has arisen about clinical trials for both treatments and preventives around the people included

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in the trials. There has been a long history of excluding older people from trials, even when the diseases for which treatments are being tested are ones that affect this group more than others; and this appears to be playing out again in the current pandemic situation. Dr. Mark Sloan, hematologist working on a drug study at Boston Medical Center, says, "Ideally, the patients enrolled in a randomized clinical trial reflect the demographics of the disease. Unfortunately, this is seldom the case." And now, even though 80% of American deaths have occurred in people over age 65, as many as a quarter of interventional trials are excluding or underrepresenting these people.

Because this disease and most treatments are going to have disparate impact on older adults, excluding them from trials can skew the results sufficiently to make interpreting the results with respect to this population difficult. Older people can make research slower, more complicated, and more expensive; but the potential for different outcomes in this age group make it essential that they be included. Their other illnesses and medications, as well as their tendency to suffer more side effects, can make it more difficult to conduct a study, but those same characteristics make it important to include them in the sample.

If we can talk about unconventional possibilities for a moment, there is a tantalizing one for achieving some nonspecific protection against SARS-CoV-2 with already-approved pharmaceuticals. This time, it's live, attenuated (weakened) vaccines for other pathogens; for some of these, there is some evidence of improved host responses against unrelated infections—infections for which the vaccine was never intended. This means, in addition to the specific (targeted) response to the vaccine's antigen, say, measles virus, there is some general improvement in nonspecific (nontargeted general) responses that sort of spill over to other pathogens.

It appears these vaccines may induce trained innate (nonspecific) immune cells which improve overall host responses and thereby offer some level of protection against broader infectious threats, including Covid-19 due to the activity of leukocyte (white blood cell) precursors in the bone marrow. What seems to be going on in lab experiments regarding this coronavirus is that these activated leukocyte precursors, long-lived myeloid-derived suppressor cells (MDSCs), which are induced by prior vaccination, inhibit the severe lung inflammation associated with mortality in Covid-19. Two vaccines in particular stand out as possibilities.

BCG (Bacille Calmette-Guerin) is an attenuated (weakened) strain of *Mycobacterium bovis*, a close cousin of the tuberculosis bacterium, *Mycobacterium tuberculosis*, used to immunize people against tuberculosis. BCG and SARS-CoV-2 have little in common, but it appears the immune boost conferred by BCG may actually strengthen responses to this coronavirus too. This is something we discussed a week or so ago, that general cranking-up of the immune system that spills over to unrelated pathogens. We don't actually know whether it works, but given BCG's low cost, ready availability, and safety, it wouldn't hurt to try. And so someone will.

It has been suggested that MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) vaccine could be helping to induce a response that assists in protecting against Covid-19. Here, there does appear to be similarity between proteins in the involved viruses, especially the spike protein of SARS-CoV-2 and the fusion protein of measles virus, which helps that virus invade human cells just as the spike protein does for the coronavirus. Recent events seem to provide support for this possibility: The 955 sailors aboard the USS Theodore Roosevelt who tested positive with only one hospitalization are interesting, given all Navy recruits are given an MMR vaccination, and there appears to be a correlation between locations where the MMR is routinely given and reduced Covid-19 death rates. Also, the small impact of Covid-19 on small children has been noted, along with the suggestion their recent and more frequent exposures to live attenuated vaccines have induced the trained suppressive MDSCs. Adults who received the MMR as children probably still have some level of antibodies against the viruses immunized, but the myeloid-deprived suppressor cells are likely gone;

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these MDSCs are long-lived, but not generally life-long.

We aren't sure there is a cross-reactive response to SARS-CoV-2 and either of these vaccines, but it appears possible, so work is being done to explore these. There is work being done to test MMR in a nonhuman primate model; if that shows efficacy, a move to human trials would likely follow shortly. Since both of these vaccines are already approved as safe, many hurdles to their use are already cleared. I'll be watching for further news.

I read yesterday about a cool opportunity for students at a couple of high schools and residents of a retirement community in Alexandria and Falls Church, Virginia, called the Companion Program. It pairs teenagers with seniors in an effort to connect them during the pandemic. There's a history between the schools and the retirement community which has included performances and other intergenerational activities, so when students and elders were both separated from their peers and the world by shutdowns, this partnership was seen as a good way to provide social opportunities and a way to use their time. Students submitted a short description of their interests in order to facilitate good matches, and folks were paired up. They've been in regular phone, Skype, Zoom, or e-mail contact ever since, sometimes spending an hour or more at a time. The program has proven so popular that there has been a waiting list to get into it.

One resident said, "I've come to feel that [the lockdown] is the hardest thing I've had to face in my life. . . . Talking with Callie during the pandemic is the most fun thing I do. . . . Of course, Callie's youth and effervescence is absolutely wonderful." And her partner, Callie, said she looks forward to their conversations. "She has so much interesting stuff to talk about I'm kind of amazed that she's so able to be happy and positive." And Callie's mother explains that this has become an integral part of her daughter's life since she's been without her extracurricular activities and her peers. "I can't think of anyone, ever, that Callie has spent this much time on the phone with. Callie at the dinner table will talk about things she and Ms. Gillespie have talked about. You can see a little pep in her step after each conversation."

There is a plan to hold a reception when the pandemic is over where the participants can all meet in person. There is also a plan to continue the program into the future. One of the organizers, Tiffany Proctor, director of life enrichment at Goodwin House, one of the communities, tells us, "The hope is that we're planting seeds for something even greater to grow, and shifting to a society that's more connected and more supportive of one another, even beyond this moment." That sounds like something I've been thinking a lot about over the past couple of months myself. Valentina Raman, the schools' director of service learning and social entrepreneurship, explained, "There was a mutual need. Our students were also feeling the effects of not being able to see their friends; they also felt the loneliness and isolation of the moment."

Did you get that? See a need, fill the need. There's a theme here, a good one.

Stay well. I'll see you tomorrow.



Gibbs has Yard of the Week

The Ann Gibbs yard at 406 E. 9th Ave. has been chosen as this week's Yard of the Week. Her son, Clark, does the mowing of the yard and is not pictured. The Yard of the Week is sponsored by the Groton Garden Cub. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	June 10	June 11	June 12	June 13	June 14	June 15	June 16
Minnesota	28,523	28,869	29,316	29,795	30,172	30,471	30,693
Nebraska	15,883	16,025	16,315	16,513	16,633	16,725	16,851
Montana	554	561	563	573	588	601	609
Colorado	28,347	28,499	28,647	28,822	29,017	29,130	29,299
Wyoming	760	768	793	811	832	841	856
North Dakota	2901	2941	2980	3016	3058	3080	3101
South Dakota	5523	5604	5665	5742	5833	5898	+5928
United States	1,979,971	2,000,464	2,023,347	2,048,986	2,074,526	2,094,069	2,111,622
US Deaths	112,006	112,924	113,820	114,669	115,436	115,732	116,114
Minnesota	+299	+346	+447	+479	+377	+299	+222
Nebraska	+131	+142	+290	+198	+120	+92	+126
Montana	+6	+7	+2	+10	+15	+13	+8
Colorado	+164	+152	+148	+175	+195	+113	+169
Wyoming	+12	+8	+25	+18	+21	+9	+15
North Dakota	+21	+40	+39	+36	+42	+22	+21
South Dakota	+52	+81	+62	+77	+91	+65	+30
United States	+19,786	+20,493	+22,883	+25,639	+25,540	+19,543	+17,553
US Deaths	+999	+918	+896	+849	+767	+296	+382
	June 17	June 18	June 19	June 20	June 21	June 22	June 23
Minnesota	30,882	31,296	31,675	32,031	32,467	32,920	33,227
Nebraska	17,031	17,226	17,415	17,591	17,707	17,810	17,957
Montana	614	630	655	666	698	717	734
Colorado	29,442	29,673	29,901	30,187	30,349	30,539	30,705
Wyoming	866	884	906	927	930	947	974
North Dakota	3124	3166	3193	3226	3251	3288	3313
South Dakota	5966	6050	6109	6158	6225	6297	6326
United States	2,137,731	2,163,290	2,191,200	2,222,600	2,255,119	2,280,969	2,312,302
US Deaths	116,963	117,717	118,435	119,131	119,719	119,977	120,402
Minnesota	+129	+414	+379	+356	+436	+453	+307
Nebraska	+180	+195	+189	+176	+116	+103	+147
Montana	+5	+16	+25	+11	+32	+19	+17
Colorado	+143	+231	+228	+286	+162	+190	+166
Wyoming	+10	+18	+22	+21	+3	+17	+27
North Dakota	+23	+42	+27	+33	+25	+37	+25
South Dakota	+38	+84	+59	+49	+67	+72	+29
United States	+26,109	+25,559	+27,910	+31,400	+32,519	+25,850	+31,333
US Deaths	+849	+754	+718	+696	+588	+258	+425

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June 22nd COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

14 counties have positive cases and 10 have only recovered cases. South Dakota registered only 29 positive cases with Brown County having two, Clark County 1, and Spink County 1. Otherwise, it's a fairly quiet day on the COVID-19 front.

Minnehaha had 11 cases and Pennington County 5. Beadle County had 7 recovered with no positives and Buffalo County had 5 recovered with no positives.

Statewide, the active cases nosedived by 19, down to 808. Brown County seen no change in its 21 active cases.

There were no new deaths in the Dakotas.

Brown County:

Active Cases: No Change (21)
Recovered: +2 (303)
Total Positive: +2 (326)
Ever Hospitalized: +1 (17)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +20 (2654)
Percent Recovered: 92.9% (No Change)

South Dakota:

Positive: +29 (6326 total)
Negative: +274 (67003 total)
Hospitalized: +8 (616 total). 88 currently hospitalized (down 21 from yesterday)
Deaths: 0 (81 total)
Recovered: +48 (5437) total
Active Cases: -19 (808)
Percent Recovered: 86.0% Up .4

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Butte +1 (403), Campbell 61, Haakon 219, Harding 34, Jones 26, Perkins 73, Potter 162, unassigned +33 (5186).

Aurora: +2 recovered (28 of 34 recovered)
Beadle: +7 recovered (387 of 494 recovered)
Bon Homme: +1 recovered (10 of 11 recovered)
Brookings: +1 positive (34 of 52 recovered)
Brown: +2 positive, +2 recovered (303 of 326 recovered)
Brule: +2 recovered (11 of 15 recovered)
Buffalo: +5 recovered (41 of 66 recovered)
Charles Mix: +1 positive (20 of 49 recovered)
Clark: +1 positive (10 of 12 recovered)
Clay: +2 recovered (57 of 73 recovered)
Codington: +1 recovered (43 of 49 recovered)
Davison: +1 recovered (28 of 35 recovered)
Fall River: +1 positive (4 of 7 recovered)
Hamlin: +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 of 11 recovered)
Hanson: +1 positive (2 of 5 recovered)
Lincoln: +3 recovered (294 of 323 recovered)

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Lyman: +1 positive (27 of 48 recovered)
Meade: +1 positive (31 of 43 recovered)
Minnehaha: +11 positive, +5 recovered (3255 of 3534 recovered)
Oglala Lakota: +1 positive, +1 recovered (37 of 56 recovered)
Pennington: +5 positive, +13 recovered (303 of 462 recovered)
Spink: +1 positive (5 of 8 recovered)
Union: +2 recovered (104 of 117 recovered)
Yankton: +1 positive (54 of 69 recovered)

Fully recovered from positive cases: Day 13-13, Deuel 1-1, Douglas 4-4, Grant 13-13, Gregory 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Sanborn 13-13, Sully 1-1.

The NDDoH & private labs report 2,227 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 25 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 3,313. NDDoH reports no new deaths.

State & private labs have reported 158,199 total completed tests.

2,952 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	688	11%
Black, Non-Hispanic	962	15%
Hispanic	1041	16%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	842	13%
Other	677	11%
White, Non-Hispanic	2116	33%

County of Residence	# of Deaths
Beadle	6
Brown	2
Jackson	1
Jerauld	1
Lake	1
Lincoln	1
McCook	1
Meade	1
Minnehaha	54
Pennington	11
Todd	1
Union	1

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Cases
Aurora	34	30	255
Beadle	494	387	1291
Bennett	2	0	255
Bon Homme	11	10	530
Brookings	52	34	1472
Brown	326	303	2654
Brule	15	11	425
Buffalo	66	41	398
Butte	0	0	403
Campbell	0	0	61
Charles Mix	49	20	476
Clark	12	10	294
Clay	73	57	862
Codington	49	43	1716
Corson	15	11	114
Custer	7	1	419
Davison	35	28	1490
Day	13	13	376
Deuel	1	1	268
Dewey	4	0	755
Douglas	4	4	292
Edmunds	5	4	280
Fall River	7	4	529
Faulk	22	16	90
Grant	13	13	493
Gregory	1	1	214
Haakon	0	0	219
Hamlin	11	9	328
Hand	7	4	172
Hanson	5	2	118
Harding	0	0	34
Hughes	32	24	949
Hutchinson	10	8	631

Hyde	3	3	85
Jackson	6	2	266
Jerauld	39	35	220
Jones	0	0	26
Kingsbury	5	3	376
Lake	17	12	621
Lawrence	16	11	1137
Lincoln	323	294	3941
Lyman	48	27	585
Marshall	5	4	239
McCook	8	6	434
McPherson	4	3	158
Meade	43	31	1104
Mellette	2	1	159
Miner	5	2	168
Minnehaha	3534	3255	17895
Moody	21	19	421
Oglala Lakota	56	37	1744
Pennington	462	303	5698
Perkins	0	0	73
Potter	0	0	162
Roberts	40	37	893
Sanborn	12	12	166
Spink	8	5	807
Stanley	12	10	118
Sully	1	1	38
Todd	50	40	792
Tripp	12	8	301
Turner	24	23	612
Union	117	104	1192
Walworth	7	5	352
Yankton	69	54	2065
Ziebach	2	1	106
Unassigned****	0	0	5186

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	3040	45
Male	3286	36

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	645	0
20-29 years	1299	1
30-39 years	1372	3
40-49 years	1036	5
50-59 years	1007	12
60-69 years	566	13
70-79 years	212	7
80+ years	189	40

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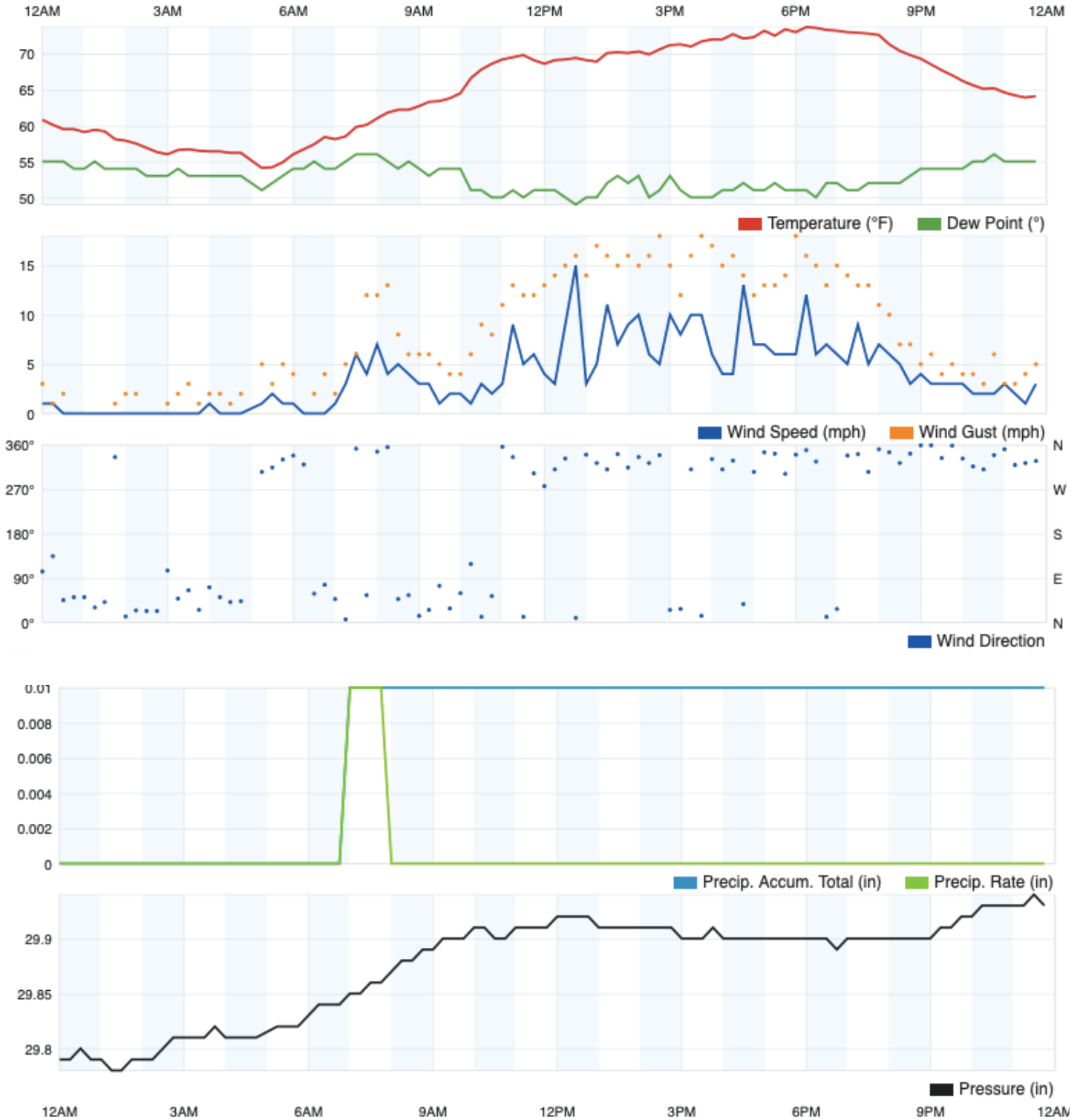
Baseball Schedule

Date	Team	Opponent	Location	Time
June 23	Jr. Legion	Claremont	Groton	6:00 (1)
June 24	Jr. Legion	Faulkton	Faulkton	6:00 (2)
June 24	Jr. Teener	Milbank	Groton	5:30 (2)
June 25	Jr. Teener	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)
June 26	Legion	Clark	Groton	5:30 (2)
June 27	Jr. Teener	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	2:00 (2)
June 27	Legion	Redfield	Redfield	2:00 (1)
June 28	Jr. Teener	Northville	Groton	4:00 (2)
June 29	Jr. Legion	Redfield	Groton	6:00 (2)
June 29	Legion	Webster	Webster	6:00 (2)
June 30	Jr. Legion	Northville	Northville	6:00 (2)
July 1	Jr. Teener	Lake Norden	Groton	5:30 (2)
July 1	Legion	Northville	Northville	6:00 (2)
July 2	Jr. Teener	Clark	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 6	Jr. Legion	Clark	Groton	5:30 (2)
July 7	Legion	Redfield	Redfield	6:00 (2)
July 9	Jr. Legion	Milbank	Milbank	5:30 (1)
July 9	Legion	Milbank	Milbank	7:00 (1)
July 10	Jr. Legion	Faulkton	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 14	Jr. Legion	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	5:30 (1)
July 14	Legion	Lake Norden	Lake Norden	7:00 (1)
July 15	Jr. Legion	Redfield	Redfield	6:00 (2)
July 15	Legion	Webster	Groton	6:00 (2)
July 20	Jr. Legion	Clark	Clark	6:00 (2)
July 20	Legion	Northville	Groton	6:00 (2)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 77 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 55 °F

Wednesday



Sunny

High: 83 °F

Wednesday
Night



Mostly Clear

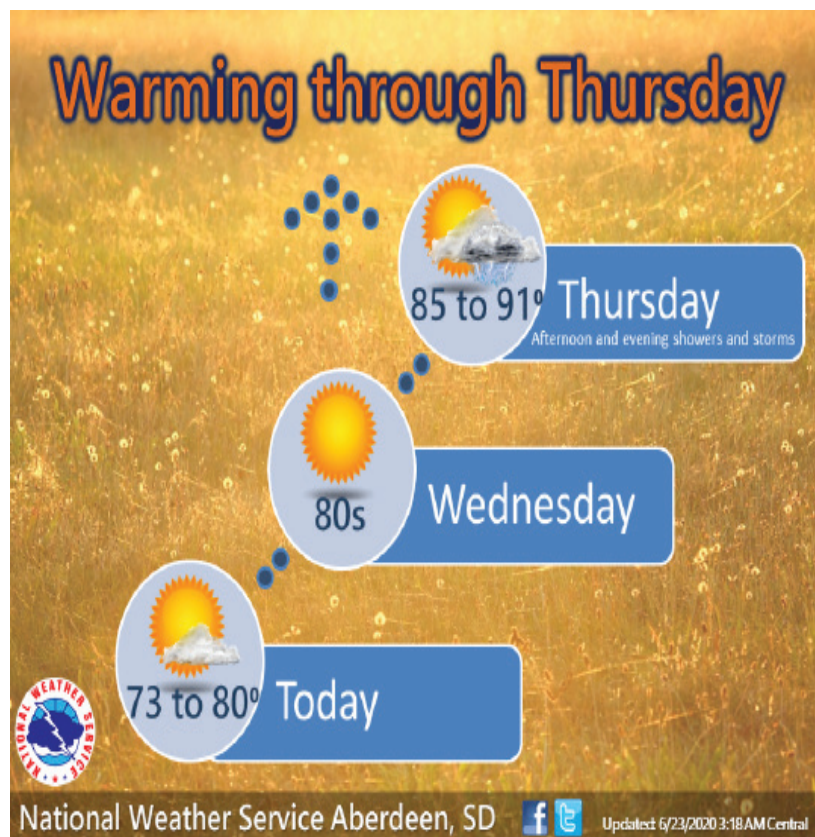
Low: 60 °F

Thursday



Sunny then
Slight Chance
T-storms

High: 89 °F



Dry high pressure, with quiet and comfortable weather, will linger into Wednesday morning. The area of high pressure will shift into Minnesota Wednesday, allowing warmer air to move in from the southeast. Temperatures will rise into the mid 80s to near 90 degrees by Thursday afternoon. The next chance of showers or storms will arrive Thursday afternoon to mainly central South Dakota, and linger over much of the area into Friday.

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Today in Weather History

June 23, 1914: A destructive, estimated F3 tornado moved east across Altamont Township in Brown County. All buildings were destroyed on at least four farms. A man was killed trying to keep his family from being blown out of a shallow cellar.

Another storm moved east from the southeastern part of Watertown to north of Goodwin. Over 200 homes were heavily damaged at Watertown by both an estimated F2 tornado and downburst winds. Barns were destroyed on three farms east of Watertown. The estimated cost was at \$200,000.

June 23, 2002: A powerful supercell thunderstorm produced six tornados from eastern McPherson County and across northern Brown County during the evening hours. The first tornado to touchdown was a brief F0, and occurred 6.4 miles northeast of Leola and resulted in no damage. The second tornado was an F1 and touched down 8.5 miles northeast of Leola and crossed over into Brown County where it dissipated 9 miles northwest of Barnard. This tornado brought down many trees and a barn and caused damage to the siding and the roof of a farmhouse in McPherson County. A third weak satellite F0 tornado occurred following the dissipation of the second tornado and resulted in no damage. A fourth, stronger F3 tornado developed 6 miles west of Barnard and moved east before dissipating 3 miles southeast of Barnard. This tornado brought down some high power lines along with a support tower and tossed a pickup truck 100 yards into a group of trees. The pickup truck was totaled. The tornado caused extensive damage to two farmhouses, several farm buildings, and farm equipment. One farmhouse lost the garage and had many trees completely snapped off down low and debarked. The fifth tornado developed 5 miles southeast of Barnard and became a violent F4 tornado. This tornado caused damage to one farmhouse, several outbuildings, trees, and equipment as it moved northeast and strengthened. The tornado then completely demolished two unoccupied homes, several outbuildings, along with destroying or damaging some farm equipment before dissipating 7.6 miles northeast of Barnard. The sixth tornado was a weak satellite F0, which occurred with this violent tornado and caused no damage. The F4 tornado was the first recorded in Brown County and one of few recorded in South Dakota. The total estimated property loss exceeded a million dollars.

