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Marty Weismantel
605/396-7341
weisag@nvc.net



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

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IMPORTANT INFORMATION ABOUT REACHING SOCIAL SECURITY DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

During the current coronavirus pandemic, we continue to provide help to you and other people in your communities. While our offices are not providing service to walk-in visitors due to COVID-19, we remain ready and able to help you by phone with most Social Security business. You can speak with a representative by calling your local Social Security office or our National 800 Number. You can find local office phone numbers online by using our Social Security Office Locator at www.ssa.gov/locator.

We offer many secure and convenient online services at www.ssa.gov/onlineservices, where you can:

Apply for Retirement, Disability, and Medicare benefits;

Check the status of an application or appeal;

Request a replacement Social Security card (in most areas);

Print a benefit verification letter;

and Much more.

Although you can do most of your business with us online, we know that service channel isn't right for everyone. You can still count on us by phone. If you have a critical situation and we cannot help you with by phone or online, we may be able to schedule an appointment for you.

If you need help, please don't wait until we can see you in person. Call us now and get the help you need. We also understand that getting medical and other documentation can be difficult due to the pandemic, so we are continuing to extend certain deadlines wherever possible.

Brown County 4-H Fashion Revue Results

The 2020 Brown County 4-H Fashion Revue was held Tuesday July 14th virtually. We had two members participate in the virtual contest, Shakinah Holsing and Alicia Davis.

In the early afternoon, Karelyn Farrand of Aberdeen and Ashley Dunham of Groton judged the models. The models were judged on the following criteria: the fit of the garment, the accessories, the individual's modeling ability, the construction of the garment; and the garments cost and care. Each model was given a ribbon placing. Both members received a purple ribbon. All participants are invited to represent Brown County during the South Dakota State Fair.

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#143 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Another milestone: We're over three and a half million cases now, 3,508,900, to be precise. That's 65,000 new cases today, our third-worst day, just 100 cases off yesterday's number and a 1.9% increase. By my reckoning (remembering that timing of the day's summary affects daily counts, as we discussed a couple of weeks ago), we didn't hit 50,000 cases in a day until July; in the 14 days since, we've met or exceeded that number 12 times. Our worst 16 days have been the past 16 days. Our seven-day average has increased for 37 consecutive days, and is now over 60,000, currently at 61,896, a record—a terrible one. This represents an almost 10,000-case increase just since last Wednesday. In the past 14 days, our new cases have increased by 48%. That's a lot of ways to say our situation is deteriorating.

Dr. Anthony Fauci warned today that we could start seeing 100,000-case days if we don't change this trajectory. At our current growth rate, our doubling time is just under 37 days; and yes, that means what you think it means. We'd better start getting serious about wrestling this thing into submission pretty darned quickly.

I have 41 states, DC, and two territories showing increasing new-case 14-day rolling averages and only two states declining. States with the highest daily new cases per capita are (from largest) Florida, Arizona, Louisiana, South Carolina, Texas, and Georgia. Today, the following states set single-day records: Idaho, Montana, New Mexico, Oklahoma (whose governor today became the nation's first to test positive), and New Hampshire. New Hampshire's new-case average is 348% higher today than last Wednesday. This is especially distressing because New Hampshire is one of the two remaining states whose 14-day average still shows a decline; guessing that's about to come to a halt. Georgia set a record seven-day new case average today; on July