1944: The deadliest and strongest tornado in the state of West Virginia occurred on this day. The Shinnston Tornado that ravaged a path of destruction from Shinnston to Cheat Mountain, then on to Maryland and ending in Pennsylvania in the Allegheny Mountains, is the only twister to produce F4 damage in West Virginia. This tornado killed 103 people.

2010: An F2 tornado destroyed approximately 50 homes and caused damages estimated to be \$15 million in Midland, Ontario. 12 people were reported to be injured. Ontario provided immediate provincial assistance of up to \$1 million to aid in cleanup and repairs.

1902 - The temperature at Volcano Springs, CA, soared to 129 degrees to set a June record for the U.S. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1957 - A few miles west of Fort Stockton TX, softball size hail injured 21 persons unable to find shelter, mostly farm laborers. Some livestock were killed. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A massive hailstorm hit eastern Colorado causing an estimated 60 to 70 million dollars damage. At La Junta, CO, hail as large as softballs caused 37 million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thirty-four cities reported record high temperatures for the date. The reading of 90 degrees at Bluefield, WV, equalled their record for the month of June. The record high of 104 degrees at Billings, MT, was their thirteenth of the month. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Six cities in the High Plains Region reported record low temperatures for the date, including Sheridan, WY, with a reading of 38 degrees. Showers and thunderstorms in the eastern U.S. deluged New Castle County, DE, with 2.5 inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary)

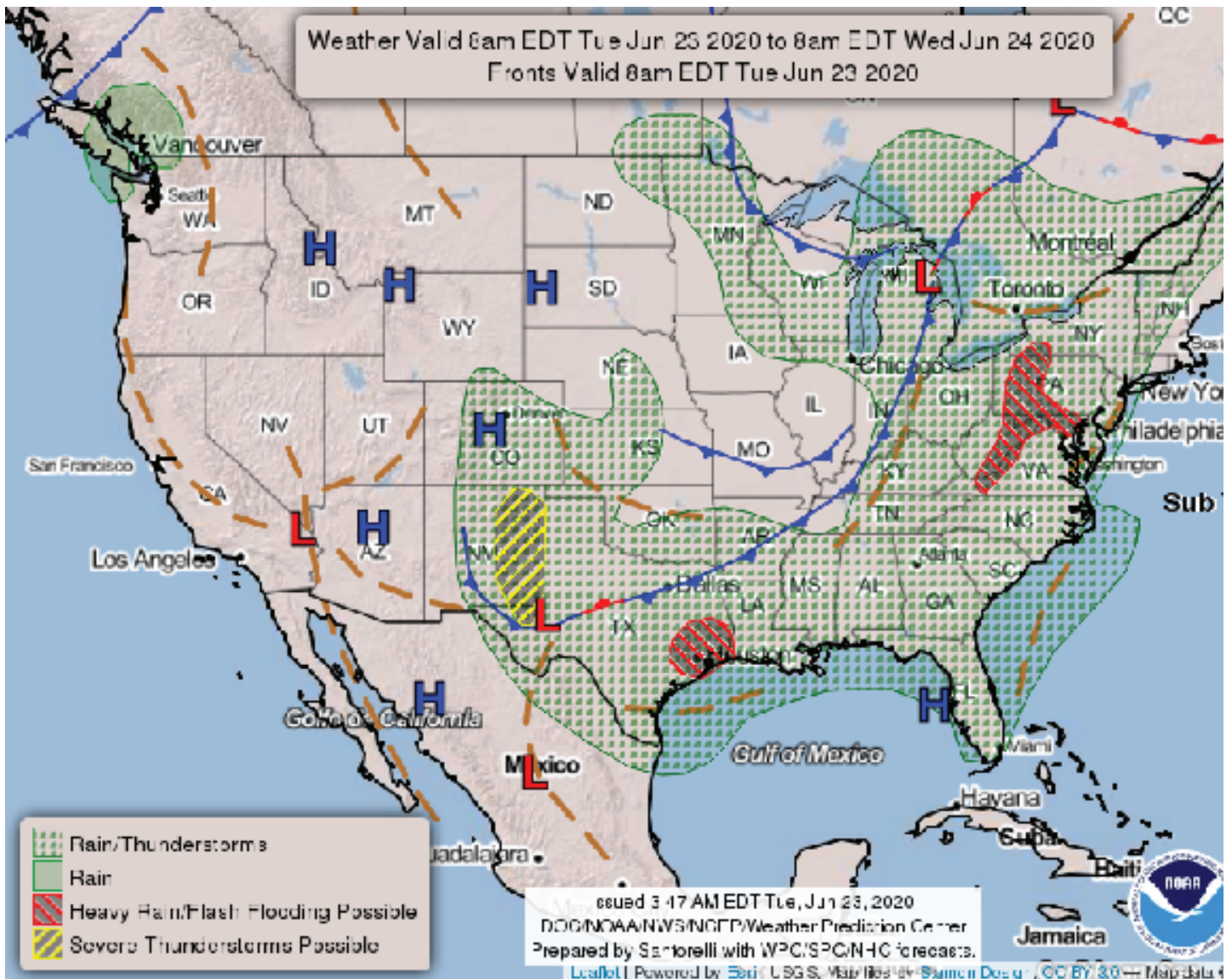
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Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 74 °F at 6:11 PM
Low Temp: 54 °F at 5:20 AM
Wind: 20 mph at 2:19 PM
Precip: .00

Record High: 104° in 1911
Record Low: 33° in 1942
Average High: 80°F
Average Low: 56°F
Average Precip in June.: 2.71
Precip to date in June.: 2.47
Average Precip to date: 9.85
Precip Year to Date: 7.12
Sunset Tonight: 9:26 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:46 a.m.



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NOW IT'S MY TIME

Horace Whittell of England hated alarm clocks with a passion. Every weekday morning for 47 years he had been awakened at 6:00 a.m. to go to work. On the day after he retired, he took his clock outside, placed it on a rock, and smashed it into little pieces shouting, "I'm through with you!"

For many, there is nothing that can be more disturbing than an alarm clock that awakens them from a comfortable sleep. It may signal another boring day filled with boring people, endless interruptions, and meaningless tasks. For others, it may be the beginning of a day filled with one crisis after another, irritable people, and problems that cannot be solved.

How different for the Christian! Every day can be a special day, a day filled with unique challenges and great opportunities to witness and serve our Lord.

Solomon wrote, "There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under the sun." This verse reminds us that God has a special plan and definite purpose that He has designed for each of us. And, if we want to enjoy a peaceful, productive, and purposeful life, we must look to Him for His goodness, guidance, and grace.

When we discover, accept, and fulfill His plan, we will enjoy His blessings every moment of every day. What may have been an annoying alarm may be God's voice calling us to another "season" of service, informing us of something significant that only we can do for Him.

Prayer: Thank You, Lord, for calling us to lives that are filled with countless opportunities to serve You in endless, exciting ways. May we always be found faithful. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: There is a time for everything, a season for every activity under the sun. Ecclesiastes 3:1

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2020 Groton SD Community Events

- **CANCELLED** Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- **CANCELLED** Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
- **CANCELLED** Fireman's Fun Night (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- **POSTPONED** Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
- **CANCELLED** Father/Daughter dance.
- **CANCELLED** Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
- **CANCELLED** Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
- 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
- 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
- 07/24/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ferney Open Golf Tourney
- **CANCELLED** State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
- 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates

News from the Associated Press

Noem: \$200 million in federal relief for cities and counties

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem announced Monday that she'll be sending \$200 million in federal coronavirus relief funds to city and county governments, but warned the economic impact of the pandemic could last for years.

The Republican governor visited the state's largest city, Sioux Falls, to explain that cities and counties will be able to access the funds based on their population. That means Sioux Falls city leaders can get up to \$41.5 million reimbursed for what they spend on addressing the coronavirus. The state has received \$1.25 billion from the federal government as part of a relief package for the coronavirus pandemic, part of which the governor is still hoping can be used to make up losses in tax revenue due to the economic downturn.

Noem said she was concerned businesses and tax revenue could be hurt in the long-term by the pandemic, especially after federal relief sent to businesses and individuals dries up.

"We're going to start to see the real impact of this virus in the coming days, and we could feel it for up to one to two years," Noem said.

She has said that the state budget that will end on June 30 looks to be in good shape, but that a special legislative session may be called in August to reshape the state's budget for the next fiscal year, which starts July 1.

The governor will be touring the state this week, visiting some of the larger cities to dole out the funds. Her visits come amid what Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken called an "appetite, at least in Sioux Falls, for us to get the cash registers ringing again."

The mayor, who at one point during the pandemic unsuccessfully lobbied Noem to issue a stay-at-home order for the city, praised the governor's hands-off approach to business closures. He said the state was in a good position to recover economically.

But that will also depend on the state preventing a resurgence of coronavirus infections. Some states have seen spikes in cases as they rolled back lockdowns.

That hasn't happened in South Dakota, at least not yet. Health officials reported 29 new cases on Monday, while the death toll remained the same at 81. The state has seen a slight decline in new cases over the last two weeks.

For most people, the coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia, and death.

Noem said she expects the state to continue to see waves of infections.

The state is expecting an influx of tourists this summer, a development Noem has actively encouraged. Visitors may be good for business and state sales tax revenues, but also pose a risk to the spread of infections.

"We are not done with the virus," she said as she reminded people to wash their hands and socially distance when possible. She has encouraged people to consider wearing a mask in public, but did not wear one at the press conference.

Teen wanted for shooting at police arrested in Kansas

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 17-year-old accused of shooting at police during a recent protest in South Dakota over the death of George Floyd has been arrested in Kansas, according to law enforcement officials.

A peaceful protest in Sioux Falls May 31 became unruly when some in the crowd began throwing large rocks and bottles.

An arrest warrant says officers saw one person pull a firearm from his waistband and point it toward officers before firing several shots. Officers were not hit by the gunfire.

The Sioux Falls teen, arrested in Holcomb, Kansas Friday, is wanted for attempted murder, aggravated assault on a law enforcement officer and riot.

Floyd died on May 25 in Minneapolis after Derek Chauvin, a white officer, held his knee to the neck of the handcuffed Black man even after Floyd stopped moving and pleading for air. His death sparked demonstrations around the world.

Officer dragged by suspect's vehicle in Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A juvenile driver is accused of dragging a Sioux Falls police officer who was investigating a reported assault.

The officer found the suspect in a vehicle about 3 a.m. Saturday, according to police. The suspect tried to flee, but got stuck in traffic.

The officer was trying to turn off the vehicle but the suspect rolled up the driver's side window trapping the officer's arm and dragging the officer as the vehicle moved forward, officials said.

Police eventually stopped the vehicle and arrested the suspect. Officials say the officer was not seriously injured.

German region in new lockdown after slaughterhouse outbreak

By FRANK JORDANS and GEIR MOULSON Associated Press

BERLIN (AP) — German authorities on Tuesday slapped new lockdown measures on a western region that has had a surge of coronavirus infections linked to a slaughterhouse, trying to make sure the cluster doesn't fuel a wider contamination in the community.

More than 1,550 people have tested positive for coronavirus at the Toennies slaughterhouse in Rheda-Wiedenbrueck and thousands more workers and family members have been put under a quarantine to try to halt the outbreak.

The company has blamed its workforce, which is made up of mostly immigrants from Eastern Europe, for bringing the virus in while union officials say the outbreak is due to the terrible working and living conditions employees faced under loosely regulated sub-contractors.

The governor of North Rhine-Westphalia state, Armin Laschet, said people in Guetersloh and parts of a neighboring county for the next week will face the same kind of restrictions that existed across Germany during the early stages of the pandemic in March and April.

These include limiting the number of people who can meet in public to those from a single household or two people from separate households, Laschet said.

"We will order a lockdown for the whole of Guetersloh county," he told reporters Tuesday. "The purpose is to calm the situation, to expand testing to establish whether or not the virus has spread beyond the employees of Toennies in the population."

"We will get a better picture of the situation through intensive testing, and can then see more clearly within seven days what the situation is," Laschet said.

Cinemas, fitness studios and bars will be closed although restaurants can still cater to people from the same household. Previously, the western county had only closed schools and daycare centers, sparking anger from parents who said their children were being punished for failings at the slaughterhouse.

Prior to the Toennies outbreak, Germany had been widely praised for its handling of the pandemic. Intensive testing, tracing and hospital preparation measures tamped down the outbreak and kept Germany's death toll five times smaller than Britain's. Germany has seen 8,899 confirmed virus deaths and about 192,000 cases.

Toennies, a family-owned company, has been criticized for using subcontractors for parts of its operation. The practice, which is common in the German meat industry and which the government now wants to ban, often results in migrant workers from Eastern Europe living in cramped communal housing and transported to abattoirs in minibuses, heightening the risk of infection.

A video circulating on social media also showed workers at Toennies seated close together during break

times at the plant, although the company has disputed how recent the video is.

Laschet expressed his frustration Tuesday at the company's handling of the outbreak, saying authorities had to order Toennies to release the names of its employees.

"The readiness to cooperate could have been greater," he said.

Laschet said the measures will be lifted June 30 if the situation has improved, but declined to provide specific parameters for how success will be measured. He also urged other regions in Germany not to discriminate against people from Guetersloh.

The German news agency dpa reported that 14 people on vacation, some of them from Guetersloh, were told Monday to leave the Baltic Sea island of Usedom, a popular holiday resort.

The head of Germany's disease control center said Tuesday that the exact reasons why slaughterhouses in Germany, the United States and elsewhere have become hubs for coronavirus infection are still being investigated.

"It's certainly the case that if you live in cramped conditions and small rooms then that's a situation where the virus can spread more easily," said Lothar Wieler, who heads the government's Robert Koch Institute.

But he added that the low temperatures in parts of the plant, intended to keep the meat cool, could also play a role.

"Another factor, which we don't think is small, is the development of aerosols," said Wieler, referring to tiny droplets of liquid that can linger in the air and potentially contain viruses.

Wieler said the outbreak at the slaughterhouse and others linked to religious gatherings could spread to other parts of the German population.

"That's why it's so important that we remain careful," he said. "The virus is still in the country and if we give it the chance to spread, then it will take that chance."

But he expressed hope that Germany could avoid a second wave of the pandemic if people followed government advice on social distancing and hygiene.

Dr. Ute Rexroth, a senior Robert Koch Institute official involved in Germany's pandemic response, noted that poverty seems to play a significant role in who gets infected, calling it "the root of the problem."

Follow AP pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Spate of shootings raises fears of a violent summer

By LISA MARIE PANE and KATHLEEN FOODY Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — A spate of shootings over the past several days has law enforcement on edge, with some warning that a turbulent brew of a pandemic, racial unrest, historic surges in gun sales and a rancorous election year could make it an especially deadly summer.

Although mass shootings are down sharply this year, other non-suicidal gun deaths are on pace to exceed last year, according to incidents tracked by the Gun Violence Archive.

That increase came before the start of summer, when there is traditionally a spike during the warmer months as people venture outside more, and before Independence Day, which historically has been one of the deadliest days each year.

Gun experts say the statistics reflect an American public increasingly stressed by the coronavirus that has roiled the economy and kept them cooped up at home, deep divisions over justice and policing, and the political divides of a presidential election year.

"There's something going on at the moment, these underlying tensions," said James Densley, professor of law enforcement and criminal justice at Metropolitan State University. "Everyone's been cooped up for so long with the pandemic, and then we had this sort of explosion of anger and grief after George Floyd's killing."

In just the past few days, more than 100 people were wounded in shootings in Chicago, including a 3-year-old boy who was killed while riding in the back seat of a car with his father. Police said the boy's

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father was the intended victim.

In North Carolina, three people were killed and six were wounded early Monday when unknown gunmen opened fire during an impromptu block party in Charlotte. An annual birthday party in Syracuse, New York, over the weekend was marred by gun violence that wounded nine people.

In Minneapolis, people fled a popular nightlife and retail area as a shooter killed one man and injured 11 others early Sunday.

And for the second time in less than 48 hours, there was a shooting in Seattle's protest zone. A 17-year-old victim was shot late Sunday night in the area known as CHOP, for "Capitol Hill Occupied Protest," a day after a 19-year-old man was fatally shot and a 33-year-old man critically injured in there.

Densley said the pace of gun violence may be a harbinger of a rough summer ahead.

"You've got people who are frustrated, angry, struggling in life and have been at home during this time processing all this and often processing this alone, maybe with the help with the Internet," he said. "Once the door starts to open, there could well be an uptick in violence."

The scattered weekend shootings come as police face a backlash, accused of using excessive force against Blacks and other minorities, and calls to "defund" their departments by shifting money from law enforcement to social services and other community investment.

"If you invest in healing and restorative justice and bring the community to the table to heal and solve its own problems, you will see more and more that you don't need police intervention," said Kofi Ademola, an adult mentor to the anti-violence organization Good Kids Mad City in Chicago.

Millions of dollars now funding Chicago's police department could be more effective fueling programs for mental health, housing, support for victims of gun violence and encouraging the creation or growth of neighborhood businesses, he said.

"Now is the time to hold them accountable and step up as a people to say we can hold our communities together without more policing," said 20-year-old Jai Simpson, a member of Good Kids Mad City who grew up on the city's South side.

Chicago Police Superintendent David Brown, who took over the department in April, is encouraged by police partnerships with community outreach groups, social services and other government agencies.

"Police can't do it alone," Brown said. "We need partners to be effective and protect this city. We're just asking for a little bit of help now. You give this department a little bit of help and this city will be safer from violent offenders."

This year has seen historic numbers of background checks being conducted for firearms purchases. Gun-rights advocates say the numbers reflect a public worried about personal safety and wanting to ensure they can defend themselves. Those worries are only being amplified amid calls to defund the police, they say.

Gun proponents seized on these fears when many Atlanta police officers declined to show up for their shifts after two white officers were criminally charged in the fatal shooting of a Black suspect.

Antonia Okafor Cover, director of outreach for Gun Owners of America, tweeted: "If you live in Atlanta THIS might be the time to buy that gun you were thinking of getting... The social experiment of having to rely on yourself for your own safety might be coming to fruition. #ATLcopwalkout"

Gun-control advocates say more firearms will only lead to more violence.

"There are a lot of people experiencing stress they've never experienced in their lives before. These are very hard times," said Kris Brown, president of the Brady gun-control group.

There is perhaps one silver lining: This year is on pace to have half as many mass shootings as the record-breaking 2019. A big reason is the "contagion" effect, said James Alan Fox, a criminologist at Northeastern University who, along with The Associated Press and USA Today, has been tracking mass killings back to 2006.

With people focused more on a deadly virus and other woes, mass shootings no longer get the attention that can end up inadvertently spurring such crimes. A similar effect happened in the aftermath of the 9/11 terror attacks, he said.

"We've been distracted. We are no longer obsessing about mass shootings like we were in the past

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couple of years," Fox said. "the less we have obsessed about it and talked about it and being scared of it, the less we fuel the contagion."

Foody reported from Chicago, and Pane reported from Boise, Idaho.

5 things to know today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. **THE PANDEMIC IS WORSENING GLOBALLY** Case numbers are surging in many large countries that have been lifting lockdowns, including the U.S. Worldwide, more than 9 million people have been confirmed infected by the virus and more than 472,000 have died.

2. **DR. ANTHONY FAUCI RETURNS TO CAPITOL HILL** The government's top infectious disease expert will testify before a House committee Tuesday. Fauci has warned that the U.S. is still in the first wave of the pandemic and has continued to urge the American public to practice social distancing.

3. **RAYSHARD BROOKS TO BE REMEMBERED AT MLK CHURCH** The private funeral for the Black man who was fatally shot by a white police officer is to be held Tuesday at Ebenezer Baptist Church.

4. **BEIRUT'S AMERICAN UNIVERSITY FACES MAJOR BATTLES** One of the Arab world's oldest and most prestigious universities is confronting a global pandemic, a severe recession and the collapse of Lebanon's currency — all at the same time.

5. **ALL EYES ON KENTUCKY PRIMARY** The virus outbreak has triggered unprecedented election disruptions across the country. Only one polling place has been designated for Louisville, the state's largest city.

Fauci to testify at a fraught time for US pandemic response

By LAURAN NEERGAARD and RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — With coronavirus cases rising in about half the states and political polarization competing for attention with public health recommendations, Dr. Anthony Fauci returns to Capitol Hill on Tuesday at a fraught moment in the nation's pandemic response.

The government's top infectious disease expert will testify before a House committee, along with the heads of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Food and Drug Administration, and a top official at the Department of Health and Human Services.

Since Fauci's last appearance at a high-profile hearing more than a month ago, the U.S. is emerging from weeks of stay-at-home orders and business shutdowns. But it's being done in an uneven way, with some states far less cautious than others. A trio of states with Republican governors who are bullish on reopening — Arizona, Florida and Texas — are among those seeing worrisome increases in cases.

Last week, Vice President Mike Pence published an opinion article in The Wall Street Journal saying the administration's efforts have strengthened the nation's ability to counter the virus and should be "a cause for celebration."

Then President Donald Trump said at his weekend rally in Tulsa that he had asked administration officials to slow down testing, because too many positive cases are turning up. Many rally goers did not wear masks, and for some that was an act of defiance against what they see as government intrusion. White House officials later tried to walk back Trump's comment on testing, suggesting it wasn't meant to be taken literally.

Fauci has recently warned that the U.S. is still in the first wave of the pandemic and has continued to urge the American public to practice social distancing. And, in a recent ABC News interview, he said political demonstrations such as protests against racial injustice are "risky" to all involved. Asked if that applied to Trump rallies, he said it did. Fauci continues to recognize widespread testing as critical for catching clusters of COVID-19 cases before they turn into full outbreaks in a given community.

About 2.3 million Americans have been sickened in the pandemic, and some 120,000 have died, accord-

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ing to data from Johns Hopkins University.

As head of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Fauci will be joined before the House Energy and Commerce Committee by CDC director Dr. Robert Redfield, FDA chief Dr. Stephen Hahn and the head of the U.S. Public Health Service, Adm. Brett Giroir.

Giroir was tapped by the White House to oversee the expansion of coronavirus testing. But he gained notoriety after a whistleblower complaint flagged him for trying to push a malaria drug touted by Trump to treat COVID-19 without conclusive scientific evidence. The FDA has since withdrawn its emergency use authorization for hydroxychloroquine.

"There have been a lot of unfortunate missteps in the Trump administration's response to the COVID-19 pandemic," said committee Chairman Frank Pallone, D-N.J. "As communities across the country ease social distancing guidance and reopen their economies, it is critically important that both the administration and Congress remain focused on containing the spread of the coronavirus and providing the resources and support Americans need during this time of crisis."

There is still no vaccine for COVID-19, and there are no treatments specifically developed for the disease, although the antiviral drug remdesivir has been shown to help some patients, as well as a steroid called dexamethasone, and plasma from patients who have recovered.

Since Fauci last testified, hospital physicians have become more skilled in treating coronavirus patients with the techniques and medications at their disposal. The U.S. continues to ramp up testing, with some 27.5 million Americans, or more than 8% of the population, tested thus far. But most communities still lack enough health workers trained in doing contact tracing, the work of identifying people who have had interactions with an infected person. That could make it more difficult to tamp down emerging outbreaks.

Fauci remains optimistic that a vaccine will be found, noting that patients develop antibodies to the virus — a sign that the human immune system is able to battle back. However, he shies away from promising results by the end of the year, as Trump has done.

The Energy and Commerce panel has oversight over drugs and vaccines, among other facets of the U.S. health care system. Committee Democrats have been harshly critical of the administration. However, not all Republicans have lined up to defend the White House. Some GOP members were growing concerned early in the year that the administration wasn't doing enough to prepare.

After Tulsa, Trump heads to virus hotspot Arizona and border

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Regrouping after a humbling weekend rally, President Donald Trump faces another test of his ability to draw a crowd during a pandemic Tuesday as he visits Arizona and tries to remind voters of one of his key 2016 campaign promises.

Trump's weekend rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, had been meant to be a sign of the nation's reopening and a show of political force but instead generated thousands of empty seats and swirling questions about the president's campaign leadership and his case for another four years in office. The low turnout has sharpened the focus on Trump's visit to Arizona, which doubles as both a 2020 battleground state and a surging coronavirus hot spot.

First, the president will travel to Yuma to mark the construction of more than 200 miles (322 kilometers) of wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, an issue that he built his campaign on four years ago. Later, he'll address a group of young Republicans at a Phoenix megachurch, where event organizers have pledged thousands will attend.

Throughout the trip, the COVID-19 pandemic will shadow Trump. The Democratic mayor of Phoenix made clear that she does not believe the speech can be safely held in her city — and urged the president to wear a face mask.

"Everyone attending tomorrow's event, particularly any elected official, should set an example to residents by wearing a mask," said Mayor Kate Gallego. "This includes the President."

Trump has refused to wear a mask in public, instead turning it into a red-vs.-blue cultural issue. Polling

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suggests that Republicans are far less likely to wear a face covering than Democrats despite health experts' warnings that it dramatically reduces the risk of transmitting the virus.

The "Students for Trump" event will be held at the Dream City Church and broadcast to groups across the nation. Students for Trump is a special project of Turning Point Action, a group chaired by Trump ally Charlie Kirk, which is hosting the president for his address. Organizers said health and safety measures still were being finalized and it was unclear if attendees would be asked to wear masks or keep socially distant.

Since late May, Arizona has emerged as one of the nation's most active hot spots for the spread of COVID-19. Use of hospitals, intensive care units and ventilators has set daily records over the past week.

Photos of restaurants and bars crowded with unmasked patrons ignited controversy. Republican Gov. Doug Ducey, a Trump supporter, reversed himself last week and allowed cities and counties to require people to wear masks in public places. Most have, including Phoenix and Yuma and the counties that surround them.

Arizona is seeing disturbing trends in several benchmarks, including the percentage of tests that prove positive for the virus, which is the highest in the nation.

The state's positive test rate is at a seven-day average of 20.4%, well above the national average of 8.4% and the 10% level that public health officials say is a problem.

Campaign officials are still assessing the fallout from low turnout in Tulsa amid concern about the virus.

Campaign officials stressed that rallies would remain a staple of the president's reelection strategy but allowed that they may, in certain states, need to change slightly. Discussions were under way about having them in more modest venues or outdoors, perhaps in airplane hangers and amphitheaters, or in smaller cities away from likely protesters.

But officials believe that Trump's ability to draw thousands of supporters out during a pandemic sets up a favorable contrasting image with Democratic rival Joe Biden. Still, the campaign has struggled to find effective attack lines on Biden.

Biden, like Trump, has had struggles with young voters but the former vice president's campaign has expressed hope that the national protests against racial injustice may change that.

Trump's visit to the Phoenix megachurch will come on the same day that Pence kicks off a faith-centered tour, highlighting the central position that religious conservatives -- particularly white evangelicals, but also right-leaning Catholics -- continue to occupy in the president's base. Yet even as Trump's campaign overtly courts religious voters, there are signs of softening support among voting blocs the president can't afford to lose.

A poll released earlier this month by the nonprofit Public Religion Research Institute found that the share of white Catholics viewing Trump favorably had fallen by double digits since last year, measuring 37% in the last week of May compared with 49% across 2019. The same poll found Trump's favorability among white evangelicals at 62% in May, a level comparable to 2019's -- but 15% less than it was in March.

Trump's focus on construction of his long-promised border wall also is meant to shore up support with his most loyal supporters.

His administration has promised to build 450 miles (724 kilometers) by the end of the year, but that seems unlikely. The government has awarded more than \$6.1 billion in construction contracts since April 2019 for various projects along the border. It has also waived procurement rules that critics say make the process of awarding multi-million dollar contracts secretive and opaque.

The White House this month floated a theory that travel from Mexico may be contributing to a new wave of coronavirus infections, rather than states' efforts to reopen their economies. It was not clear that the evidence supports the theory.

Trump's first visit to the border in more than a year comes a day after another hardline immigration move. The Trump administration said Monday that it was extending a ban on green cards issued outside the United States until the end of the year and adding many temporary work visas to the freeze, including those used heavily by technology companies and multinational corporations.

The administration cast the effort as a way to free up jobs in an economy reeling from the coronavirus.

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Associated Press writers Jonathan Cooper and Astrid Galvan in Phoenix and Elana Schor in New York contributed to this report.

UN evaluates reports of record Arctic heat in Siberia

GENEVA (AP) — The U.N. weather agency is investigating media reports suggesting a new record high temperature of over 38 degrees Celsius (100.4 degrees Fahrenheit) in the Arctic Circle amid a heatwave and prolonged wildfires in eastern Siberia.

The World Meteorological Organization said Tuesday that it's looking to verify the temperature reading on Saturday in the Russian town of Verkhoyansk with Roshydromet, the Russian federal service for hydro-meteorological and environmental monitoring.

Agency spokeswoman Clare Nullis said wildfires in the Russian region and hot summer conditions regularly drive temperatures above 30 degrees C (86 F) in July, but they've never been found to top 38 degrees in the area.

"We're taking it seriously, but we need to await official confirmation," she told reporters in Geneva.

Follow all AP coverage of climate change issues at <https://apnews.com/Climate>.

Lebanon's crisis, pandemic hit American University in Beirut

By ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — One of the Arab world's oldest and most prestigious universities, which endured civil war, kidnappings and various economic crises, is preparing for what may be the biggest challenge in its 154-year history.

The American University of Beirut is confronting a global pandemic, a severe recession and the collapse of Lebanon's currency — all at the same time — and is planning a series of sweeping layoffs and salary cuts in response.

AUB president Fadlo Khuri said the school, which ranks among the top 150 in the world, will lay off up to 25% of its workforce, close administrative departments and shelve an ambitious project for a major new medical center.

"The layoffs are very painful," Khuri told The Associated Press in an interview at the sprawling campus on the Mediterranean Sea. "AUB has never had to do this before, we've never been forced to have layoffs."

The American University of Beirut, which operates under a charter from the state of New York, was the first to introduce American education to the Middle East. For generations, it has educated the Arab world's elite, produced three presidents, around a dozen prime ministers — including Lebanon's current premier, Hassan Diab — and countless Cabinet ministers and ambassadors.

Its vibrant campus has also been a pillar of Beirut's cultural and intellectual life, with a diverse student body and a history of activism.

The announcement has come as a shock to members of the 6,500-strong workforce of AUB and the American University Medical Center. Tens of thousands of Lebanese have already lost their jobs in a worsening economic crisis exacerbated by the coronavirus outbreak.

The crisis is rooted in decades of institutionalized corruption and mismanagement that came to a head last October, igniting mass protests. The economic meltdown has plunged the fragile country into deep uncertainty and threatens to unleash further unrest and chaos.

Unemployment has skyrocketed to 35%, and nearly half the population lives below the poverty line, according to the World Bank.

The crisis has also squeezed the middle class. Lebanese, who have long used the dollar and the Lebanese pound interchangeably, have seen the local currency lose nearly 70% of its value. With incomes and savings evaporating, many parents have been unable to afford school, and university fees charged in dollars.

Khuri first laid out the painful reality in a memo to staff on May 5, describing the situation as a "confluence of calamities" that he said together amount to the "greatest crisis since the university's foundation

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in 1866.”

He said the university had expected to raise \$609 million in revenue for 2019 and 2020, but instead faces real losses of \$30 million, an amount that would almost totally wipe out contingency funds it has built up since 2015.

In a June 15 memo, he announced there would be a series of unprecedented layoffs to help cope with the crisis. Khuri told the AP the decision was “very difficult personally” but aims at making AUB more sustainable.

The university remained open throughout much of the 1975-1990 Lebanese civil war, providing an oasis of calm and greenery even as a number of foreign staff members were kidnapped or killed, including president Malcom Kerr who was assassinated in 1984 and David Dodge who was acting university president when he was kidnapped by pro-Iranian gunmen in 1982. He was released a year later in Iran. International and local faculty and students joined waves of Lebanese who fled the country’s recurring conflicts.

The university closed down when the coronavirus pandemic hit in March, but it has partially reopened for summer classes. It currently enrolls around 9,250 students.

Khuri said the current crisis is very different than what happened during the civil war, when the Central Bank and government still had resources that could stabilize the situation.

“What happened during the civil war is that the Lebanese state disintegrated but the Lebanese government still had resources,” Khuri said. “Right now, what you have is a perfect storm.”

Khuri, who has expressed support for the demands of the protest movement, said the system in Lebanon needs to fundamentally change. He hopes that the aspirations of young Lebanese who took to the streets in October last year will be heard.

“The poison in the American constitution was slavery, the poison in the Lebanese constitution is sectarianism,” he said.

Lebanon’s communal power-sharing system, established since the country’s independence from France, distributes top government posts according to sect and has spawned widespread corruption and political paralysis.

Khuri, who was born in Boston and brought up in Beirut, where he attended AUB in the early 1980s, said he was concerned that when Beirut airport reopens after the coronavirus shutdown, even more of Lebanon’s best and brightest will emigrate.

He said a strong AUB is the best hope for the people of Lebanon and the Arab world, to help develop the region’s future leaders — another reason to take tough measures.

“It’s a very bitter cup to drink, but we don’t get to choose our battles in life, and unfortunately this is the one that I’ve inherited,” he said.

Virus numbers surge globally as many nations ease lockdowns

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — The number of global coronavirus cases continued to surge Tuesday in many large countries that have been lifting lockdowns, including the U.S., even as new infections stabilized or dropped in parts of Western Europe.

India has been recording about 15,000 new infections each day, and some states Tuesday were considering fresh lockdown measures to try to halt the spread of the virus in the nation of more than 1.3 billion. The government earlier lifted a nationwide lockdown in a bid to restart the ailing economy, which has shed millions of jobs.

Hospitals in Pakistan are turning away patients, but with the economy there teetering, the government remains determined to reopen the country.

New cases have also been rising steeply in Mexico, Colombia and Indonesia.

Brazil, with more than 1.1 million cases and 51,000 deaths, has been affected more than anywhere but the U.S., which has reported more than 2.3 million cases and 120,000 deaths, according to a tally kept

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by Johns Hopkins University.

In the U.S., surges in cases across the South and West are raising fears that progress against the virus is slipping away, as states reopen and many Americans resist wearing masks and keeping their distance from others.

On Tuesday, Dr. Anthony Fauci will return to Capitol Hill at a fraught moment in the nation's response. The government's top infectious disease expert will testify before a House committee.

His testimony comes after President Donald Trump said at a weekend rally in Oklahoma that he had asked administration officials to slow down testing, because too many positive cases are turning up.

Many rally goers did not wear masks, and for some that was an act of defiance against what they see as government intrusion. White House officials later tried to walk back Trump's comment on testing, suggesting it wasn't meant to be taken literally.

Dr. Michael Ryan, the World Health Organization's emergencies chief, said the record number of new cases couldn't be explained by increased testing alone, noting many countries have seen large increases in hospital admissions and deaths.

"The epidemic is now peaking or moving towards a peak in a number of large countries," he said.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said it took more than three months for the world to see 1 million confirmed infections, but just eight days to see the most recent 1 million cases.

"The greatest threat we face now is not the virus itself; it's the lack of global solidarity and global leadership," he said during a video conference for the Dubai-based World Government Summit.

Even some countries that have had initial success in stamping out the virus are finding pockets of resurgence.

In Australia, Victoria state on Tuesday reported 17 new cases, resulting in the closing of two primary schools in Melbourne. State Premier Daniel Andrews said there would be significant community transmission among the new cases.

China reported 22 new cases, including 13 in Beijing, a day after a city government spokesperson said containment measures had slowed the momentum of a new outbreak in the capital that has infected more than 200 people.

And South Korea reported 46 new cases, including 30 linked to international arrivals.

The country has been struggling to stem a resurgence of the virus in the Seoul metropolitan area, where hundreds of infections have been linked to entertainment and leisure activities, church gatherings and low-income workers such as door-to-door salespeople and warehouse workers who couldn't afford to stay home.

South Korea also said it was testing 176 workers at the southern port of Busan following a virus outbreak among crew members of a Russian cargo ship that has so far sickened 16.

Saudi Arabia said this year's pilgrimage, or hajj, to Islam's holy sites will not be canceled, but only "very limited numbers" of people will be allowed to take part. The hajj traditionally draws around 2 million Muslims from around the world for five intense days of worship and rituals in Mecca.

Worldwide, more than 9 million people have been confirmed infected by the virus and more than 472,000 have died, according to the Johns Hopkins University tally. Experts say the true numbers are much higher because of limited testing and cases in which patients had no symptoms.

Associated Press journalists from around the world contributed.

Follow all of AP's pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Saudi Arabia: Hajj will see at most 'thousands' due to virus

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A Saudi official said Tuesday that the hajj pilgrimage, which usually

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draws up to 2.5 million Muslims from all over the world, will only see at the most a few thousand pilgrims next month due to concerns over the spread of the coronavirus.

The kingdom's Hajj Minister Muhammad Benteen said a "small and very limited" number of people — even as low as just 1,000 from inside the kingdom — will be allowed to perform the pilgrimage to ensure social distancing and crowd control amid the global virus outbreak.

"The number, God willing, may be in the thousands. We are in the process of reviewing so it could be 1,000 or less, or a little more," Benteen said in a virtual press conference.

While the decision to drastically curb this year's hajj was largely expected, it remains unprecedented in Saudi Arabia's nearly 90-year history and effectively bars all Muslims from outside the kingdom from travelling there to performing the pilgrimage.

The Saudi government waited until just five weeks before the hajj to announce its decision. The timing indicates the sensitivity around major decisions concerning the hajj that affect Muslims around the world.

"This is a very sensitive operation and we are working with experts at the Health Ministry," Benteen said, stressing the importance of protecting the lives and health of pilgrims.

As part of the curbs, Saudi officials said that no one over the age of 65 will be allowed to perform the hajj and that all pilgrims and those serving the pilgrims this year will be quarantined both before and after the pilgrimage.

Saudi Arabia first announced late on Monday that only a very limited number of pilgrims would be allowed to perform the hajj in Mecca from among residents of various nationalities already inside the kingdom.

It's a blow to those who've saved money for years to afford the journey — the hajj is not only a once-in-a-lifetime requirement for all Muslims but also a chance to wipe away past sins and connect with Muslims from all walks of life.

"It is a wish of every Muslim to perform hajj, but because of COVID-19, it will not be possible this year," Chairman of the Islamic Centre of India Maulana Khalid Rashid said.

Rashid, who is one of India's most influential Muslim clerics, said China is ultimately responsible. "Had China told the world about COVID beforehand, the world would have reacted differently," he said, adding that a delegation from India should be allowed to go and perform the hajj.

"This is an annual ritual and the tradition should not be broken," he said.

The hajj typically draws 2 million people from around the world, with the rest coming from inside Saudi Arabia. It's a profound experience, with the faithful standing shoulder-to-shoulder in prayer, often weeping, their palms stretched toward the sky for five intense days of worship around Mecca.

Each country is allocated a specific quota of hajj visas according to its population of Muslims, with Indonesia having the largest, close to 221,000. In countries like Egypt, Pakistan and India, securing a slot can require hefty fees, a connection to a local official or simply years of patience.

Pakistan, which usually sends around 180,000 pilgrims, said Saudi authorities had been in touch to inform them about the decision to limit this year's hajj. Instead, Pakistani diplomats already in Saudi Arabia will represent the country this year at the hajj, which begins at the end of July.

The president of an association of hajj tour operators in Bangladesh, Shahadat Hossain Taslim, praised the decision to essentially hold the hajj with just a symbolic number of pilgrims.

"It has a great symbolic value," he said. Around 137,000 Bangladeshis typically travel to Mecca each year for the hajj.

"We are going to lose business worth millions of dollars, but we have nothing to do. The situation is not in our hands," Taslim added.

Egypt's top Muslim cleric, Sheikh Ahmed el-Tayeb, praised the Saudi decision as wise, and said it showcases Riyadh's awareness of the dangers caused by the virus. Similarly, officials in Indonesia and Afghanistan welcomed this year's restrictions on hajj.

Saudi Arabia's borders have been shut to foreigners since late February in attempts to slow down the spread of the virus. The government suspended the smaller year-round umrah pilgrimage earlier this year, imposed a nearly three-month-long 24-hour curfew in Mecca, shuttered mosques during the holy month

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of Ramadan and restricted businesses.

Still, the kingdom has one of the highest infection rates in the Middle East, with more than 161,000 confirmed cases so far, including 1,307 deaths.

The virus causes mild to moderate symptoms in most people, who recover within a few weeks. But it is highly contagious and can cause severe illness or death, particularly in older patients or those with underlying health problems.

Saudi Arabia said the decision to curtail the hajj was aimed at preserving global public health because of the risks associated with large gatherings. It defended its decision on religious grounds as well, saying that the teachings of Islam require the preservation of human life.

In Afghanistan, retired army colonel Mahmood Seddiqi said Muslims who cannot go to Saudi Arabia this year should donate the money they would have spent on the pilgrimage to help those hardest-hit by the pandemic and its economic impact.

"It's Allah's will," he said. "It will be better to help your neighbors and people in need."

The kingdom has faced smaller epidemics like the MERS virus and had taken precautions by barring pilgrims from African countries stricken by the Ebola virus in recent years.

There have been major disruptions during the hajj in past years, including a deadly stampede and a crane collapse in 2015 that killed more than 2,500 people. In 1987, Saudi security forces killed more than 400 people, mostly Shiite Muslims, in a clash sparked by Iranian pilgrims protesting during the hajj.

The most dramatic closure of the Grand Mosque in Mecca, however, took place in 1979 when religious extremists stormed Islam's holiest site, which houses the cube-shaped Kaaba that Muslims pray toward and circulate during pilgrimage. Thousands of worshippers were trapped inside and hundreds were killed in a siege that lasted two weeks.

Associated Press writers Munir Ahmed in Islamabad; Biswajeet Banerjee in Lucknow, India; Tameem Akhgar in Kabul, Afghanistan; Samy Magdy in Cairo and Julhas Alam in Dhaka, Bangladesh, contributed to this report.

1 city, 1 voting place: Kentucky braces for lines in primary

By BRUCE SCHREINER and CHRISTINA A. CASSIDY Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — With only one polling place designated Tuesday for Louisville, a city of 600,000 people, voters who didn't cast mail-in ballots or show up early could face long lines in Kentucky's primary, the latest to unfold as the pandemic triggers unprecedented election disruptions across the country.

The outcome of a competitive Democratic U.S. Senate primary could hang in the balance if Election Day turnout is hampered in Louisville — the hometown of Charles Booker, who's mounted a strong late challenge against presumed front-runner Amy McGrath.

"If Charles Booker barely loses, I think the integrity of that election is in question," Republican state Rep. Jason Nemes said Monday.

The primary's winner will go against Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell, who isn't expected to see a serious GOP primary challenge, in November.

The state's Republican secretary of state, Michael Adams, said he's "cautiously optimistic" long lines won't force people to wait hours before voting in Louisville, where the only in-person Election Day voting place is at the state fairgrounds.

Early voting opened statewide two weeks ago. That, along with strong demand for absentee ballots, could spare people from long waits, Adams said Monday.

Nemes sued to get more in-person voting locations in the state's most populous counties. A federal judge denied the request days before the election.

The surge of absentee ballots could cause waits of another sort Tuesday, as some counties have said they won't release vote totals before June 30.

Kentucky turned to widespread mail-in absentee voting in an agreement between the Democratic gover-

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nor and Adams in response to the coronavirus outbreak. But many voters not requesting absentee ballots will head to the polls Tuesday.

Many states pushed their elections back to manage an onslaught of poll worker cancellations and consolidation of polling places. They also sought time to push more voters to cast absentee ballots.

New York also has a primary Tuesday and has consolidated some polling sites. Erie County — home to the state's second-largest city, Buffalo — will see 40% fewer polling sites.

State board of elections spokesman John Conklin said he hopes the consolidation plan will have "minimal" impact on voter turnout and access.

State election workers were trying to get 1.8 million absentee ballots to New Yorkers. County boards of elections have scrambled to process 11 times as many ballot applications as they did for the 2016 primaries without extra state funding, Conklin said.

In Kentucky, despite waves of mail-in voting, some braced for long lines and frustration.

"There will be a number of people who want to vote tomorrow but will be discouraged from voting because it's much too difficult," Nemes said.

That's of particular concern for Booker, who's Black and counting on a high turnout in Louisville. He said his campaign would "keep a watchful eye" and stands ready to mount a legal challenge if needed.

"There should not have only been one location," Booker said. "That will just naturally disenfranchise folks."

McGrath tried to join the suit demanding more than one in-person voting location on Election Day in Louisville and other population centers, but a federal judge denied her campaign's motion to intervene. McGrath also pushed to extend the deadline for requesting an absentee ballot.

For voters unable to get absentee ballots, "you are forced to now stand in line in the one polling location in the middle of a pandemic," McGrath said. "If you're 82 years old, are you going to do that?"

In Lexington, the state's second-largest city with 323,000 people, the voting location is at the University of Kentucky's football stadium.

Richard Beliles, Common Cause Kentucky board chairman, said offering "so few polling places for the primary is irresponsible and unacceptable, and sadly it was avoidable."

Georgia delayed its primary twice to give election officials more time to prepare, sending absentee ballot applications to every active registered voter in the state. That wasn't enough. When Georgia held its primary June 9, metro Atlanta voters waited up to 10 hours. As in Milwaukee and Philadelphia, many of the lines were concentrated in minority communities, sparking objections from voting rights advocates.

Even in Nevada, where absentee ballots were sent to every registered voter for the June 9 primary, large-scale consolidation caused problems. The last voter in Las Vegas to cast a ballot did so at 3 a.m., eight hours after polls were supposed to close.

In Kentucky, Adams said: "There are going to be lines -- 30, 45 minutes, maybe an hour, maybe longer." He added: "We don't think anyone will be disenfranchised."

At the fairgrounds in Louisville, after being directed into the large hall, voters will wait in line spaces about 6 feet (1.83 meters) apart by chalk markings on the floor, before heading to cast their votes. Hand sanitizing stations are available when exiting the voting area.

Jefferson County, which includes Louisville, sent out 218,404 absentee ballots to voters who requested them by the June 15 deadline, according to the county clerk's office. As a comparison, about 125,000 people voted in the 2016 U.S. Senate primary in Jefferson County.

The county also allowed early in-person voting beginning June 15 at the state fairgrounds. Last week nearly 7,500 people walked in and voted early between Monday and Friday, county clerk spokesman Nore Ghibaudy said. Voters have also been allowed to vote early in-person at the county's election center near downtown since June 8.

More than 883,000 absentee ballots were requested statewide, with slightly more than half filled out and sent in, Gov. Andy Beshear said. More than 88,000 Kentuckians voted in-person early, he said.

Cassidy reported from Atlanta. Associated Press writers Dylan Lovan and Piper Hudspeth Blackburn in

Louisville and Marina Villeneuve in Albany, New York, contributed to this story.

South Carolina beaches fill, but COVID-19 takes no vacation

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

MYRTLE BEACH, S.C. (AP) — The elevator doors opened and inside were 10 people crammed into a space no bigger than a closet, none of them wearing a mask.

In bathing suits, they walked out of the hotel, across the pool deck and into the sand in what is fast becoming South Carolina's hot spot for COVID-19 — Myrtle Beach. People in this resort city are leaving their cares — and sometimes their face coverings — at home after months of worry as hotels, restaurants and beaches reopen.

Mark Johnson said he doesn't like wearing a mask when he's at work delivering doughnuts to grocery stores around Charlotte, North Carolina. "Just wash your hands and use common sense," Johnson said as he sat on a chair in the sand, a can of beer in his cup holder.

The coronavirus has not taken a vacation. When hotels were allowed to start taking reservations again on May 15, there had been 283 COVID-19 cases in Horry County, which includes Myrtle Beach. By June 22, that number had climbed to more than 2,000, and infections had doubled in nine days.

And those numbers include only people who live in the county. The figures do not count anyone who tests positive after taking COVID-19 home along with a souvenir hermit crab or an airbrushed T-shirt. Business leaders estimate 20 million people visit the area each year, 60 times Horry County's population of about 330,000.

It was unclear how many visitors could be expected in 2020. In April, just 3% of hotel rooms, condominiums and campsites in Horry County were rented, according to research from Coastal Carolina University. By mid-June, occupancy rates rebounded to 74%, only slightly less than the typical 81% at this point in the summer, the college reported.

Health officials in at least five West Virginia counties determined through contact tracing that trips to Myrtle Beach likely led to infections. They recommend finding safer destinations or self-quarantining for two weeks after a trip.

"Please be careful. And please think real hard about getting tested when you get home," West Virginia Gov. Jim Justice told people who visited Myrtle Beach. "If you would opt to go to one of our state parks or do something in this great place in West Virginia, we'd rather you do that."

Christy Kasler is from another state that produces many Myrtle Beach visitors — Ohio. As she sat in a chair and watched her daughter-in-law play with her 11-month-old grandson on his first trip to the beach, she said the recommendation to self-quarantine when she returns to her Nelsonville home was asking too much.

"If I get it, I could have just as easily got it back home," Kasler said. "You can't live your life in fear."

Horry County isn't South Carolina's only hot spot. Health officials are tracking virus clusters in the Latino community around Greenville, restaurant workers in Charleston, rural churches that returned to services and large family gatherings.

When Gov. Henry McMaster effectively closed the state at the start of April, the rate of new cases flattened out. It started climbing again after reopening began in early May, and the rate keeps rising. South Carolina now has the fourth-highest new infection rate in the nation when adjusted for population, trailing just Arizona, Arkansas and Alabama.

The state sets records almost daily for the number of new cases, the percentage of positive tests and the number of people in the hospital with COVID-19.

Since reopening six weeks ago, the message from both local and state governments in South Carolina shifted from shutdowns to personal responsibility, like washing hands and wearing masks, although McMaster has said he will not require face coverings.

After giving televised COVID-19 briefings nearly every day when the virus first started to spread, McMaster and state health officials have not spoken in front of cameras for more than a week. When they

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do talk, they say shutting businesses again is out of the question.

"We understand that what we're continuing to ask of everyone is not easy and that many are tired of hearing the same warnings and of taking the same daily precautions, but this virus does not take a day off," state epidemiologist Dr. Linda Bell said in a statement.

Myrtle Beach needs visitors. Instead of a shutdown, the community now fears that bad publicity could keep people away. That would be terrible news after restaurants and many hotels were closed for two months.

From February to April, more than 1 in 4 workers lost their jobs, and nearly 45,000 jobs disappeared in the Myrtle Beach area, vaulting Horry County to the top of South Carolina jobless rate, according to unemployment figures.

Some of those businesses remain closed. Others that reopened are struggling with the extra cost of cleaning, food and other supplies, and the reduction in revenue because they cannot accommodate as many customers under social-distancing rules.

"Man, at this point I'm just praying we get back to normal. I want to keep people healthy, but businesses are hurting too," Myrtle Beach City Councilman Michael Chestnut said outside his restaurant, Big Mike's Soul Food.

He paused and shook his head. "I'm not sure what normal is ever going to look like," Chestnut said.

The Myrtle Beach City Council initially imposed a limit of three people per elevator when adopting rules to reopen hotels. But in a place where the oceanfront skyline is dominated by tall hotels, it was impractical to make people climb all those stairs or wait for an empty elevator, Chestnut said.

Jacko Morowitz has run a gift shop somewhere in Myrtle Beach for more than 25 years. He thought about putting a sign on the door requiring masks and asking customers to cover their mouth and nose when inside.

But he bought \$100,000 of merchandise last winter for his Good Vibes Gift Shop, and the inventory just sat there for two months. He figures he can't risk turning a single customer away by pushing masks.

Asked what might happen if suddenly people get scared of the virus and stop coming to Myrtle Beach, Morowitz blurted out "we're" followed by an expletive.

"Sorry about that," he said. "But that's the best word I can use whether I get sick or everybody stays home."

Follow Jeffrey Collins on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/JSCollinsAP>.

Follow AP coverage of the pandemic at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>.

Budgets put limits on social distancing options for schools

By MIKE CATALINI and MICHAEL MELIA Associated Press

As schools consider how and when to reopen their buildings during the pandemic, many are finding themselves overwhelmed by the potential expenses that would come with operating under social distancing guidelines: protective equipment, staff for smaller classrooms, and additional transportation to keep students spread out on bus rides.

The burdens loom large in particular for urban, under-resourced districts that often have neither the space nor the budgets to accommodate new health protocols.

In Hartford, Connecticut, Superintendent Leslie Torres-Rodriguez shudders at the thought of how to afford a scenario where each teacher had dramatically fewer students. In some grades, she said, she has individual teachers with up to 27 students in their classrooms.

"My budget would be non-existent," she said.

The vast majority of American school districts have yet to announce when they will resume in-person instruction. The trajectory of the outbreak remains uncertain, and many are waiting on direction from

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their states. Many are developing plans for at least some distance learning, and budgets are one of the factors that could determine how much they do from afar.

In Camden, New Jersey, one of the state's poorest cities, Superintendent Katrina McCombs said costs for classroom cleanings, protective equipment and other virus-related expenses are a concern, especially because the city relies on cash infusions from a state government that is facing a \$10 billion shortfall over the current and next fiscal years.

New Jersey has not yet issued guidelines for reopening schools, but McCombs said she hopes the governor leaves flexibility for big urban districts like hers, where families could be at especially high risk for exposure given the number of multi-generational households.

"I think the big thing that comes to mind right away ... just thinking about those logistics of our city, I would hope that as the governor is rolling out those recommendations they can take those unique factors into consideration especially in our large urban districts," she said.

As schools reopen it will cost the average school district about \$1.8 million to make social distancing possible, according to an estimate published by AASA, the School Superintendents Association, and the Association of School Business Officials International. The expense will strain budgets of districts that are bracing for cuts due to the economic downturn and hoping for additional federal aid.

"You have a significant increase in costs for school districts at a time when school districts are going to have less money. Why? Because you see all of the states' budgets are going to be decimated," said Ben Domenech, executive director of AASA. "How is that going to play out?"

In the town of Stonington, Connecticut, school board chairwoman Alexa Garvey said it would help immensely with finances if the state eased guidance in place for the summer that there should be only one student on each seat of a bus. There are also unresolved questions about providing masks.

"Does every child need a mask?" she said. "What are our obligations to supplying those masks?"

The superintendent of Florida's Miami-Dade County Public Schools district, one of the nation's largest, said at a recent National Press Club panel that it was considering teachers' and parents' input on how to continue instruction in light of changes forced by the pandemic and the associated costs.

"Based on the demands of social distancing and precautions, there will not be enough money to have the old system back in a fully functional way," Superintendent Alberto Carvalho said.

Schools with more resources will have more options.

The affluent town of Greenwich, Connecticut, where the school system has 12.2 students for every teacher and instructor on staff, is like many others developing approaches for various scenarios. To keep up social distancing when buildings reopen, Superintendent Toni Jones has said the district could use media centers, cafeterias and other spaces for classrooms to spread out staff.

In Hartford, which has 14.7 students per teacher, the district serves many high-poverty communities and also brings in thousands of students from 60 other towns through school-choice programs. The superintendent there said the challenges associated with reopening are so severe, it may be time to come up with entirely new models for instruction.

"Is it that the entire ecosystem has to be examined?" Torres-Rodriguez said. "If we're going to go to smaller class sizes, where are we going to get more teachers from?"

"We know that we have experts in our community right now. We have our corporate. We have our industry. We have higher ed," she said. "So how do we leverage our retirees, for example? How do we leverage our soon to be college upper class students? Industry? I just think it is an opportunity."

Kantele Franko, in Columbus, Ohio, contributed to this report. Catalini reported from Trenton, New Jersey, and Melia reported from Hartford.

Documents: Mom called kids 'zombies' before their deaths

By REBECCA BOONE Associated Press

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — The case of two kids who were missing for months before they were found dead in

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rural Idaho has taken another bizarre twist, with new court documents alleging that their mother believed they were zombies and that she was on a mission to rid the world of such creatures.

Police discovered the remains of 17-year-old Tylee Ryan and her 7-year-old brother, Joshua "JJ" Vallow, on June 9 at property belonging to their mother's new husband. The case gained attention for the couple's doomsday beliefs and the mysterious deaths of their former spouses, and court documents released late last week detail more about the strange worldview that detectives think may have influenced Lori Vallow Daybell and Chad Daybell.

So far, no one has been charged with killing the kids, who had not been seen since September, but the Daybells are both behind bars.

Lori Daybell's attorney has indicated that she intends to defend herself against charges of child abandonment and obstructing an investigation. Chad Daybell has pleaded not guilty to destroying or concealing the children's bodies.

Lori Daybell's longtime best friend, Melanie Gibb, has been cooperating with authorities for months, according to the documents written by Rexburg police Lt. Ron Ball. Gibb is the last known person to have seen JJ alive, according to police, when she was visiting Lori Daybell at her apartment in the small Idaho town last September.

"Gibb reports that when she arrived in Rexburg, Lori Vallow informed her that JJ Vallow had become a 'zombie,'" Ball wrote. "Gibb further reports that the term 'zombie' refers to an individual whose mortal spirit has left their body and that their body is now the host of another spirit. The new spirit in a 'zombie' is always considered a 'dark spirit.'"

It wasn't the first time Gibb said she heard her friend talk about zombies, according to the statement. Gibb said Lori Daybell had called Tylee a zombie in spring 2019 when the teen didn't want to baby-sit her little brother and that Lori Daybell had first learned the concept from Chad Daybell at the start of that year.

Gibb said the couple believed that when a zombie takes over a person's body, "the person's true spirit goes into 'limbo' and is stuck there until the host body is physically killed," the court document said. "As such, death of the physical body is seen as the mechanism by which the body's original spirit can be released from limbo."

Gibb also said the couple believed they were spiritual leaders.

"She was told by Chad Daybell and Lori Vallow that they held the religious belief that they were a part of the 'Church of the Firstborn' and that their mission in that Church was to lead the '144,000' mentioned in the Book of Revelation. They also stated their mission was to rid the world of 'zombies,'" according to the police document.

Hints of strange, doomsday beliefs have surrounded the complex case since it began last year.

It started last summer with Lori Daybell's brother shooting and killing her estranged husband, Charles Vallow, in suburban Phoenix in what he asserted was self-defense. Vallow was seeking a divorce, saying Lori believed she had become a god-like figure who was responsible for ushering in the biblical end times. Her brother, Alex Cox, died in December of an apparent blood clot in his lung.

Shortly after Vallow's death, Lori and the children moved to Idaho, where Chad Daybell lived. He ran a small publishing company, putting out many fiction books he wrote about apocalyptic scenarios loosely based on the theology of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. He also recorded podcasts about preparing for biblical end times, and friends said he claimed to be able to receive visions from "beyond the veil."

He was married to Tammy Daybell, who died last October of what her obituary said were natural causes. Authorities grew suspicious when he married Lori just two weeks later, and they had Tammy Daybell's body exhumed in December. The results of that autopsy have not been released.

Police began searching for Tylee and JJ in November after relatives raised concerns. Police say the Daybells lied to investigators about the children's whereabouts before quietly leaving Idaho. They were found in Hawaii months later.

Tylee was last seen Sept. 8, when she went to Yellowstone National Park with her mom, her brother and Cox, court documents say.

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It's not clear what happened to her, but police say the next day, Cox's cellphone data shows he made a trip to Chad Daybell's property and was near where the children's bodies were found. Also on Sept. 9, investigators say Chad Daybell texted Tammy, reportedly telling her that he decided to burn some plants and also had shot a raccoon, which he buried in an area of the property where the family had previously buried dead pets, according to the court documents.

The detective said in the documents that he was suspicious because raccoons are normally nocturnal and the text said the animal had been shot during the day.

Gibb visited Lori Daybell a couple of weeks later. Gibb said she was told Tylee was attending school at a nearby college, though investigators later found the teen had never been enrolled. Gibb also said JJ's behavior appeared to be typical, despite his mother claiming he was acting strangely.

The last time Gibb saw JJ was Sept. 22 at Lori Daybell's apartment. Cox left with his nephew for his apartment nearby, Gibb told police, and when they returned, JJ appeared to be asleep, with his head on Cox's shoulder.

The next morning, Gibb said JJ was gone and Lori said Cox had taken him for a while, according to the document.

An analysis of Alex Cox's cellphone records that day show that his phone pinged at locations on Chad Daybell's property where the children's remains were later found, police said.

It was those cellphone records that led police to the bodies, according to the court documents. Police didn't immediately respond to requests for comment about Cox's possible involvement in the children's deaths.

In NY, KY primaries, mail-in deluge and lines in Louisville

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Overwhelmed Kentucky and New York officials faced a deluge of mail-in votes likely to delay results for days after high-profile primaries Tuesday, contests testing if establishment Democratic congressional candidates can withstand challengers fueled by voter fury over racism.

The day's poster child for voting nightmares loomed potentially in Louisville, Kentucky. The state's largest city and hometown of a serious challenger for the Democratic nomination for the Senate, Louisville — population nearly 600,000 — had just one in-person polling place. Kentucky's Republican secretary of state, Michael Adams, said he hoped early voting and the large demand for mail-in ballots would avert long lines.

All of this flowed from the coronavirus pandemic, which has upended life in America since March. Tuesday, it was on track to take its toll on voters hoping to cast ballots without long waits and for officials hoping to quickly declare winners in all but the most one-sided contests.

Like other states, Kentucky and New York have made it easier for voters to cast ballots by mail, instead of risking exposure to the virus by waiting on long lines. That is likely to mean delayed election results caused by a perfect storm — far more mail-in votes than usual and ballot-counting procedures that haven't been adjusted to handle them.

The focus was on two races Tuesday. In both, Democrats were waiting to see if nationwide protests sparked by last month's killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis police custody would translate to decisive turnout by African American and progressive voters.

Amy McGrath, favored by party leaders and buoyed by a massive \$41 million war chest, faced an eleventh-hour scare as she fought to become Democratic nominee against Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky. She's a former Marine combat pilot with centrist views, which top Democrats like Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer view as a strong match for the Republican-heavy state.

But freshman state legislator Charles Booker's underfinanced campaign has caught fire after he attended recent protests against the March police killing of 26-year-old Breonna Taylor in her Louisville home. That's helped Booker win support from progressive icons like Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., and the state's two largest newspapers, leaving the primary's outcome unpredictable.

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Meanwhile, House Foreign Affairs Committee Chairman Eliot Engel, D-N.Y., embraced by a who's who of prominent Democrats, was battling for a 17th House term.

His challenger is educator and political neophyte Jamaal Bowman, who has drawn strength from anti-racism protests and his accusations that Engel has grown aloof from his district in parts of the Bronx and Westchester. Engel, a liberal, has support from the likes of Hillary Clinton, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and the Congressional Black Caucus. He's also outspent Bowman, who's been helped by progressive groups and a coveted endorsement by The New York Times.

Virginia was also holding congressional primaries, and there was one Republican House runoff each in North Carolina and Mississippi.

Kentucky has been overwhelmed by such an increase in mail ballots that the state's two biggest counties, Jefferson and Fayette, aren't planning to release results election night, said Secretary of State Michael Adams. Jefferson County is home to Louisville.

Kentucky typically receives few mail ballots, but expects them to account for the majority of votes this time. With the state now allowing any registered voter to vote by mail, more than 400,000 mail ballots were returned as of Sunday. All received by Saturday will be counted.

New York officials expect the vast majority of votes to be mail ballots this year, compared to their typical 5% share. Counties have until eight days after Election Day to count and release the results of mail ballots, with 1.7 million requested by voters.

Other notable contests Tuesday included an effort by one-time CNBC anchor and former Republican Michelle Caruso-Cabrera to grab the Democratic nomination from Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. Ocasio-Cortez, who has become a progressive icon, was an unknown 28-year-old when she won a 2018 primary over longtime Rep. Joe Crowley, who seemed in line to become House speaker.

As Tuesday's voting approached, President Donald Trump continued his effort to undermine Americans' faith in mail-in voting by repeating his unfounded claim that the system is rife with fraud.

"Because of MAIL-IN BALLOTS, 2020 will be the most RIGGED Election in our nations history - unless this stupidity is ended," he tweeted, accusing proponents of "using Covid in order to cheat."

Already this year, problems like long lines and lost mail-in ballots have plagued elections in Georgia, Nevada, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania.

AP reporter Stephen Ohlemacher contributed to this report.

Election chaos renews focus on gutted Voting Rights Act

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — When some Georgia voters endured a pandemic, pouring rain and massive waits earlier this month to cast their ballot, President Donald Trump and other Republicans blamed local Democrats for presiding over chaos.

"Make no mistake, the reduction in polling places is a result of a concerted effort by Democrats to push vote-by-mail at the expense of in-person voting," said Justin Clark, the Trump campaign's senior counsel. "Nothing more and nothing less."

But the meltdown was also a manifestation of a landmark Supreme Court case that gutted a key provision of the Voting Rights Act. The 2013 decision — *Shelby County v. Holder* — was heralded by conservatives at the time for invalidating a longstanding "preclearance" process that required certain states and jurisdictions with high minority populations and a history of discrimination to get federal approval for any changes to voting procedures.

Seven years later, the fallout from that decision is colliding with unprecedented changes to the way elections are being conducted. In response to the coronavirus, many states are encouraging mail-in voting. That — combined with a reduction in poll workers — has prompted the consolidation of polling places.

That reduction would have been much harder to pull off in Georgia without the Supreme Court decision. Voting rights advocates are braced for more potential trouble on Tuesday when another round of states

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hold elections.

In Kentucky, the planned reductions in polling places are even sharper than Georgia, with fewer than 200 across a state that usually has nearly 3,700, prompting worries especially about the state's most populous cities where Kentucky's nonwhite population is concentrated.

Meanwhile, Trump has railed against voting by mail, arguing without evidence that it could contribute to fraud. Conservatives are trying to use an Arizona case over absentee voting to further weaken the Voting Rights Act. And concerns are mounting across the ideological spectrum that the changing nature of elections could leave some Americans questioning the result in November.

"Everything is happening at once right now," said University of Georgia law professor Lori Ringhand, citing the pandemic, states like Georgia moving to new voting machines and years of legal wrangling over racial discrimination and election security. "It's just a perfect storm happening in a political environment that has politicized the very act of making voting either easier or harder."

Democrats worry that the GOP goal is to make voting harder. Trump is especially critical of moves that would expand voting by mail and warned without evidence on Monday that foreign countries may try to print ballots.

"That's going to be Trump's mantra through September, October: 'They're going to try to steal the election!'" said Terry McAuliffe, the former Virginia governor and onetime Democratic National Committee chairman.

Georgia Democratic Party Chairwoman Nikema Williams said the anxiety among many in her party is a reminder that a full-strength Voting Rights Act is needed, though she accepts that federal law won't change before November.

"Your right to vote should not depend on your zip code, what county you live in," she said.

Joe Biden, the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee, has called for restoring the Voting Rights Act, but he has not released detailed proposals.

A key question is whether to attempt a new version of "preclearance" by updating the formula used to decide what states and local areas must submit to the process, since that formula is what the Supreme Court ruled impermissible. The path more likely to withstand the court's scrutiny, said Ringhand, is for Congress to set standards that apply nationally.

A White House spokesman declined to comment when asked whether Trump might ever pursue a Voting Rights Act update.

The previous requirements were a key voting rights tool because it turned a usual legal principle on its head. Litigants usually must wait until after some harmful action before asking a court for relief, but "preclearance" put the burden on government officials to prove their proposed election rules would not harm minority voters.

Kentucky, which is among the states holding primaries on Tuesday, had not been affected by that provision.

Voting rights advocates sued there anyway under the remaining law's general prohibition on discrimination, but a federal District Court ruled the overhauled precinct plan was allowable. That decision shows the difficulty citizens sometimes have in proving voting rights violations, especially when the challenge is theoretical, before an election has even taken place.

The burden could get even heavier if Republicans and conservatives get their way in an Arizona case. That dispute started with a challenge to the state's ban on "ballot harvesting," the practice of third parties rounding up absentee ballots.

A federal appeals court ruled against the law, using Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act. Congress spelled out in 1982 that it intended that part of the law to be applied as a "results" test, meaning courts would simply judge whether laws from elections procedures to district boundaries for elected posts had a discriminatory effect on minorities. Some conservatives now want the Supreme Court to rule that anyone challenging a law under Section 2 would have to prove that lawmakers intended to discriminate. That's a much higher burden of proof required to strike down a law.

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In the meantime, Ringhand lamented that voters are displaying diminishing confidence that any of the authorities involved are truly interested in fairness.

"I'm not sure there's a great deal of trust in any of our decision makers right now, whether that's legislators or state judges or federal judges or secretaries of state," she said. "Trust is at an all-time low."

MLB plans 60-game slate, shortest since 1878, as union balks

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Major League Baseball plans to unilaterally issue a 60-game schedule for its shortest season since 1878 after the players' association rejected a negotiated deal of the same length, putting the sport on track for a combative return to the field amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Commissioner Rob Manfred and union head Tony Clark met last week and outlined plans that included expanding the playoffs from 10 teams to 16, widening use of the designated hitter to National League games and an experiment to start extra innings with a runner on second base. But the latest version of the deal proposed by MLB was rejected by the Major League Baseball Players Association's executive board in a 33-5 vote on Monday.

Those innovations now disappear.

"Needless to say, we are disappointed by this development," MLB said in a statement. "The framework provided an opportunity for MLB and its players to work together to confront the difficulties and challenges presented by the pandemic. It gave our fans the chance to see an exciting new postseason format. And, it offered players significant benefits."

MLB's control owners approved going unilaterally with the 60-game schedule in ballparks without fans if the final arrangements can be put in place, a person familiar with the decision told The Associated Press. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no announcement had been made.

MLB asked the union to respond by 5 p.m. EDT Tuesday as to whether players can report to training by July 1 and whether the players' association will agree on the operating manual of health and safety protocols. The schedule would be the shortest since the National League's third season.

Given the need for three days of virus testing and 21 days of workouts, opening day likely would be during the final week of July. MLB already has started to investigate charter flights that could bring players back from Latin America, another person told the AP, also on condition of anonymity because no announcements were made.

The union announced its rejection, and the vote total was confirmed by a person familiar with that meeting who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the balloting was not made public. The decision likely will provoke what figures to be lengthy and costly litigation over the impact of the coronavirus on the sport, similar to the collusion cases that sent baseball spiraling to a spring training lockout in 1990 and a 7 1/2-month strike in 1994-95 that wiped out the World Series for the first time in nine decades.

It also eliminates a \$25 million postseason players' pool, meaning players will not get paid anything above meal money during the playoffs and World Series, and the clubs' offer to forgive \$33 million in salary advanced to 769 players at the bottom of the salary scale with lower rates of pay while in the minors: \$16,500, \$30,000 or \$60,000 for each of them.

"It's absolute death for this industry to keep acting as it has been. Both sides," Cincinnati pitcher Trevor Bauer tweeted in a rare instance of a player criticizing the union. "We're driving the bus straight off a cliff. How is this good for anyone involved? Covid 19 already presented a lose lose lose situation and we've somehow found a way to make it worse. Incredible."

Teams lose what would have been a new right to sell advertising patches on uniforms, broadcast enhancements such as having players wear microphones during games and a 2020 suspension of the luxury tax that for a 60-game season projected to save the New York Yankees \$8.5 million, Houston \$3 million, the Los Angeles Dodgers \$434,000 and the Chicago Cubs \$116,000.

Manfred loses what would have been an additional \$60 million to the commissioner's discretionary fund.

The union said in a statement that the "board reaffirmed the players' eagerness to return to work as

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soon and as safely as possible.”

“To that end we anticipate finalizing a comprehensive set of health and safety protocols with Major League Baseball in the coming days, and we await word from the league on the resumption of spring training camps and a proposed 2020 schedule,” the union said.

While the framework had included the expanded playoffs for both 2020 and 2021, and Manfred offered to drop it from the second season if players feared it would decrease their future bargaining leverage.

Spring training was suspended on March 12, two weeks ahead of scheduled openers, and the sides have reverted to the familiar financial infighting that fractured the sport in the past. An initial deal March 26 called for players to receive prorated salaries and gave Manfred power to set the schedule, but that agreement did not require MLB to play in ballparks without fans.

Teams sought additional salary concessions, claiming they would lose \$640,000 for each additional regular-season game. The union was skeptical, requested additional documents and said it did not receive enough to evaluate the true financial picture.

Players refused to budge from their insistence on prorated salaries, and MLB finally agreed to that last week during the one-on-one meeting between Manfred and Clark. While Manfred called it a framework for an agreement, Clark said it was merely a proposal and further angered MLB.

At that point, the sides remained about \$275 million apart after weeks of talks. MLB offered 60 games and \$1.48 billion from salaries that originally totaled \$4 billion, plus a \$25 million postseason players’ pool. The union wanted 70 games and \$1.73 billion plus a \$50 million pool.

Players are expected to file a grievance, claiming MLB violated a provision in the March agreement requiring both sides to “work in good faith to as soon as is practicable commence play, and complete the fullest 2020 championship season and postseason that is economically feasible” consistent with several provisions. MLB is expected to file a grievance accusing the union of negotiating in bad faith.

Arbitrator Mark Irvings will hear the case. If the union proves a longer schedule had been feasible, each game on the schedule would be worth \$25 million in salary across the 30 teams.

Reduced revenue for clubs this year is expected to cause a drop in the free-agent market, which next offseason is slated to include Mookie Betts, George Springer, J.T. Realmuto, James Paxton, Marcus Stroman and Bauer.

All the while, the coronavirus upended plans of many clubs to resume training at their Florida facilities due to a rise in virus cases in the state. Twenty-nine teams intend to work out in their regular-season ballparks, with Toronto awaiting additional talks with the Canadian federal and Ontario provincial governments.

The sides have discussed expanding rosters to 30 active players during the season’s first two weeks, and 28 during the third and fourth weeks before settling in at the new 26-player limit. Because there are no minor league affiliates playing, each team would keep 60 players around.

More bickering and turmoil lies ahead. Baseball’s collective bargaining agreement expires on Dec. 1, 2021, and the virus damaged the already deteriorated relationship and became just another of the financial issues that point toward a spring training lockout ahead of the 2022 season.

“If there’s going to be a fight the time for that fight is after the ‘21 season when a new CBA is negotiated. 5 years of potential change,” Bauer tweeted. “We’re doing irreparable damage to our industry right now over rules that last AT MOST 16 months.”

This dispute has played out following five straight years of relatively flat salaries, a failed grievance alleging the Chicago Cubs manipulated the service time of Kris Bryant to delay the free agency of the star third baseman and a still-pending grievance that some teams did not use revenue sharing money as the labor contract specified, part of the union’s claim teams are “tanking.”

MLB says clubs have the right to determine when prospects are ready for the majors and also are free to lower major league payrolls for rebuilding.

Further, the failed negotiations sparked criticism of Clark and union chief negotiator Bruce Meyer by agents, though there is no evidence yet that the displeasure has extended to players.

Until now, the latest openers were on May 1 during five seasons in the 1800s, according to the Elias Sports Bureau, but since 1900 it had been April 25 following the end of the 1994-95 strike. Players inter-

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rupted the 1981 season with a strike that started June 12, and the second half of a split season started on Aug. 10.

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

Mail voting: Pence, aides embrace practice panned by Trump

By BRIAN SLODYSKO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Vice President Mike Pence and a half-dozen other senior advisers to President Donald Trump have repeatedly voted by mail, according to election records obtained by The Associated Press. That undercuts the president's argument that the practice will lead to widespread fraud this November.

More than three years after leaving the Indiana governor's residence, Pence still lists that as his official residence and votes absentee accordingly. Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has permanent absentee voting status in her home state of Michigan.

Brad Parscale, Trump's campaign manager, voted absentee in Texas in 2018 and didn't vote in the general election two years earlier when Trump's name was on the ballot.

Two other senior Trump campaign officials — chief operating officer Michael Glassner and deputy campaign manager Bill Stepien — have repeatedly voted by mail in New Jersey. And Nick Ayers, a senior campaign adviser who was previously chief of staff to Pence, has voted by mail in Georgia since 2014.

In most election years, voting by mail is an unremarkable event. But this year is different because Trump has railed against state efforts to expand access to mail-in voting as an alternative to waiting in lines at polling places during a pandemic. He has argued without evidence that mail-in voting will lead to fraud and warned Monday that foreign countries could print ballots.

That, some experts say, is a double standard that amounts to voter suppression.

"These are people who are taking advantage of — which is perfectly legal — their right to vote absentee," said Trevor Potter, the president of the nonpartisan Campaign Legal Center, who previously served as a general counsel on both of John McCain's Republican presidential campaigns. "But they don't want other people to do the same thing."

Trump himself voted by mail in the Florida primary earlier this year. White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany has a lengthy history of voting by mail, which has been detailed in recent news stories. And Attorney General William Barr, who has also raised concern about the practice, voted absentee in Virginia in 2012 and 2019, The Washington Post previously reported.

Tim Murtaugh, the Trump campaign's communications director, defended the Trump aides who have voted by mail. In a statement, he said there's a "vast difference between voting absentee by mail when you can't get to the polls on Election Day versus mailing every registered voter a ballot, even those who didn't request one."

Amid the pandemic, some states — governed by both Democrats and Republicans — sent applications for absentee ballots to voters, but not ballots themselves. Six states will send ballots in November. Others are taking less dramatic steps.

"The media thinks they're playing 'gotcha' by purposefully ignoring that difference," Murtaugh continued. "Voter rolls are notorious for having bad addresses or even listing dead people as active voters."

The campaign declined to make the Trump advisers who vote by mail available for interviews.

The coronavirus has upended primaries across the U.S. this year, leading to postponed elections, shortages of poll workers, the shuttering of some polling locations and hours-long lines at some that have remained open. That's raised Democratic fears that similar complications in November could alter the outcome of the contest between Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

Justin Clark, the Trump campaign's top attorney, told Republicans during a meeting in Wisconsin last year that the GOP relies on voter suppression to be competitive in swing states, while calling for the party to "start playing offense a little bit," according to a recording that was previously obtained by the AP.

While instances of voter fraud are rare, Trump's campaign seized on recent news stories detailing how a

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Philadelphia election judge recently pleaded guilty to stuffing ballot boxes in exchange for bribes between 2014 and 2016.

In Texas, where Parscale voted by mail in 2018, there are stiff absentee ballot laws, requiring a person to be over 65, disabled, or out of the county where they are registered during early voting, as well as on Election Day.

Parscale was in Houston for a Trump rally on Oct. 22, 2018, the day early voting began in San Antonio, where he lived at the time, according to records and several tweets he sent. The day after, he signed a statement of residence that was submitted to county election officials to clarify his address. Yet it's unclear if he traveled to San Antonio, where his presence would have disqualified him from voting absentee.

The Texas Supreme Court has ruled that fear of contracting the coronavirus does not make voters eligible to cast their ballot by mail.

Parscale acknowledged the difficulty he faced casting an absentee ballot in 2016, when he wasn't able to vote.

"I was in New York working to elect Donald Trump and encountered a series of problems receiving my absentee ballot from Texas and missed the deadline," Parscale said in a statement to CBS News, which first reported that he didn't vote that year. "Just further proof that vote-by-mail is not the flawless solution Democrats and the media pretend it is."

DeVos, the education secretary, has voted absentee in all but three Michigan elections over the past decade, according to records. Trump threatened last month to withhold federal funding after Michigan's Democratic secretary of state mailed out absentee ballot applications to registered voters.

DeVos' family has donated millions of dollars to Republican causes, including groups that are now part of a fierce court fight to limit the expansion of vote-by-mail.

Glassner and Stepien have both voted repeatedly by mail in New Jersey, where Glassner has voted absentee four times since 2016. That includes a general election ballot that was rejected by election officials in 2019. Stepien has voted seven times by mail since 2006, the records show.

Some Republicans question the wisdom of Trump's anti-vote-by-mail strategy.

Former Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Ridge, a Republican, said it is "counterproductive."

"You're the incumbent president of the United States. You have a bully pulpit, you've got this massive war chest, and you've got a huge electronic following," he said. "Why would you not encourage them to vote, number one, and say, well if you can't get to the polls for whatever reason, make sure you fill out that absentee ballot and vote for me?"

Associated Press writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this report from Washington.

South Korean activist floats leaflets to North amid tensions

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — A South Korean group launched hundreds of thousands of leaflets by balloon across the border with North Korea overnight, an activist said Tuesday, despite Pyongyang repeatedly warning it that it will retaliate against such actions.

Activist Park Sang-hak said his organization floated 20 huge balloons carrying 500,000 leaflets, 2,000 one-dollar bills and small books on North Korea from the border town of Paju on Monday night.

Park, formerly a North Korean who fled to South Korea, said in a statement his leafleting is "a struggle for justice for the sake of liberation of" North Koreans.

The move is certain to intensify already high tensions between the Koreans. North Korea recently abruptly raised its rhetoric against South Korean civilian leafleting, destroyed an empty, Seoul-built liaison office on its territory and pushed to resume its psychological warfare against the South.

Local officials in South Korea said they were looking into the account and may ask police to investigate it as a potential safety threat to front-line residents. Seoul's Unification Ministry, which handles relations with North Korea, issued a separate statement expressing "deep regret" over Park's attempt to send leaflets.

Calling North Korean leader Kim Jong Un "an evil" and his rule "barbarism," Park said he'll keep sending

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anti-Kim leaflets.

"Though North Korean residents have become modern-day slaves with no basic rights, don't they have the rights to know the truth?" he said.

South Korean officials have vowed to ban leafleting and said they would press charges against Park and other anti-Pyongyang activists for allegedly raising animosities and potentially endangering front-line border residents. In 2014, North Korean troops opened fire at propaganda balloons flying toward their territory, triggering an exchange of fire that caused no known casualties.

Park accused South Korea's liberal government of sympathizing with North Korea or caving to its threats. Park's brother, another activist also formerly from North Korea, last week canceled plans to release bottles filled with dried rice and face masks from a front-line island.

Gyeonggi province, which governs Paju, has earlier issued an administrative order prohibiting activists from entering certain border areas including Paju to fly leaflets to the North.

If Park's leafleting is confirmed, Gyeonggi official Kim Min-yeong said the province will demand police investigate him. The penalty for violations is a year in prison or a maximum 10 million won (\$8,200) fine.

The provincial office said in a statement Tuesday it had separately requested police investigate four activists' groups, including Park's, for alleged fraud, diversion of official funds and other charges. It said the four groups have been accused of exploiting leafleting as way to collect donations as part of money-making businesses, rather than North Korea human rights movements.

North Korea does not tolerate outside criticism of its ruling family, who enjoy a strong personality cult built by North Korea founder Kim Il Sung, whose military's surprise invasion on South Korea triggered a devastating three-year war in June 1950.

Park previously said he would push to drop a million leaflets over the border around Thursday, the 70th anniversary of the start of the Korean War. A large banner that Park said was flown to North Korea with the leaflets Monday shows the image of Kim Il Sung and accuses him of "the slaughter of (the Korean) people" and urges North Koreans to rise up against the Kim family's rule, according to photos distributed by Park.

At least one of the banners and a balloon with leaflets were found to have landed in Hongcheon, a South Korean town southeast of Paju, not North Korea, Yonhap news agency reported. Hongcheon police said they couldn't immediately confirm the report.

In recent weeks, North Korea has unleashed insults against leafleting activists like Park, describing them as "human scum" and "mongrel dogs." It said it would also take a series of steps to nullify 2018 tension-reduction deals with South Korea. On Monday, North Korea's state media said it had manufactured 12 million propaganda leaflets to be floated toward South Korea in what it said would be the largest-ever anti-Seoul leafleting campaign.

Experts say North Korea is likely using the South Korean civilian leafleting as a chance to boost its internal unity and apply more pressure on Seoul and Washington amid stalled nuclear talks.

While Seoul has sometimes sent police to block activists from leafleting during sensitive times, it had previously resisted North Korea's calls for a ban, saying the activists were exercising their freedom of speech.

Seoul's recent moves against leafleting have drawn criticism that the government is sacrificing democratic principles to keep alive its push for inter-Korean engagement.

Putin uses World War II parade to boost support before vote

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A massive Russian military parade postponed by the coronavirus pandemic will roll through Red Square this week to celebrate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe, even though Russia is still registering a steady rise in infections.

President Vladimir Putin's insistence on holding the parade reflects not only his desire to put Russia's power on display but also to bolster patriotic sentiments a week before a constitutional referendum that could allow him to remain in office until 2036.

The Victory Day parade normally is held on May 9, the nation's most important secular holiday. This

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year's date of Wednesday, June 24, coincides with the day in 1945 when the first parade was held on Red Square after the defeat of Nazi Germany by the Soviet Union and its allies.

The Soviet Union lost a staggering 27 million people in what it called the Great Patriotic War and the enormous suffering and sacrifice of that era has left a deep scar in Russia's psyche.

Victory Day is a rare event in the nation's divisive post-Soviet history that is revered by all political sides, and the Kremlin has used that sentiment to encourage patriotic pride and underline Russia's role as a global power.

The show is particularly important this year for Putin. The Kremlin hopes it will help secure public support a week before the July 1 nationwide vote on constitutional amendments that effectively reset the clock on his tenure in office and will allow him to seek two more six-year terms if he chooses.

"For Putin, the parade has a symbolic meaning, a symbol that the epidemic is over and so the vote can be held," said Dmitry Oreshkin, a Moscow-based independent political analyst. "And even more importantly, Victory Day serves as a positive symbol of people's unification, economic mobilization, strong leadership and consolidation — the things that Putin wants to claim credit for."

The plebiscite was initially set for April 22 but, like the parade, was postponed by the coronavirus outbreak. When the first signs of a slowdown in the contagion appeared, Putin rescheduled the vote for July 1, eager to consolidate his power before the economic fallout from the pandemic further eroded his popularity.

His approval rating plummeted to 59% in April, its lowest level in more than two decades, according to the Levada Center, the nation's top independent pollster.

"Three months later, the ratings will be lower as the economy is going downhill," Oreshkin said. "It's essential to hold the vote right now."

While the pandemic has shattered the Kremlin's hopes to get top world leaders to attend the parade, the heads of several ex-Soviet nations and Serbia's president are still scheduled to show up Wednesday. The celebration will feature 14,000 troops, about 300 military vehicles and 75 warplanes in a display of the country's military might.

Russian officials have insisted that all necessary precautions have been taken to protect the health of its troops, elderly veterans and foreign guests at the parade.

Russia has the world's third-highest number of confirmed coronavirus cases after the United States and Brazil and still reports about 8,000 new infections a day. Its reported virus death toll is nearly 8,200, a number that experts say is much too low for a country with over 590,000 confirmed cases.

With this in mind, Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyenin has cautioned the public against coming to see the show. Putin spokesman Dmitry Peskov also advised Moscow residents, who usually converge on central avenues to see the tanks and missiles roll by, to watch it on TV this time.

While the parade is politically important for the Kremlin, Putin's persistence in holding it despite the risks of contagion also reflects his strong personal preoccupation with World War II.

The 67-year-old Russian leader views the war from a deeply emotional angle, often invoking dramatic memories of his parents, Vladimir and Maria, and his brother Viktor, nicknamed Vitya, when the Nazis besieged his hometown of Leningrad, now called St. Petersburg, for nearly 2 1/2 years.

"For my parents, the war meant the terrible ordeals of the Siege of Leningrad where my 2-year-old brother Vitya died," Putin wrote in an article published in the U.S. journal *The National Interest*. "It was the place where my mother miraculously managed to survive. My father, despite being exempt from active duty, volunteered to defend his hometown."

The Kremlin has tapped that history to rally patriotism at home but has also regularly used it against foreign opponents.

For many years, Russian officials have chastised the West for the failure to condemn annual demonstrations in Estonia and Latvia honoring veterans of *Waffen SS*, as well as Ukraine's adulation for nationalist leaders who sided with the Nazis in the war.

Amid a bitter strain in relations with Poland, Putin this year zeroed in on Warsaw, denouncing its prewar leaders of colluding with Nazi Germany to annex part of Czechoslovakia in 1938.

Poland criticized Putin's article as part of his "information war" against the West.

Causing outrage in Warsaw and the Baltics, Putin also staunchly defended a 1939 pact between Soviet leader Josef Stalin and Nazi leader Adolf Hitler that carved up Poland and the Baltic states. World War II began when Germany invaded Poland on Sept. 1, 1939, a week after the pact was signed. On Sept. 17, the Soviet Red Army rolled into Poland from the east.

Repeating a Soviet-era argument, Putin described the deal as an attempt by Stalin to buy time for strengthening the country's defenses, arguing that Moscow had no other choice after Britain and France stonewalled Soviet proposals for a military alliance. Nazi Germany broke the pact and invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941.

Putin has pointed out that every seventh Soviet citizen was killed in the war, while the United Kingdom lost one out of every 127 and the United States lost one out of 320.

"The Soviet Union and the Red Army, no matter what anyone is trying to prove today, made the main and crucial contribution to the defeat of Nazism," Putin wrote in *The National Interest*.

Follow AP pandemic coverage at <http://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandtheOutbreak>

Seattle will move to dismantle protest zone, mayor says

By GENE JOHNSON Associated Press

SEATTLE (AP) — Faced with growing pressure to crack down on an "occupied" protest zone following two weekend shootings, Seattle's mayor said Monday that officials will move to wind down the blocks-long span of city streets taken over two weeks ago that President Donald Trump asserted is run by "anarchists."

Mayor Jenny Durkan said the violence was distracting from changes sought by thousands of peaceful protesters opposing racial inequity and police brutality. She said at a news conference that the city is working with the community to bring the "Capitol Hill Occupied Protest" zone, or CHOP, to an end and that police soon would move back into a precinct building they had largely abandoned in the area.

Durkan also vowed to address some of the protesters' demands, including investing more in Black communities, reimagining policing in cooperation with community leaders, and pushing for accountability measures and statewide reform of police unions.

The mayor did not give an immediate timeline for clearing out the occupation but said "additional steps" would be examined if people don't leave voluntarily. With scores of people camping in a park in the protest zone, Durkan said peaceful demonstrations could continue, but nighttime disorder had to stop.

"The cumulative impacts of the gatherings and protests and the nighttime atmosphere and violence has led to increasingly difficult circumstances for our businesses and residents," Durkan said. "The impacts have increased and the safety has decreased."

A shooting Sunday night was the second in less than 48 hours at the edge of the zone, which is named for the Capitol Hill neighborhood near downtown Seattle and emerged during nationwide protests over the killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police.

The 17-year-old victim was shot in the arm and declined to speak with detectives, police said. Gunfire early Saturday left a 19-year-old man dead and another person critically wounded.

The victims were taken to a hospital by volunteer medics in private cars, and police said they were met by a hostile crowd that prevented them from immediately getting to the scene.

It was not apparent if the shootings had anything to do with the protest — gunfire sometimes occurs in the neighborhood, especially on warm summer nights.

Protesters cordoned off the several-block area near the police's East Precinct after Seattle riot squads unleashed tear gas, pepper spray and flash-bangs on large crowds of mostly peaceful protesters, drawing condemnation from many city leaders and a federal court order temporarily banning the use of the weapons on demonstrators.

After police largely abandoned the building, protesters took over the area — with demonstrators paint-

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ing a large "Black Lives Matter" mural on the street, handing out free food, playing music and planting a community garden. Its existence incensed Trump, who criticized Durkan and Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, both Democrats.

Peace has prevailed during the day. On Monday, people lounged on the turf at a park, while volunteers handed out food, water and toiletries. Artists painted designs on wooden barricades, and a few candles burned in front of a sign on the police building listing people killed by officers.

At night, however, the atmosphere has become more charged, with demonstrators marching and armed volunteer guards keeping watch.

"With not having a police presence here, people are free to do whatever they want to do," said Bobby Stills, a Seattle resident who has spent time volunteering at the protest zone. "You never know who's going to show up. That's why people here are on such high alert — they don't know who's who or what's what or their intentions."

Durkan, who has faced calls from protesters and even some City Council members to resign over her handling of the demonstrations, and Police Chief Carmen Best said they did not immediately have a timeline for returning officers to the East Precinct, which was established to better respond to emergency calls in the city's historically Black district. They said officers would return safely and in the near future. Best noted that some other crimes, including rape, arson and burglary, had been reported in or near the protest zone.

Demonstrators who had marched to the West Precinct police building downtown were returning to the zone when Sunday night's shooting occurred, police said.

Andre Taylor, who founded of the anti-police-shooting organization Not This Time! after his brother was killed by Seattle police in 2016, said Monday that he had warned protest organizers that the city would need to retake the area because of the violence.

"That CHOP area is attracting this kind of activity and it's unsafe," Taylor said in a Facebook video. "I told them, 'All those people that were supporting you guys, they're going to start walking away from you, especially all those white people that were following you. ... They don't want to be associated with any part of that violence.'"

Former U.S. Rep. Dave Reichert, a Republican who previously served as sheriff in the county where Seattle is located, also called on the city to take back control.

"Elected officials have abandoned the rule of law and their oath to protect and defend our communities," he wrote in an opinion piece for Washington State Wire, a website devoted to state political news. "They have abandoned their law-abiding citizens and have been cowardly bullied into surrendering the East Precinct — and multiple city blocks."

Associated Press photographer Ted Warren in Seattle contributed.

With unsubstantiated claim, Trump sows doubt on US election

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump opened a new front Monday in his fight against mail-in voting, making unsubstantiated assertions that foreign countries will print up millions of bogus ballots to rig the results and create what he called the "scandal of our times."

The claims not only ignore safeguards that states have implemented to prevent against widespread fraud but they also risk undermining Americans' faith in the election, spreading the very kind of disinformation U.S. authorities have warned foreign adversaries could exploit to foment doubt in the voting process.

Trump accelerated his attacks following a bruising weekend for his reelection campaign, when a lower-than-expected turnout at a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, left him seething, and as he fights for a second term during the worst unemployment since the Great Depression. The rhetoric, coming as states scramble to adjust voting processes because of the coronavirus pandemic, represents a two-track approach of trying to both block mail-in balloting in advance and setting the stage for challenging the results once it's over.

"It's a way of trying to turn the foreign interference claims that have been made on their head," said

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Richard Hasen, an election law expert at the University of California, Irvine. "Typically we've heard that the Russian government and others were working to help elect Trump, and here is Trump using fears of foreign interference as a way of bolstering his own side."

"This potentially lays the groundwork," he added, "for him contesting election results."

Though election records obtained by The Associated Press show that a half-dozen senior advisers to the president have voted by mail, others in the administration have recently promoted the notion that states could be inundated with fraudulent ballots from overseas.

Attorney General William Barr raised that prospect in interviews in recent weeks with The New York Times Magazine and Fox News.

"Right now, a foreign country could print up tens of thousands of counterfeit ballots, and (it would) be very hard for us to detect which was the right and which was the wrong ballot," Barr told Fox in an interview that aired Sunday.

The president tweeted Monday a news report on Barr's remarks as well as a separate message that said: "RIGGED 2020 ELECTION: MILLIONS OF MAIL-IN BALLOTS WILL BE PRINTED BY FOREIGN COUNTRIES, AND OTHERS. IT WILL BE THE SCANDAL OF OUR TIMES!"

Biden's campaign issued a statement Monday night calling Trump's tweets "a desperate attempt to re-write reality to revive this President's faltering re-election campaign."

"We will not stand by while Donald Trump recklessly undermines faith in our democratic process," campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said.

Experts say Trump's doomsday scenario is far-fetched.

"Comments like that demonstrate an ignorance of by-mail voting and the technology associated with how it actually works," said Eddie Perez, global director of technology development at the OSET Institute, a nonprofit election technology research corporation.

"There are more protocols than people are probably aware of, which would make such an attack rather difficult," he added.

Though fraud in absentee balloting is rare, that's not to say there aren't more pedestrian problems that could arise as people vote by the mail, including ballots that are intercepted in a mailbox and tampered with. The National Conference of State Legislatures lists on its website multiple disadvantages to the process, including slower reporting of results and the possibility that voters could be coerced by family members.

But the list doesn't broach the idea of foreign countries manufacturing their own ballots — a type of fraud that would encounter significant practical obstacles, not least because states say they are adept at differentiating legitimate ballots from inauthentic ones.

The ballots used by Colorado's 64 individual counties are printed exclusively in the United States, distinguished by specific colors and target areas and processed through sensitive scanners designed to weed out the inauthentic, said Secretary of State Jena Griswold. A bipartisan team of election judges conducts signature verification and refers for further investigation suspected instances of double-voting.

And in Washington state, each county is responsible for printing its own ballots, which are placed inside a security envelope or sleeve. Voters' signatures on return ballots are cross-checked against the signature on voter registration applications. The state says if a signature is missing or doesn't match the voter registration record, voters are contacted.

"My experience doing this is that usually when people get creative with things like that, you can tell," Washington Secretary of State Kim Wyman said in an interview.

Five states — Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington — conduct elections entirely by mail, according to the NCSL. But nearly all states, led by Democratic and Republican governors alike, offer some form of the option.

With health officials saying that voting by mail can help prevent the spread of the coronavirus, many states are moving ahead with plans that ease access to mail-in ballots. Wisconsin recently decided to send absentee ballot requests to nearly all voters. Michigan, another swing state, has taken that step as well.

That trend has agitated Trump, who even before Monday has openly railed against absentee voting. He

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told Politico in an interview published Friday that the “biggest risk” to his reelection is the growing use of mail-in ballots, and suggested that his chances may hinge on whether he can prevail in court against efforts to make absentee voting easier.

By Monday, he was tweeting that this year would be the “most RIGGED election” in American history and blasted unspecified people or states who he said were “using Covid in order to cheat by using Mail-Ins!”

It was the type of rhetoric that alarmed election security experts, but was even cautioned against by a Republican-led Senate committee in a report earlier this year on Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election.

“Sitting officials and candidates should use the absolute greatest amount of restraint and caution if they are considering publicly calling the validity of an upcoming election into question,” the report said.

Associated Press reporters Brian Slodysko in Washington and Nicholas Riccardi in Denver contributed to this report.

NASCAR rallies around Wallace as FBI investigates noose

By JENNA FRYER AP Auto Racing Writer

Bubba Wallace steered the No. 43 to the front of pit road, NASCAR champion Kyle Busch pushing the famous car on one side and close friend Ryan Blaney pushing on the other.

The entire 40-driver field and their crew members followed. After the car came to a stop, Wallace climbed out, sat on the window ledge and sobbed. Richard Petty, his Hall of Fame team owner, gently placed a hand on Wallace’s shoulder.

As federal authorities descended on Talladega Superspeedway on Monday to investigate the discovery of a noose in Wallace’s garage stall, the entire industry rallied around the Cup Series’ only Black driver.

“The news has disturbed us all and of course we want justice and know who and why,” said seven-time NASCAR champion Jimmie Johnson. “And we want to stand with our friend.”

The 82-year-old Petty, at his first race since the coronavirus pandemic began and at Talladega on race day for the first time in more than 10 years, stood side by side with Wallace during the national anthem before Monday’s rain-postponed event. Everyone stood behind the car while Brad Keselowski held the American flag at the front of the display of solidarity.

The idea to stand with Wallace started with Johnson, while former series champion Kevin Harvick suggested they all push the car to the front of the grid, Wallace said.

One by one, after the anthem, they hugged Wallace. He then had a long embrace with Petty.

And then he went racing.

If not for a shortage of fuel, Wallace might have had a chance to race for the win. A late stop for gas led to a 14th-place finish but felt like a win for Wallace. He went to the fence and slapped hands through the wiring with a group of fans, many wearing “I Can’t Breathe” shirts as they cheered.

He apologized for not wearing a mandatory mask but didn’t put it on because “I wanted to show whoever it was, you are not going to take away my smile.”

“This sport is changing,” he said. “The pre-race deal was probably one of the hardest things I’ve ever had to witness in my life. From all the supporters, from drivers to crew members, everybody here, the bad-ass fan base, thank you guys for coming out. This is truly incredible and I’m glad to be a part of this sport.”

It was Wallace who successfully pushed the stock car series to ban the Confederate flag at its venues less than two weeks ago and he was the target when the noose was found hanging in the Richard Petty Motorsports garage stall Sunday afternoon at the Alabama track. A member of Wallace’s crew reported it to NASCAR, and by Monday morning U.S. Attorney Jay Town said his office, the FBI and the Justice Department’s Civil Rights Division were involved.

“Regardless of whether federal charges can be brought, this type of action has no place in our society,” Town said.

NASCAR President Steve Phelps said security has been stepped up for Wallace — his team was also

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granted unusual access to its car Monday morning to ensure it had not been tampered with overnight — and the FBI was “currently on site” at the track.

He said the FBI director had told agents in Birmingham to “use all their resources” to find the perpetrator. “Unequivocally they will be banned from this sport for life,” Phelps said. “There is no room for this at all. We won’t tolerate it. They won’t be here. I don’t care who they are, they will not be here.”

NASCAR has tried to distance itself from the Confederate flag for years at the risk of alienating a core group of its fan base. At Wallace’s urging, it went ahead with the ban as the nation grapples with social unrest largely tied to George Floyd, an unarmed Black man who died in the custody of Minneapolis police.

NASCAR has not outlined how it will enforce the restriction and this week’s race at Talladega, in the heart of the South, presented the series with its biggest test in the early going. Disgruntled fans with Confederate flags drove past the main entrance to the track all weekend and a plane flew above the track Sunday pulling a banner of the flag that read “Defund NASCAR.”

Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey said she was “shocked and appalled” by the “vile act” against Wallace.

“There is no place for this disgusting display of hatred in our state,” Ivey said. “Bubba Wallace is one of us; he is a native of Mobile and on behalf of all Alabamians, I apologize to Bubba Wallace as well as to his family and friends for the hurt this has caused and regret the mark this leaves on our state.”

Petty said in a statement he was “enraged” by the “filthy act” of racism. Retired champion Jeff Gordon called it a “cowardly” act while retired champion and current team owner Tony Stewart seethed in a social media post: “Angry. Outraged. Disappointed. Those words don’t fully describe how I feel. #IStandWithBubba and I’ll damn sure stand up to anyone who engages in this kind of behavior.”

Phelps said he was the one who told Wallace about the noose.

“It was a difficult moment for Bubba, a difficult moment for me,” he said. “He’s handled it with the grace that he has handled everything that’s happened over the last few weeks.”

The 26-year-old Wallace said after the noose was discovered: “This will not break me, I will not give in nor will I back down. I will continue to proudly stand for what I believe in.”

Wallace has previously worn a shirt that says “I Can’t Breathe” over his firesuit and sported a Black Lives Matter paint scheme in a race last month in Martinsville, Virginia.

Talladega is one of the more raucous stops on the NASCAR schedule, but the pandemic prompted the series, like all sports, to ban or sharply limit fans. Up to 5,000 fans were allowed in, but there were far fewer than that Monday and none of them had access to the infield or the Cup Series garage.

Under strict new health guidelines, a very limited number of people can access the garage. That would include crew members for each of the 40 teams, NASCAR employees, Talladega staff members and any contracted safety crews or security guards.

Phelps declined to discuss whether cameras in the garage area might have captured anything of value but noted NASCAR has an approved list of who is allowed access that has been turned over to authorities.

“It will be part of what the FBI is looking at,” he said

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

Trump: US doing ‘too good a job’ on testing

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said Monday the United States has done “too good a job” on testing for cases of COVID-19, even as his staff insisted the president was only joking when he said over the weekend that he had instructed aides to “slow the testing down, please.”

The president’s comments at a campaign rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, on Saturday brought quick rebukes from the campaign of likely Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden as well as scores of Democratic lawmakers.

In an interview with Scripps for its local TV stations, Trump was asked Monday whether he did indeed tell aides to “slow it down.” He did not directly answer the question.

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"If it did slow down, frankly, I think we're way ahead of ourselves, if you want to know the truth," Trump said. "We've done too good a job," adding that the reason the United States has more coronavirus cases is that it does more testing.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said any suggestion that testing has been curtailed is not rooted in fact, saying Trump made the slow-it-down comment "in jest."

She said that Trump's comments were an effort to criticize the media for its coverage of the coronavirus and its "failure" to understand that "when you test more, you also find more cases."

However, the U.S. is seeing disturbing trends in several benchmarks, including the percentage of tests that prove positive for the virus.

Health officials say that testing in the United States early on was insufficient for optimal containment. In early March, Dr. Anthony Fauci, a member of the White House coronavirus task force, testified that the nation's testing system was "not really geared to what we need right now" and added, "it is a failing. Let's admit it."

But now, about a half-million people per day are being tested, and the president and his aides have been repeatedly touting the United States as leading the world in testing.

Democratic Gov. Steve Sisolak of Nevada told Vice President Mike Pence in a conference call with governors on Monday that the president's comments were not helpful and wanted assurances there is not a federal mandate to slow down testing. Pence told Sisolak and other governors on the call that the administration looked forward to continuing to partner with them on testing.

The administration also stressed to governors on the call that states should be focusing resources on "hard to test" communities and that counties with high positivity rates should be saturated with more testing.

Lawmakers are expected to have several questions about testing and the president's comments on Tuesday when members of the administration's coronavirus task force testify at a House hearing.

"The American people are owed answers about why President Trump wants less testing when experts say much more is needed," House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said.

Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson called Trump's rally remarks on discouraging testing "somewhat of a flip-pant comment" and said it's not in line with what he's heard from the administration.

"It's clear the national policy is to expand testing," said Hutchinson, a Republican. "There again, you have to look at what is the action, what is the true policy versus just what the words are."

The United States has confirmed nearly 2.3 million COVID-19 cases, which represents about a quarter of the world's cases. More than 120,000 people in the U.S. with COVID-19 have died. The next closest nation is Brazil, with 50,600 deaths.

Associated Press staff writers Michelle Price in Las Vegas, Rachel La Corte in Olympia, Wash., and Andrew DeMillo in Little Rock, Ark., contributed to this report.

Some New York news shows back, but many hosts work remotely

By DAVID BAUDER AP Media Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — The couch is still in storage, but the morning team on "Fox & Friends" returned for the first time Monday to the midtown Manhattan studio vacated in March because of the coronavirus pandemic.

A few blocks west, there was a similar welcome for two-thirds of the "CBS This Morning" hosts, who had taken brief trips to Washington and a New York theater before settling in at home after being chased out on March 18.

"I can't even tell you how good I feel today," said CBS' Gayle King, who made little secret of her distaste for working at home.

Monday represented a key phase in New York City's reopening, with many offices bringing employees back for the first time. Despite the CBS and Fox moves, most news employees continue to work remotely, and the television programs that originate here have a patchwork of approaches that have quickly become familiar.

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For instance, ABC's "World News Tonight" anchor David Muir has remained in his upper West Side studio, since he has no guests to interact with on-set. NBC "Nightly News" anchor Lester Holt works from home, while "CBS Evening News" anchor Norah O'Donnell works out of the network's Washington bureau.

Although journalists are exempt from stay-at-home orders, most networks have a skeleton crew of behind-the-scenes workers in the office.

CNN's evening lineup, including Erin Burnett, Anderson Cooper and Don Lemon, do their shows from "flash studios" in New York's Hudson Yards office complex, where they are the only people in the room as they work. Chris Cuomo is similarly back after several weeks confined to his basement with COVID-19.

A majority of the show hosts on MSNBC — including Joe Scarborough, Mika Brzezinski and Willie Geist of "Morning Joe" — work remotely.

Fox News' prime-time anchors — Tucker Carlson, Sean Hannity and Laura Ingraham — work out of home studios. Martha MacCallum returned to Fox's offices last week, while daytime hosts Bill Hemmer and Ed Henry never left.

While Steve Doocy, Ainsley Earhardt and Brian Kilmeade of "Fox & Friends" were in the same studio Monday, they may as well have been in different zip codes: they were stationed behind different desks.

"To be in the building, you need to have a mask on," Doocy said. "We're free not to wear it on the air because we're socially distant."

Doocy last month said that he and his colleagues were not in the same room "because the government won't let us." He later corrected himself to say Fox was simply following government protocols and guidelines.

Other morning shows have varied approaches. ABC's "Good Morning America" has been back in its Times Square studio, but without a live audience and without the immune-compromised Robin Roberts, who works out of her home. Hoda Kotb of NBC's "Today" show has worked out of that show's Rockefeller Center studio, but most of her colleagues are at home.

"CBS This Morning" isn't fully back. Although King and Anthony Mason sat at the same desk on Monday, colleague Tony Dokoupil remained in Brooklyn, where he shares a home studio with his wife, MSNBC's Katy Tur.

"We're all being extra, extra, extra safe," King said. "But we are really thrilled to be here."

Trump rally size raises question about risk in age of virus

By AAMER MADHANI, JONATHAN LEMIRE and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump's paltry crowd for his weekend campaign rally in Oklahoma raises new questions about politics in the age of coronavirus: Maybe pandemic-scarred Americans just aren't ready to risk exposure for close-up engagement in the 2020 presidential election.

Only about a third of seats in the 19,000-seat BOK Center were filled for the rally, despite boasts by Trump and his campaign team that they had received more than 1 million ticket requests.

With all 50 states well into reopening their economies, Americans are now creating their own individual risk budgets and calculating what sort of activities are worth hazarding when coronavirus infections are still surging in some areas of the country.

At a moment when many Americans are still weighing the risks and rewards of mundane activities like a meal at a restaurant, a trip to the grocery store or a visit to the salon, the idea of attending a campaign rally — more than four months before Election Day — may seem like an extraneous, if not perilous, activity to some.

"There was the presumption that the risk calculus was being made very, very differently by Trump supporters and was broad enough to fill up that arena," said Matt Bennett, executive vice president at the center-left Washington think-tank, the Third Way. "It just turns out it wasn't."

Trump and his campaign attributed the low attendance to worries about potential violence and media hype about the dangers of the virus. Left-leaning pranksters claimed they were behind many of the more than 1 million requests for tickets, giving Trump's campaign the false sense that the event was going to have a massive overflow crowd.

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But the relatively sparse crowd suggests that even in a rock-ribbed Republican state like Oklahoma, Americans of all political stripes still are cautious as they emerge from lockdown.

According to a June poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research, Democrats are more likely than Republicans to say they're very worried about themselves or someone in their family being infected with the virus.

But in total, about half of Republicans along with about 8 in 10 Democrats say they're at least somewhat worried. And about 6 in 10 Americans still favor limiting gatherings to 10 people or fewer.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany insisted Monday that the president was pleased with the energy of the crowd and stressed that more than 7 million viewers tuned into Fox News to watch. But privately, advisers to the president said he was furious about the low turnout.

The Trump campaign is now conducting a review of what went wrong in Tulsa. Presidential advisers privately expressed some regret at touting the numbers of ticket requests in advance but believed, more than anything, that Trump supporters were scared away by the potential for protests and violence in the area, according to three campaign and White House officials who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to discuss private conversations publicly.

But they also allowed that they may have overestimated the willingness of even die-hard Trump supporters to attend a largely mask-less, non-socially distanced indoor rally along with thousands of others, the officials said. In particular, campaign staffers noticed a lack of senior citizens and families with young children at the Tulsa rally, and believe they were scared off by fears of the virus as well as possible violence.

Campaign officials stressed that rallies would remain a staple of the president's reelection strategy but acknowledged the format may need to change slightly in certain states. Discussions were under way about having them in more modest venues or outdoors, perhaps in airplane hangers and amphitheatres, or in smaller cities away from likely protesters.

More steps are likely to be put in place to safeguard the health of both rallygoers and staffers, the officials said. Six campaign staffers and two members of the Secret Service working in advance of the Oklahoma rally tested positive for COVID-19. Contact tracing for those people was underway, the officials said.

Still, campaign officials said Trump's ability to draw thousands of supporters out during a pandemic sets up a favorable contrast with the presumptive Democratic nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden.

Dan Eberhart, a major Republican donor and Trump supporter, said the president did "pretty well in pulling in a crowd" considering where Americans' comfort level is at the moment. He said campaign officials — including Trump campaign manager Brad Parscale — "completely failed managing expectations 101."

"I think there is still a lot of uncertainty out there around how reopening is going to go," Eberhart said. "This was the first event after several months; I expect the crowds and enthusiasm will return."

In interviews, many of those who attended the Tulsa rally told Associated Press reporters that they had little or no concerns about risking infection. Many said they had put their fate in the hands of God, while others said they believed the media were sensationalizing the risks of infection.

But some rally attendees acknowledged they had a measure of fear of being infected, and a smattering wore face masks.

"I want to protect my parents and grandparents," said Chris Rasmusser, 40, a Tulsa attendee who said he wore a mask for part of the time while he was lined up to get into the arena.

Trump and his campaign supporters have belittled Biden as hiding out in his basement since the pandemic upended American life in March. Since then, Biden has relied heavily on virtual town halls and fundraisers from his home in Delaware.

Biden's advisers have pushed back against the criticism -- and hand-wringing from some fellow Democrats -- by making the case that it's too dangerous at the moment to engage Americans in traditional campaigning.

Voters don't care about where he's filming from, Biden campaign manager Jen O'Malley Dillon said in an interview last month. "What they care about is what he's saying and how we connect with them."

Madhani reported from Chicago. Associated Press writers Emily Swanson in Washington and Sean Murphy

in Tulsa, Oklahoma, contributed reporting.

Fans turn up heat for ABC's canceled 'Baker and the Beauty'

By LYNN ELBER AP Television Writer

LOS ANGELES (AP) — With cries for equality and justice ringing in the streets, a petition drive to rescue a canceled television series may seem inconsequential.

But among the advocates for ABC's "The Baker and the Beauty," felled by its ratings after one season, are those who value it as an entertaining and affirmative depiction of family life in general and a Latino family in particular — long a TV rarity and, they say, especially vital now.

"We have so many shows on TV and so little shows that are actually relatable and appeal to everyone," said viewer Dana Pulsinelli. She launched the online effort to find the "dramady" a new home after she connected with other fans and kept hearing the same question: Why would "this amazing show, with this fantastic cast that touched on so many relatable subjects, be canceled in a time where diversity and inclusion is so important?"

It should be celebrated instead of "tossed away like it means nothing," the New Jersey resident said in an email, lauding "The Baker and the Beauty" for celebrating both Cuban American culture and depicting a young character struggling with her sexuality amid family resistance.

The change.org petition, with 133,000 signatures and counting as of Monday, calls for a streaming or cable platform to give the series "the shot it deserves!" In their comments, fans lauded it as lighthearted fare that's "much-needed during these challenging times," "witty and endearing," and a welcome depiction of "hardworking immigrants" that also "tenderly represents" LGBTQ youth.

The support has buoyed cast members Lisa Vidal, who plays matriarch Mari, and Nathalie Kelley, who stars as the title character, Noa, an Australian supermodel and entrepreneur who finds unlikely love with Daniel, a Cuban American (Victor Rasuk) working in his family's Miami bakery. Belissa Escobedo plays Daniel's younger sister, who comes out as lesbian.

The series, whose nine episodes aired from April to June on ABC, was adapted from a Israeli TV hit of the same title that streamed on Netflix.

"This show is important because it represents, first and foremost, family. It represents a beautiful, healthy, functional family," Vidal said. "But I also feel that it's important because it's a Latin family, because it speaks to the positive stereotype of being a Latin family. It speaks to the beautiful parts of who we are as a Latin community, loving and encouraging and hard-working and passionate. ... It speaks to all those wonderful truths that are not actually perpetuated on TV and film enough."

Produced by the NBCUniversal, Keshet and ABC studios with Dean Georgaris as executive producer, the series is also well-made, Kelley said.

"The writing is sophisticated, the characters are three-dimensional. We packaged, with ABC's help, this beautifully timed show that was delivered in such a nuanced, authentic way," she said. "And we did grow our audience, which is why the ultimate decision to not give us a second chance of second season to continue to grow (the ratings) was disappointing, because we really had checked all the boxes."

The series showed small upticks in both total viewers and the advertiser-favored young adult audience from its first to last episodes.

While she doesn't want to point fingers, Vidal said, it could have been better served with more vigorous promotion, a more suitable time slot for family viewing — 10 p.m. Monday wasn't it, she contends — and the recognition that an unusual program deserves more careful handling and time to prove itself.

Karey Burke, president of ABC Entertainment, called dropping the show "a huge disappointment."

"It was an incredible cast and a very sweet show. And I was frustrated that we were not able to find it an audience. But that doesn't mean we aren't going to keep trying," Burke said. "And it's critical, frankly, from a business standpoint that we continue to evolve and reflect what our audience looks like."

Fan lobbying helped the Latino-led reboot of "One Day at a Time" survive its cancellation, moving from Netflix to the Pop channel. As with that effort, "The Baker and the Beauty" has support from stars includ-

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ing Zoe Saldana, Gabrielle Union and Eva Longoria, who posted on social media: "Representation matters on television!"

Showrunner Georgaris, whose credits include "Bluff City Law" and "The Meg," said the romantic comedy's fate is in the hands of the studios seeking a new deal to continue it.

"I think that actually there is a legitimate chance. And I think, truthfully, the public support and celebrity support, those things do make a difference at a time like this," he said, given the expanding number of steaming services that offer the chance of a new home.

Lynn Elber can be reached on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/lynnelber>.

Black Catholics: Words not enough as church decries racism

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Black Roman Catholics are hearing their church's leaders calling for racial justice once again after the killing of George Floyd, but this time they're demanding not just words but action.

As protests against racism and police brutality continue nationwide, there are rising calls for huge new investment in Catholic schools serving Black communities; a commitment to teach the complex history of Black Catholics; and a mobilization to combat racism with the same zeal the church shows in opposing abortion.

"As a church, we're very good with words. The church has made clear it stands against racism," said the Rev. Mario Powell, a Black priest who heads a Jesuit middle school in Brooklyn.

"What's profoundly different this time is folks aren't looking for more words -- they're looking for actual change," he said.

Noting that hundreds of Catholic inner-city schools have closed in recent decades, he's among those urging church leaders to make the necessary spending to reverse that. He also said all Catholic schools should teach the history of Black Catholics in America.

"It's a history of discrimination and oppression," said Powell, 38. "It's also a very rich history that should be celebrated, of a population that has overcome a lot."

In 2018, after what it called an accumulation of "episodes of violence and animosity with racial and xenophobic overtones," the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops issued a pastoral letter condemning racism and vowing to combat it. Numerous bishops issued similar statements following Floyd's death under the knee of a white Minneapolis police officer.

Professor Shannen Dee Williams, a Black Catholic who teaches history at Villanova University, argued in a June 15 article in the National Catholic Reporter that such responses are insufficient.

The recent statements "fall way short when it comes to acknowledging the church's role in the contemporary crisis and direct complicity in the sins of anti-Black racism, slavery and segregation," she wrote, noting that the church was a major slaveholder in several states and engaged in segregation of parishes, schools, hospitals, convents and seminaries for decades after emancipation.

In an interview, Williams said the U.S. church hierarchy should formally apologize.

"We want them to own up to that history, and then atone for it," she said.

The same day her article appeared, Archbishop Wilton Gregory of Washington, D.C., the highest-ranking Black leader in the U.S. church, joined eight fellow bishops from his region in acknowledging the church's "sins and failings" on racial justice.

"Prayer and dialogue, alone, are not enough. We must act to bring about true change," their statement said, calling for greater equality in health care, education, housing and criminal justice.

Black Catholics' somewhat marginal place in the U.S. church is illustrated by statistics compiled by the national bishops' conference.

According to the conference, there are about 3 million African American Catholics, roughly 4% of the nation's 69 million Catholics. But there are just 250 Black priests, or less than 1% of the total of 36,500, along with eight active Black bishops out of more than 250, or about 3.2%.

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Some are calling on church leaders to engage more energetically with youth at the forefront of the protest movement.

Earlier this month scores of young Black Catholics staged a march in Louisville, Kentucky, to protest racial injustice and also signaling they want their local church leadership to do more.

One of the speakers, retired priest John Judie, included the church in a list of institutions that have favored white people over Black people.

In an interview, Judie said some young people in the archdiocese are uncertain about their place.

"When is the leadership going to sit down with the young adults who organized that protest and listen to what drove them to do this?" Judie said. "So far, I'm not seeing it happen."

That's a notion shared by Ansel Augustine, who was a youth minister at his parish in New Orleans as it rebuilt after Hurricane Katrina.

"We see our youth and young adults leading these movements, putting their faith into action," said Augustine, now executive director of cultural diversity for the Washington archdiocese. "Now is the time to empower them, to listen to what these young prophets are saying."

Ralph McCloud, who directs the anti-poverty program of the national bishops' conference, said such steps are under way.

"We've begun with the listening sessions, hearing the very painful stories of people who've been victims of racism within the church and without," McCloud said.

"We need to broaden the conversation and see who's missing at the table," he added. "With African American Catholics, our numbers are so low that we get overlooked, sometimes inadvertently, sometimes intentionally."

Back in 2014, Augustine wrote an article for the Catholic media outlet Busted Halo asking why the fight against racism seemed to be a lesser priority for the U.S. Catholic leadership than the anti-abortion cause. Augustine took note when those remarks were echoed by Pope Francis earlier this month.

"We cannot close our eyes to any form of racism or exclusion, while pretending to defend the sacredness of every human life," the pontiff said.

Gregory, the Washington archbishop, echoed the idea that racial justice should be part of pro-life advocacy.

"Birth is only the first moment of a person's human dignity, which is never lost throughout the journey of life," he said via email.

That message heartens people like Lorelean Jordan, a parishioner of the predominantly Black congregation of the Church of Saint Peter Claver in St. Paul, Minnesota.

"Black Lives Matter should be a pro-life issue, getting the same amount of resources and same amount of zeal as the pro-life movement," she said.

She would like to see the church help coordinate a national anti-racism march and direct all U.S. priests to mark the feast day of Peter Claver, the 17th-century patron saint of enslaved people, by preaching about racial injustice.

Corrects: This story was first published on June 21, 2020. It was updated on June 22, 2020, to correct Ansel Augustine's title in his Catholic parish in New Orleans in 2005. Augustine was a youth minister, but he was not a priest.

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Surging US virus cases raise fear that progress is slipping

By TAMARA LUSH, NATHAN ELLGREN and TAMMY WEBBER Associated Press

ST. PETERSBURG, Fla. (AP) — Alarming surges in coronavirus cases across the U.S. South and West raised fears Monday that the outbreak is spiraling out of control and that hard-won progress against the scourge is slipping away because of resistance among many Americans to wearing masks and keeping

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their distance from others.

Confirming predictions that the easing of state lockdowns over the past month and a half would lead to a comeback by the virus, cases surpassed 100,000 in Florida, hospitalizations are rising dramatically in Houston and Georgia, and a startling 1 in 5 of those tested in Arizona are proving to be infected.

Over the weekend, the virus seemed to be everywhere at once: Several campaign staff members who helped set up President Donald Trump's rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, tested positive, as did 23 Clemson University football players in South Carolina. At least 30 members of the Louisiana State University team were isolated after becoming infected or coming into contact with someone who was. Meatpacking plants were also hit with outbreaks.

"It is snowballing. We will most certainly see more people die as a result of this spike," said Dr. Marc Boom, CEO and president of Houston Methodist Hospital, noting that the number of COVID-19 hospital admissions has tripled since Memorial Day to more than 1,400 across eight hospital systems in the Houston metropolitan area.

He warned that hospitals could be overwhelmed in three weeks, and he pleaded with people to cover their faces and practice social distancing.

"It is possible to open up at a judicious pace and coexist with the virus, but it requires millions and millions of people to do the right thing," Boom said.

Texas is among a number of states — including Arizona, Alabama, Florida and South Carolina — whose governors have resisted statewide mask requirements, leaving the matter to local authorities.

The number of new coronavirus cases across the country per day has reached more than 26,000, up from about 21,000 two weeks ago, according to an Associated Press analysis of data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. Over 120,000 deaths in the U.S. have been blamed on the virus, the highest toll in the world.

In Georgia, the number of people hospitalized because of COVID-19 rose to 1,000, erasing a month's worth of progress.

Infections are at their highest level since the outbreak began, nearly two months after Georgia began lifting restrictions on businesses. Gov. Brian Kemp has required face coverings by waiters, barbers and others working face-to-face with customers but has largely let businesses decide whether customers must wear masks.

In Orlando, 152 coronavirus cases were linked to one bar near the University of Central Florida campus, said Dr. Raul Pino, a state health officer in the tourism city.

"A lot of transmission happened there," Pino said. "People are very close. People are not wearing masks. People are drinking, shouting, dancing, sweating, kissing and hugging, all the things that happen in bars. And all those things that happen are not good for COVID-19."

Although he asked health officials to renew calls for people to wear masks and keep their distance, Gov. Ron DeSantis has not signaled he will retreat from reopening the state after three months of shutdowns that have damaged the economy.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott said reimposing lockdown orders would be a last resort and reemphasized, but stopped short of mandating, people wear masks to curtail sobering trends. Monday marked the 11th consecutive day Texas set a new high for COVID-19 hospitalizations.

In Louisiana, however, Gov. John Bel Edwards extended restrictions on businesses because of a troubling uptick in cases, following the example set by Utah and Oregon last week. Louisiana has recorded more than 3,000 deaths.

"There are a lot of people out there saying they are done with this virus. Well, the virus isn't done with us," Edwards said.

Countries such as Brazil, India and Pakistan are also seeing surging cases.

Dr. Michael Ryan, the World Health Organization's emergencies chief, said the outbreak is "definitely accelerating" in the U.S. and a number of other countries, dismissing the notion that the record-breaking daily levels of new cases simply reflect more testing. He noted that numerous countries have seen marked increases in hospital admissions and deaths.

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"The epidemic is now peaking or moving towards a peak in a number of large countries," he warned. In the U.S., Arizona, in particular, is seeing disturbing trends in several benchmarks, including the percentage of tests that prove positive for the virus. Arizona's is the highest in the nation.

The state's positive test rate is at a seven-day average of over 20%, well above the national average of 8.4% and the 10% level that public health officials say is a problem. When the positive test rate rises, it means that an outbreak is worsening — not just that more people are getting tested.

At Maryland's Fort Washington Medical Center on the outskirts of the nation's capital, workers described a scramble to find beds, heartbreaking encounters with family members of critically ill patients and frustration with Americans who do not believe the coronavirus threat is real.

"Everybody is out lounging on the beaches. Just thinking that it's over. And it's not," respiratory therapist Kevin Cole said. "It's far from being over. And unfortunately, it's those people that will keep this pandemic going."

Meanwhile, New York City, once the most lethal hot spot in the U.S., lifted more of its restrictions, moving a big step closer to normal. Restaurants can serve diners outdoors, customers can browse through stores and get a haircut, and children can return to playgrounds.

Eve Gonzalez, a 27-year-old food industry worker in New York whose job had not yet resumed, said it is too soon: "I'm dying to go out, but people's health is more important."

Worldwide, over 9 million people have been confirmed infected by the virus and more than 470,000 have died, according to Johns Hopkins. Experts say the true numbers are much higher because of limited testing and cases in which patients had no symptoms.

Amid the global surge, the head of the World Health Organization warned that world leaders must not politicize the outbreak but unite to fight it.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, who has faced criticism from U.S. President Donald Trump, said during a videoconference for the Dubai-based World Government Summit that it took over three months for the world to see 1 million confirmed infections, but just eight days to see the most recent 1 million cases.

Tedros did not mention Trump by name but warned: "The greatest threat we face now is not the virus itself; it's the lack of global solidarity and global leadership."

Trump has criticized the WHO over its early response to the outbreak and what he considers its excessive praise of China, where the outbreak began. He has threatened to pull the U.S. out of the agency.

Brazil, with over 50,000 deaths, the second-highest toll in the world, registered a record 54,000 new coronavirus cases in its latest single-day count. And nearly 1 in 3 people tested overall have turned up positive, according to the WHO's Ryan, who said the startlingly high number suggests cases are going either unreported or undetected because of a low rate of testing.

Saudi Arabia said this year's pilgrimage, or hajj, to Islam's holy sites will not be canceled, but only "very limited numbers" of people will be allowed to take part. The hajj traditionally draws around 2 million Muslims from around the world for five intense days of worship and rituals in Mecca.

India's health care system has been slammed by the virus, with the caseload in the country of more than 1.3 billion people climbing by nearly 15,000 Monday to over 425,000. The number of deaths climbed past 13,000.

In Pakistan, infections are accelerating and hospitals turning away patients, with new cases up to 6,800 a day. The government has relaxed its coronavirus restrictions, hoping to salvage a near-collapsed economy in the country of 220 million people.

Associated Press journalists from around the world contributed.

In Minneapolis, talk of changing PD means taking on union

By AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — The fiery leader of Minneapolis' police union has built a reputation of defying the city, long before he offered the union's full support to the officers charged in George Floyd's death.

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When the mayor banned "warrior training" for officers last year, Lt. Bob Kroll said the union would offer the training instead. When the city restricted officers from wearing uniforms at political events, he had T-shirts made to support President Donald Trump. He commended off-duty officers who walked away from a security detail after players on the state's professional women's basketball team, the Minnesota Lynx, wore Black Lives Matter T-shirts. And after Floyd's death, he didn't hold back as he called unrest in the city a "terrorist movement."

As Minneapolis tries to overhaul its police department in the wake of Floyd's death, city leaders will collide with a pugnacious and powerful union that has long resisted such change. But that union and Kroll are coming under greater pressure than ever before, with some members daring to speak out in support of change and police leaders vowing to negotiate a contract tougher on bad cops.

Other unions have publicly called for Kroll's removal, while public opinion polls show more Americans are shifting their views on police violence and believe offending officers are treated too leniently.

"People recognize that this just can't just be half-baked measures and tinkering around the edges in policy reform. What we're talking about right now is attacking a full-on culture shift of how police departments in Minneapolis and around the nation operate," Mayor Jacob Frey said.

Floyd, a handcuffed Black man, died May 25 after Derek Chauvin, a white officer, used his knee to pin Floyd to the ground. Chauvin has been charged with second-degree murder, third-degree murder and manslaughter. Three other officers were charged with aiding and abetting both second-degree murder and manslaughter.

All four officers were fired, but Kroll issued a statement saying they had the union's full support and warned against rushing to judgment.

The Minnesota AFL-CIO and some of the state's biggest unions called for Kroll to quit. Kroll, whom the Star Tribune reported is planning to step down when his term ends in 2021, hasn't responded to interview requests.

Floyd's death sparked outrage in Minneapolis and beyond, as protests erupted around the world amid emphatic calls for police reform. In Minneapolis, the first steps are being aimed at the union, long seen as a barrier. Chief Medaria Arradondo said he would withdraw from union contract negotiations to consider structural changes, and Frey is calling on state lawmakers to fix an arbitration process that he said reverses roughly half of police terminations in the state.

In an interview Sunday on "60 Minutes," Arradondo said Kroll is "absolutely ... an influencer."

"He and others are going to have to come to a reckoning that either they are going to be on the right side of history or they're going to be on the wrong side of history... or they will be left behind," the chief said.

One of the union's victories happened in 2007, when it persuaded the city to curtail the power of the Minneapolis Civilian Review Authority by shielding from public view a finding that a complaint had been sustained against an officer.

The union's power has consistently stymied change, community leaders say.

"It makes it very hard to implement reforms if ... the federation is in the background saying, 'Don't worry about this, we'll file a grievance,'" said Steve Fletcher, one of nine City Council members who pledged to revamp the police department. "That sends a strong signal that you can just ignore leadership. That has, over time, created a culture that is very resistant to change."

When the City Council declined last year to put additional officers on the street, Fletcher described police pushback as a "protection racket." He said business owners began calling him to complain that officers were slowing response times or not resolving issues, and telling businesses to call their council members.

Police unions across the country are seen as just as powerful, enshrining protections for officers who have been accused of crimes, including such special privileges as allowing them to wait 24 hours to be interrogated. They also have fought against making public misconduct claims, and traditionally lawmakers have been reticent to battle them over fears of being seen as anti-police.

There are signs that the power of police unions may be eroding. In New York, lawmakers passed on party lines a reform bill for the nation's largest department and others that makes major changes to officer security reviled by the union.

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In Minneapolis, 14 officers signed an open letter condemning Chauvin, saying they "stand ready to listen and embrace the calls for change, reform and rebuilding." The move was seen as a big deal for a police department where such public dissent is rare.

A recent poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research found that when compared with five years ago, more Americans believe police brutality is a very serious problem that unequally targets Black Americans. The poll also found that Americans are far more likely now than they were five years ago to say that police officers who cause injury or death in the course of their job are treated too leniently by the justice system.

Allen Berryman, a retired police sergeant and president of the union for most of the 1990s, said the union is doing its job.

"People like the idea of due process for themselves when they get arrested ... or anything like that, but they don't seem to like it" for officers, he said, adding that a lack of progressive discipline by management is part of the problem.

In answers to emailed questions from The Associated Press, Assistant Chief Mike Kjos said issues involving discipline are complex and the union's involvement is just one piece. One hurdle, he said, is that discipline handed out in past cases may be used as precedent for present cases that results in light punishment.

"It's not impossible, but it does present challenges for increased levels of discipline when previous administrations may have operated from a different lens on accountability," he said.

Michael Friedman, who chaired the Civilian Review Authority for three years, said the union's history of supporting officers "without any common regard for community standards for what policing should be" is a problem "that rightfully frustrates many."

"But it's also very convenient for others to say, especially right now, 'Hey, it's a union problem,'" Friedman said. "And say if we change the union, or get rid of the union, or remove a right or two, that changes everything."

Associated Press writer Doug Glass contributed.

Trump rally highlights vulnerabilities heading into election

By STEVE PEOPLES and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's return to the campaign trail was designed to show strength and enthusiasm heading into the critical final months before an election that will decide whether he remains in the White House.

Instead, his weekend rally in Oklahoma highlighted growing vulnerabilities and crystallized a divisive reelection message that largely ignores broad swaths of voters — independents, suburban women and people of color — who could play a crucial role in choosing Trump or Democratic challenger Joe Biden.

The lower-than-expected turnout at the comeback rally, in particular, left Trump fuming.

"There's really only one strategy left for him, and that is to propel that rage and anger and try to split the society and see if he can have a tribal leadership win here," former Trump adviser-turned-critic Anthony Scaramucci said on CNN's "Reliable Sources."

The Republican president did not offer even a token reference to national unity in remarks that spanned more than an hour and 40 minutes at his self-described campaign relaunch as the nation grappled with surging coronavirus infections, the worst unemployment since the Great Depression and sweeping civil unrest.

Nor did Trump mention George Floyd, the African American man whose death at the hands of Minnesota police late last month sparked a national uprising over police brutality. But he did add new fuel to the nation's culture wars, defending Confederate statues while making racist references to the coronavirus, which originated in China and which he called "kung flu." He also said Democratic Rep. Ilhan Omar, who came to the U.S. as a refugee, "would like to make the government of our country just like the country from where she came, Somalia."

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White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany defended Trump's use of the term "kung flu," telling reporters Monday: "What the president does do is point to the fact that the origin of the virus is China. It's a fair thing to point out as China tries to ridiculously rewrite history," she said. "What President Trump is saying, 'no China, I will label this virus for its place of origin.'"

Trump won the presidency in 2016 with a similar red-meat message aimed largely at energizing conservatives and white working-class men. But less than four months before early voting begins in some states, there are signs that independents and educated voters — particularly suburban women — have turned against him. Republican strategists increasingly believe that only a dramatic turnaround in the economy can revive his reelection aspirations.

"It's bad," said Republican operative Rick Tyler, a frequent Trump critic. "There's literally nothing to run on. The only thing he can say is that Biden is worse."

But the day after Trump's Tulsa rally, the president's message was almost an afterthought as aides tried to explain away a smaller-than-expected crowd that left the president outraged.

The campaign had been betting big on Tulsa.

Trump's political team spent days proclaiming that more than 1 million people had requested tickets. They also ignored health warnings from the White House coronavirus task force and Oklahoma officials, eager to host an event that would help him move past the civil rights protests and the coronavirus itself.

His first rally in 110 days was meant to be a defiant display of political force to help energize Trump's spirits, try out some attacks on Biden and serve as a powerful symbol of America's reopening.

Instead, the city fire marshal's office reported a crowd of just less than 6,200 in the 19,000-seat BOK Center, and at least six staff members who helped set up the event tested positive for the coronavirus. The vast majority of the attendees, including Trump, did not wear face masks as recommended by the Trump administration's health experts.

After the rally, the president berated aides over the turnout. He fumed that he had been led to believe he would see huge crowds in deep-red Oklahoma, according to two White House and campaign officials who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

There was no sign of an imminent staff shakeup, but members of Trump's inner circle angrily questioned how campaign manager Brad Parscale and other senior aides could so wildly overpromise and underdeliver, according to the officials.

Publicly, Trump's team scrambled to blame the crowd size on media coverage and protesters outside the venue, but the small crowds of pre-rally demonstrators were largely peaceful. Tulsa police reported just one arrest Saturday afternoon.

It's unclear when Trump will hold his next rally.

Before Oklahoma, the campaign had planned to finalize and announce its next rally this week. Trump is already scheduled to make appearances Tuesday in Arizona and Thursday in Wisconsin. Both are major general election battlegrounds.

At least one swing state governor, meanwhile, says Trump would not be welcome to host a rally in her state amid the pandemic.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, said she "would think very seriously about" trying to block Trump from hosting a rally there if he wanted to.

"We know that congregating without masks, especially at an indoor facility, is the worst thing to do in the midst of a global pandemic," Whitmer said in an interview before the Oklahoma event, conceding that she wasn't aware of the specific legal tools she had available to block a prospective Trump rally. "I just know we have limitations on the number of people that can gather and that we're taking this seriously."

Biden's campaign, meanwhile, seized on a fresh opportunity to poke at the incumbent president, suggesting that Trump "was already in a tailspin" because of his mismanagement of the pandemic and civil rights protests.

"Donald Trump has abdicated leadership, and it is no surprise that his supporters have responded by abandoning him," Biden spokesperson Andrew Bates said.

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller in Washington contributed to this report.

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

Watchdog eyes violent routing of protesters near White House

By ELLEN KNICKMEYER Associated Press Writer

An Interior Department watchdog office will investigate law enforcement and security forces' violent clearing of protesters from a square in front of the White House earlier this month.

The Interior Department's U.S. Park Police and other forces released chemical agents and at times punched and clubbed a largely peaceful crowd of demonstrators to drive the public from Lafayette Square on June 1, during nationwide protests over the police killing of George Floyd.

Three Democratic lawmakers — Sen. Ron Wyden of Oregon and Reps. Raul Grijalva of Arizona and Debra Haaland of New Mexico — had asked Interior Department Inspector General Mark Lee Greenblatt to investigate the actions that night of the Park Police, who oversee some of the nation's most iconic national monuments.

Greenblatt agreed late last week, telling the lawmakers that Interior Secretary David Bernhardt had also asked for the review.

"Given the significance of the events, we have already begun collecting and reviewing information concerning the Park Police's activities," he told the Democrats.

The agency's first task will be determining which of the many agencies was in charge of law enforcement in the square that night, Greenblatt said. That "adds complex and jurisdictional challenges" to the watchdog office's work, he wrote.

Authorities have given at times conflicting accounts about who oversaw and ordered the forceful routing of protesters from Lafayette Square. Besides a range of law officers, the Secret Service and Attorney General William Barr were among those present at various times then.

Forces drove the crowd from the square shortly before President Donald Trump walked unannounced to an area nearby to pose for photos.

The administration has denied demonstrators were cleared out to make way for Trump. Bernhardt, the interior secretary, has said violent attacks by the crowd warranted clearing the protesters. Reporters and other witnesses and Democratic lawmakers say they saw little sign of that scale of violence by the crowd.

This story has been corrected to show first name of Sen. Wyden is Ron, not Roy.

US honeybees are doing better after bad year, survey shows

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

American honeybee colonies have bounced back after a bad year, the annual beekeeping survey finds.

Beekeepers only lost 22.2% of their colonies this past winter, from Oct. 1 to March 31, which is lower than the average of 28.6%, according to the Bee Informed Partnership's annual survey of thousands of beekeepers. It was the second smallest winter loss in the 14 years of surveying done by several different U.S. universities.

Last winter's loss was considerably less than the previous winter of 2018-2019 when a record 37.7% of colonies died off, the scientists found. After that bad winter, the losses continued through the summer of 2019, when beekeepers reported a 32% loss rate. That's much higher than the average of 21.6% for summer losses. Those summer losses were driven more by hives of commercial beekeepers than backyard hobbyists, said bee partnership scientific coordinator Nathalie Steinhauer.

While the summer losses are bad, winter deaths are "really the test of colony health," so the results overall are good news, Steinhauer said. "It turned out to be a very good year."

Populations tend to be cyclical with good years following bad ones, she said. The scientists surveyed

3,377 commercial beekeepers and backyard enthusiasts in the United States.

"One would hope that a lower winter loss means a better 2020 assuming that the weather cooperates and beekeepers don't end up skimping on colony management," said University of Montana bee expert Jerry Bromenshenk, who wasn't part of the study.

Beekeepers in the U.S. also may be taking more of their colonies indoors in the winter, helping them survive, said University of Georgia entomologist Keith Delaplane. New U.S. Department of Agriculture research suggests putting bees in "cold storage" helps them survive the winter.

For decades scientists have been watching the population of pollinators — crucial to the world's food supply — shrink. Honeybees, the most easily tracked, are threatened by mites, diseases, pesticides and loss of food.

Loss rates now being seen "are part of the new normal," Steinhauer said.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter: @borenbears

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

Planning for summer beach days? Docs share virus safety tips

By KELLI KENNEDY Associated Press

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (AP) — Americans have never been more ready to get out of the house and bask in the sun. Warm-weather beach destinations are the most popular vacation searches, with Florida — particularly Key West — Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, and San Diego among the top considerations.

According to Tripadvisor, 50% of travelers are looking to book a one- to five-day trip this month, suggesting massive pent-up demand for sand and surf. But the craving for a beach getaway coincides with recent spikes in coronavirus cases in nearly half the states, including beach havens like Florida, Texas and the Carolinas.

The good news for beachgoers is that 83% of beaches are now open — up from only 56% two weeks ago, according to the National Recreation and Park Association. Experts agree that outdoor activities are relatively low risk because the air helps disperse virus particles, as long as you follow basic precautions.

"It is not going to be your typical summer at the shore. Most beaches are going to have restrictions around physical distancing," said Allison Colman, director of health for the National Recreation and Park Association.

Common changes include parking restrictions to control crowds, limits on leisure activities like sunbathing, and nixing coolers, chairs, umbrellas and other gear. Beach rules vary widely by city and county, and visitors should check their destination's regulations before heading out.

In New York City and its suburbs, state beaches are fully open with swimming, though some picnic areas remain off limits, and parking areas on the busiest days may close early to reduce crowds. Beaches run by the city itself are also open, but swimming is barred.

State beaches are open for swimming and sunbathing in Connecticut, where officials have urged people to keep 15 feet (4.5 meters) between blankets, and many parking lots are at reduced capacity. New Jersey's public beaches also reopened at reduced capacity and some are not selling daily badges.

In California, most beaches, including popular ones in Los Angeles County, are now allowing sunbathing and swimming. Some are maintaining bans on staying in one place, but allow exercise or crossing the sand to reach the water.

Beaches also reopened in Miami this month banning groups of more than 10 people, requiring social distancing of 10 feet (3 meters) or more and forbidding canopies. Masks must be worn when social distancing might be difficult.

In many areas, "beach ambassadors" are strolling the sand to enforce social distancing. Nearly 50% of agencies are using park rangers, law enforcement or other staff to disperse crowds, Colman said.

If you're downwind from groups of people, even if you're more than 6 feet (2 meters) apart, respiratory droplets can be blown, putting you at greater risk, said Dr. Shawn Nasser, a Beverly Hills, California, ear, nose and throat specialist.

If it's not crowded, it might be safe to enjoy a beach day without a mask with a small group, and ideally bring your own towels, toys, chairs and food. If you need to rent equipment, just make sure to use a disinfectant wipe.

"The caveat is that people cannot be packed like sardines on the beach. They can't be sitting on top of each other," Nasser said.

If the parking lot is full or the beach looks packed, experts advise picking another beach or coming back at off-peak hours like weekday mornings and evenings.

Trickiest to navigate are high-traffic areas like parking lots and narrow ramps to and from the water. Wearing a mask is advised.

"People have that quarantine fatigue in LA and other coastal cities, and literally they're saying, 'forget it' ... that's when we're seeing bumps," Nasser said.

Nivek Divincci has been to Miami Beach a half dozen times since it reopened more than two weeks ago and calls it a natural stress reliever.

"The breeze, the ocean, the sound of the waves, the sand — everything about it makes it feel like you're in a better place," said the 20-year-old real estate agent.

On most visits, he's gone with his roommate or a few other people, practiced social distancing and felt safe, except once.

"It was crowded and people were breaking the guidelines ... no masks," he said, noting that the groups starting getting larger. "They were touching each other 24/7 and they were even sharing drinks at one point."

Nasser says a car-ride getaway is safe as long as vacationers follow social distancing at fuel stops, stay at hotels following CDC guidelines for sanitation, and stick to takeout meals to avoid crowds.

For more information on how to go to the beach safely see this advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/parks-rec/public-beaches.html>.

Associated Press Entertainment Writer Andrew Dalton contributed to this report in Los Angeles.

Recreational pot laws may boost traffic deaths, studies say

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer

Laws legalizing recreational marijuana may lead to more traffic deaths, two new studies suggest, although questions remain about how they might influence driving habits.

Previous research has had mixed results and the new studies, published Monday in JAMA Internal Medicine, can't prove that the traffic death increases they found were caused by marijuana use.

One study found an excess 75 traffic deaths per year after retail sales began in Colorado in January 2014, compared with states without similar laws. But it found no similar change in Washington state.

The other study looked at those states plus two others that allow recreational pot sales, Oregon and Alaska. If every state legalized recreational marijuana sales, an extra 6,800 people would die each year in traffic accidents, the researchers calculated. They found an increase of 2 deaths per billion miles traveled compared with 20 states without those laws. That change was slightly higher than in the other study.

Both involved several years of traffic death data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration before and at least two years after retail sales of recreational pot began in the states examined. Those sales dates ranged from 2014 to 2016.

The studies lack information on whether motorists were stoned when they crashed. Marijuana can remain in tissues for several days so even if toxicology tests detected it after a fatal crash, that wouldn't prove the driver was impaired, said co-author Magdalena Cerda, a New York University researcher.

It's possible that recreational pot laws might affect drivers' use of other drugs, including alcohol, she noted.

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"That's an open question we need to answer in further research," Cerda said.

A journal editorial said more rigorous research is needed including studies on how often motorists use drugs.

"Clearly, introducing new legal intoxicants has the potential to ... lead to deaths due to impaired driving," the editorial said.

Recreational marijuana is legal in 11 states.

Variations in sales taxes, purchase limits and other aspects of marijuana laws in each state could play a role in any impact on traffic deaths. Also, when the two-state study was done, pot stores were more densely located in Colorado than in Washington, which could have made the drug more readily available, the authors said.

The four-state study, led by Dr. Russell Kamer of New York Medical College, accounted for jobless rates, maximum speed laws and seat-belt laws. But the authors said other factors they did not consider could have influenced traffic deaths.

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner at @LindseyTanner.

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As virus cases soar, Pakistan says it must keep economy open

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The coronavirus is spreading in Pakistan at one of the fastest rates in the world, and its overwhelmed hospitals are turning away patients. But the government is pushing ahead with opening up the country, trying to salvage a near-collapsed economy where millions have already slid into poverty from pandemic restrictions.

Further complicating the dilemma, many people are ignoring government calls to wear masks or obey social distancing rules.

Millions crowd markets and mosques. Hard-line clerics tell followers to trust that faith will protect them. Many call the virus a hoax. Even some government officials dismiss warnings, saying traffic accidents kill more people.

"I am nervous when I go out because I see our people are still not taking it seriously," said Diya Rahman, a broadcaster at Radio Pakistan in the capital, Islamabad. Two of her colleagues have died of the virus and more than 20 others have tested positive.

She fears that "until they see their families are dying they won't understand that we can save ourselves if we adhere to the guidelines, to wear masks."

Pakistan is a prime example of fragile developing countries that say they'll just have to live with rising infections and deaths because their economies cannot withstand an open-ended strict lockdown.

But the rapid acceleration in infections in Pakistan this month could be an indicator of what other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America might face.

New cases in Pakistan leaped from around 2,000-3,000 a day in late May to up to 6,800 a day in mid-June. Deaths are nearing 150 a day. So far, more than 180,000 people have been infected in the country of 220 million, and the government said Sunday the number could reach 1.2 million people in August. Authorities have reported 3,590 deaths.

Infections have soared a spectacular 257% in the last month, the International Rescue Committee said Monday, calling for international support "for local communities displaced by violence and natural disasters, as well as Afghan refugees as they face the health and economic impacts of the pandemic amidst deteriorating living conditions."

More than 1.5 million Afghan refugees live in Pakistan.

Earlier this month, the World Health Organization warned Pakistan in a letter that it was among the top

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10 countries in the speed of the virus's spread and faced devastating effects from opening prematurely. It urged the government to alternate between two weeks of lockdown and two weeks of opening. The Associated Press acquired a copy of the letter, some of which was reported in the press.

The government rejected the proposal. One lawmaker even accused the WHO of "imperialism."

Prime Minister Imran Khan said the refusal to impose a complete lockdown saved the country from economic collapse. In televised speeches, he has pleaded with the public to wear masks, ignore conspiracy theories and take the virus seriously.

A survey by Gallup Pakistan released Monday said 55% of Pakistanis believe the virus threat is exaggerated. The survey of 1,050 people has a margin of error of 2-3 percentage points.

As cases spiraled, the government last week shut down some districts in Islamabad and other cities where fresh outbreaks have been identified. But otherwise it has largely kept lifting restrictions.

The restrictions were imposed in mid-March, but within weeks were lifted bit by bit. Now, most businesses have reopened, including markets and malls, as is public transportation. Schools, restaurants and wedding halls remain closed, gyms had to be shut again, but mosques never closed because clerics refused to do so. Last week, the border with Iran — blamed as the source of the first infections — was reopened for trade only.

At the same time, hospital beds have been filling up.

Zeeshan Hassan said his uncle was turned away from three hospitals in the southern city of Multan, a virus hot spot. Administrators said they had neither a bed nor the drugs to treat him, Hassan said. His uncle was finally admitted to a government hospital, where he died within 15 hours.

A few family members dressed in protective equipment were allowed to bury him.

"Now we are all afraid we will get this COVID-19," Hassan said.

Health professionals are being infected at an alarming rate, with over 3,000 testing positive and more reported each day, said Dr. Qaiser Sajjad, secretary-general of the Pakistan Medical Association.

Even before the pandemic, Pakistan lacked enough trained health personnel to administer equipment like ventilators. With fewer than 3,000 acute care beds for the whole country, Sajjad warned that the system was teetering on collapse.

"People are now starting to get scared and the government is now taking it seriously, but I think we are too late because COVID-19 has already spread massively everywhere in the country," he told the AP.

Misinformation is rampant, he said, and many Pakistanis believe doctors made up the coronavirus to explain deaths in an inept and failing health care system. It also doesn't help that some government officials have gone on TV to downplay the impact of the virus, Sajjad said.

"The poor people and ignorant people, they absolutely don't believe the virus exists. They think it is some conspiracy, all between the government and doctors," he said.

Pakistan is dealing with serious economic issues. Economic growth has been slowing since 2018 but the virus has sent it into contraction for the first time: This month, the country recorded negative growth of 0.38.

"Pakistan is officially in a recession," said Haroon Sharif, a former economic adviser who still counsels the prime minister.

The number of people living in poverty has risen to 40% from 30% since the pandemic began, and massive job losses could spark unrest, Sharif warned.

Sharif said the prime minister is trying to help the poorest Pakistanis, while his Cabinet ministers — many of whom are wealthy industrialists and landowners — focus on the elite. Middle-income earners and small businesses that employ 15 people or fewer are largely ignored, he said.

They have little savings, and much of their business is in cash and so they have little to no support from the banking system.

"I know examples of teachers who are selling fruit," said Sharif.

—

Associated Press writer Asim Tanvir in Multan, Pakistan, contributed.

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VIRUS DIARY: 'We're together & we're safe'

By CHRISTINA PACIOLLA Associated Press

PALMYRA, N.J. (AP) — All I wanted was to be home. To sleep in my bed, cook in my kitchen and greet my husband after work.

I cried a lot. I gained 10 pounds. I even started to get dry, itchy patches on the bridge of my nose and eyelids that I blamed on the air quality in Newark, the train exhaust on the PATH platform, the stinky, hot steam pouring out of sewer grates in lower Manhattan.

Me working in New York City but living just outside Philadelphia in South Jersey affected every other aspect of my life. Why not my skin?

All I wanted was to be home.

In September 2018, my editor position in Philly moved up the Turnpike. Commute or leave. Work in "the other city" or quit the job at my dream company. It was the easiest and hardest choice I've ever had to make.

To ease the stress and finances of a marathon commute, I stayed in the guest bedroom of two selfless friends and their two delightful children in North Jersey. There, I had my own room — hell, my own floor. Their freezer was stocked with my Trader Joe's meatballs. My Mazda was in their driveway.

They made me feel at home. But I wasn't home. Most nights, I'd stay at work later so I didn't get back to their house during their family time.

Like I said, all I wanted was to be home. And on Fridays, I'd race back there to my husband. For almost 15 months, this was my life.

Last November, after months of interviews and impatient waiting, I got a promotion. A promotion that brought me back to Philadelphia, a stone's throw from my house, my bed, my couch, my husband.

I got what I wanted. I was home.

And only a few months later, I got more home than I asked for, more home than I bargained for. It took a pandemic.

I have been home since December, but I have really been home since March 15. So has my husband. We decided his job at a grocery store, although essential, wasn't essential for us. So he took time off.

Not only do I get to sleep in my own bed every night, I get to cook every meal in my kitchen. I get to do yoga in my own yoga room and even lead a daily session for my colleagues. Trader Joe's meals are in my own freezer. My car is in my own driveway.

And I get to do it all with my husband. Every day, all day.

I cook, he cleans. I feed the cats in the morning, he takes the evenings. Dinners are eaten together, walks taken with one another. We point out the nicest houses with the landscaping we wish we had. Often we walk the same route to see if the dogs we pet through fences are outside.

Our family and friends are only minutes apart. Every so often, we set up lawn chairs or blankets in front of their houses for weekend afternoon visits.

Sometimes we stop at their houses on our walks and I say goodbye to them, knowing I don't have to wait a whole week to see them again.

My husband installed my little library, an outdoor book box painted the same colors as our house. Every day I check for new submissions, gleefully bouncing around the house to tell him what's new and what's been borrowed.

We have our alone time, of course. But we have it together. A Post-it hangs on my computer monitor, written by him during the first few weeks of quarantine, when I wasn't doing very well. "We're together & we're safe."

The second half of that has been true for a while. But the first half is finally true again.

Virus Diary, an occasional feature, showcases the coronavirus pandemic through the eyes of Associated Press journalists around the world. See previous entries here. Follow AP News Editor Christina Paciolla on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/cpaciolla>

Amid pandemic, Live Nation announces drive-in concert series

By MESFIN FEKADU AP Music Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Tour promoter Live Nation has announced its first-ever drive-in concerts series in the U.S. for July, months after the live music industry has been on lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The entertainment company on Monday announced "Live from the Drive-In" — a set of nine shows to take place July 10-12 in Nashville, Tennessee; Maryland Heights, Missouri; and Noblesville, Indiana.

Grammy-winning singer Brad Paisley will headline shows in all three cities, while fellow country artists Darius Rucker and Jon Pardi will also perform in Nashville at Nissan Stadium. Nelly will perform in Maryland Heights, near St. Louis.

Concertgoers will be able to drive into the parking lots of the amphitheaters — a maximum of four people per car — and will have two empty parking lot spaces in between each vehicle so fans can watch and party from their designated individual tailgating zones. Attendees are encouraged to bring food, drinks and chairs, setting up around their cars to view the performers from the stage and also from the large LED screens.

All venue staff are required to wear masks, and Live Nation requests that attendees wear masks upon arrival, where there will be contact-less ticket scanning through their windows. Masks are not required once fans are in their designated tailgate areas, and Live Nation is not requiring that fans wear gloves.

Tom See, president of Live Nation Venues-US Concerts, said the company spent months working to find a safe, enjoyable way to put on live shows during the pandemic.

"We're really dialed in with partnerships with (the) local jurisdictions (and) we've been meeting with them for months, just talking about how we can provide a great, comfortable experience to fans with social distancing at the forefront in whatever phase they're about to enter. Because of those relationships and that communication going back and forth, we've been successful in getting that green light," See said in an interview with The Associated Press.

"It was really important to us not to just do one and be done. It wouldn't be Live Nation. It wouldn't be the concert industry leader. We wanted to make a bigger statement."

Nelly, who is celebrating the 20th anniversary of his debut album "Country Grammar," and Pink Floyd tribute band El Monstero are both from St. Louis and will perform at The Hollywood Casino Amphitheater. Pardi and rock band Yacht Rock Revue will headline at the Ruoff Music Center near Indianapolis.

Tickets will go on sale for the general public on Friday. See said ticket prices will fluctuate by market, but they can be as low as \$125, which is roughly \$31 per person if the maximum number of four attendees per car attend.

"I'm very excited to do this because I wanted to make sure, if we were going to do anything like this, that they had the important stuff worked out," Paisley said in an interview with the AP. "My goal would be not to spread this virus to one person. There should be no spread from this. That's key. I just don't think it's worth doing shows if we're putting people at risk."

"The idea that we're outdoors is a great thing," Paisley added. "I just think it's a fun way to watch a concert anyway. It'd be fun if there wasn't a virus."

For the Missouri show, See said they have a capacity to fit 1,000 cars while incorporating social distancing guidelines. Grills and BBQ pits are not permitted, but concertgoers can bring pre-cooked food and drinks, including alcohol. Live Nation encourages that groups assign a designated driver.

A menu of hot food items and nonalcoholic will be available for purchase, Live Nation said. People can place orders online and the items will be delivered to their designated tailgate zone.

Fans will only be able to leave their pods to access single restrooms, which See said will be cleaned regularly throughout the show. Attendees are encouraged to wear masks when leaving for restrooms.

"They don't have to walk too far to be able to use the facility," he said.

"The traditional drive in, I get it, you're stuck in your car, and you're going to get it through an FM transmitter. That's not happening with these shows," See said.

"We're giving you what's about the size of a double-car garage to where you're going to be able to park your car, get out of your car, and have a great tailgating hang for you and your friends, and listen to

music through proper professional PA and amazing audio and video display. It's really a different aspect of drive-in and live. It's highly experiential."

Online:

<http://www.livenation.com/drivein/>

Luxury fashion challenged to confront racist attitudes

By COLLEEN BARRY and THOMAS ADAMSON Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — When luxury fashion lined up social media posts to show solidarity with Black Lives Matters protests, brands got a whole lot of blowback.

Transgender model and actress Munroe Bergdorf jumped on L'Oreal's #BlackoutTuesday posts to accuse the beauty brand of hypocrisy for having fired her three years ago when she complained about racism in strong language. U.S. actor Tommy Dorfman, who appears in a recent campaign for Salvatore Ferragamo, called out the Italian luxury brand for what Dorfman called a "homophobic and racist work environment."

And ordinary Instagram followers piled on, challenging fashion houses to do more than post a black square on their virtual real estate, to instead make runways, magazine covers, boardrooms and creative studios living showcases of diversity.

Global fashion brands have faced racial backlashes in the past, notably in the wake of scandals like the Gucci knitwear recalling blackface, Prada's Little Black Sambo bag charm and Dolce&Gabbana's anti-Asian comments.

The U.S protests against systemic racism, which are spreading around the globe, are also putting the spotlight on the fashion world in its role as a cultural beacon, and emboldening insiders — some with lucrative deals that often assume their discretion — to speak up.

"People have the fire under their bottoms," said Tamu McPherson, an American content creator based in Milan who collaborates with top luxury brands. "Their stories are strong and their voices are being heard. If they industry ignores them, they can be kept accountable. Everyone is sharing, and corroborating, their stories."

McPherson has been working with luxury brands in Milan, Paris and New York since 2013, contributing to digital campaigns, story-telling and in-house diversity training.

"In seven years, I am still one of the only black people invited into those spaces. That is unacceptable," said McPherson, who urged greater racial inclusion in a letter posted June 6 on her "All the Pretty Birds" website, in which she described the fashion industry as "steeped in racism, anti-Blackness and white privilege."

"For years, they did not want to listen. Now they are listening because of the pandemic and the shocking murders we could all pay attention to, because there were not any distractions. This is the moment," she said.

Ferragamo courted criticism when it responded to the protests with a post that said, "No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion."

Dorfman shot back that people at the fashion house "have said heinous, transphobic, body phobic and racist things directly to me. I called them out every time and they promised to change."

A person close to Ferragamo said that the brand is committed to inclusivity, noting that it features models of all colors in its runway shows. Nearly half of Ferragamo's Fall 2020 runway models were of diverse races.

The pushback against the industry has had some early results. Bergdorf, who was sacked as L'Oreal UK's first openly transgender model in 2017 for decrying "the racial violence of white people," has now accepted a role as consultant on the U.K. Diversity and Inclusion Advisory Board to help "influence and inform the brand." The offer came after she highlighted the hypocrisy of the beauty company's June 1 statement that it "stands in solidarity with the Black community, and against injustice of any kind ... Speaking out is worth it."

The Fashion Spot, which has been tracking diversity on runways and magazine covers, has reported

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progress since launching its surveys in 2015. The Spring 2020 season had the highest level of diversity on runways in the four main fashion cities of Paris, Milan, New York and London, at 41.5%, only to dip for the Fall 2020 shows, to 40.6%. That remains an improvement from 17% in the website's inaugural survey for Spring 2015.

New York and London have led in diversity, while Paris and Milan tend to lag, according to the Fashion Spot's data.

After her post, McPherson said she has gotten feedback from some brands that her appeal was being shared internally.

"The focus truly is on getting representation of Black, Indigenous and people of color integrated and hired at all levels of an organization, especially in decision-making positions and senior roles where they can advocate, educate and inform decisions," McPherson said. "Now is the opportunity to rebuild."

After coming under fire for designs deemed racist, both Gucci and Prada last year announced long-term strategies to both promote diverse voices that have not been properly represented in fashion, including with scholarships.

This time, the reckoning has gone to the fashion world's highest levels. Anna Wintour has apologized in an internal email for not doing enough to elevate Black voices and publishing images and stories that have been racially and culturally "hurtful and intolerant" during her 32-year tenure at Vogue. Her comments came as Samira Nasr was named the first editor in chief of color in the 153-year history of U.S. Harper's Bazaar.

Supermodel Naomi Campbell — the first Black woman to appear on the cover of French Vogue — is publicly calling for equal pay for models of color and more representation generally, while acknowledging that in the past she has chosen to deal privately with such issues.

"It is not something I call out, because I am personally someone who wants to rise to the challenge," she told CNN. But she said, "in my business, it has gone on for long enough."

Adamson reported from Paris. Leanne Italie in New York contributed.

Follow all AP coverage of protests against racial injustice and police brutality at <https://apnews.com/GeorgeFloyd>

AP-NORC poll: Politics drive divergent view of US economy

By JOSH BOAK and EMILY SWANSON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Americans' outlook on the national economy has improved somewhat from its lowest points during the early weeks of the coronavirus pandemic, but a new poll suggests Democrats and Republicans are living in alternate economic realities amid the sharpest recession in the nation's history.

Eighty-five percent of Democrats call economic conditions "poor," while 65% of Republicans describe them as "good" in a new survey conducted by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

This divide reflects the deep polarization ahead of the 2020 presidential election, as well as a series of indicators that point toward a weakened but recovering U.S. economy.

"The economy is in terrible shape and improving rapidly," said Harvard University professor Jason Furman, formerly the top economist in the Obama White House. "Depending on which of the two halves you're looking at, you're going to have a very different interpretation of where we are."

Americans can see reasons for hope as well as doubt. They face a host of uncertainties about the path of COVID-19, the fate of small businesses with fewer customers and the status of additional government aid.

Overall, 63% of the country says the economy is in poor shape, down somewhat from the 70% who felt that way in May. The change was driven by increasingly optimistic Republicans, only 43% of whom described the economy as good a month ago. Two-thirds of Republicans, but just 29% of Democrats, expect improvement over the next year.

Thelma Ross, 78, of Granby, Missouri, believes the economy will recover if President Donald Trump can defeat Democratic challenger Joe Biden, the former vice president.

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"I think it's going to come back, stronger than ever, if we get the right president in," Ross said. "President Trump is a businessman."

Yet she is concerned by the protests after Minneapolis police killed George Floyd, an African American, and the calls to remove statues that celebrate the Confederacy and Christopher Columbus. Ross views division as harmful for any economic recovery.

Ross said of Trump: "I pray for divine revelation and divine guidance for that man because he needs that right now."

The survey finds that African Americans and Hispanics are more likely than white Americans to say someone in their household has lost a job or other income. That inequality has added to the broader reckoning with structural racism amid nationwide protests over police brutality following Floyd's death.

Overall, 66% of Hispanic Americans and 53% of Black Americans say they've experienced some form of household income loss, including layoffs, unpaid time off and cuts in hours or pay. Forty-two percent of white Americans say the same. Thirty-four percent of Hispanics, 29% of African Americans and 20% of white Americans said someone in their household has been laid off.

The poll finds signs that some of those layoffs are becoming permanent. Among all those who experienced a layoff in their household, 55% say the job definitely or probably will return — and 8% say it already has. Still, 36% said the job will most likely not come back, which is significantly higher than the 20% who said that in April.

The economy cratered in March and April as people sheltered in place in hopes of stopping the pandemic, and the unemployment rate spiked to at least 14.7%. Responses to government surveys suggested the true jobless rate may have been even higher. But it showed signs of reviving in May. Retail sales surged 17.7%, and 2.5 million jobs were added. The unemployment rate improved to 13.3%, a number that is still the second highest reading in records going back to 1948.

Leah Avery, 54, lost her job driving a school bus in suburban Dallas. She said she checks her email daily to find out how schools will reopen. She applied for unemployment benefits a month ago, but the request has been under review.

"It's a struggle day by day for us to pay our bills, and I know others are going through the same thing," she said.

The job loss has only added to her stress. Her aunt died from COVID-19, and she needs to take care of her elderly mother and her husband, who has dialysis appointments three days a week. It's a full-time job with no pay, she said.

"I just have these moments where it makes me cry," she said. "You don't know this day from the next day what is going to happen."

The nearly \$3 trillion in approved federal aid has shielded many people from the pain of the downturn. About two-thirds of Americans still call their personal financial situations good.

A bipartisan group of economists proposed an additional \$1 trillion to \$2 trillion of aid to sustain any recovery, including targeted funds for state and local governments, subsidized loans for small businesses, more generous unemployment benefits and aid for low-wage workers.

"It should be thought of as an investment in the economy," said Melissa Kearney, a University of Maryland economics professor who helped lead the effort. The proposals are based on ideas shown to boost growth and provide traction for a recovery that is still in its early and fragile stages.

Broxton Sanders, 20, has been selling mattresses while on break from studies at the University of South Alabama. He's a rising junior majoring in political science, and he would like to one day oversee a hospital for military veterans. He noticed that mattress sales picked up during Memorial Day weekend, but there are days now with few, if any, shoppers.

"The economy definitely could be better," Sanders said. "I'll be honest, I think we've seen the worst of it. But that doesn't mean it couldn't fall off a cliff at any second."

The AP-NORC poll of 1,310 adults was conducted June 11-15 using a sample drawn from NORC's proba-

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bility-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 3.7 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>.

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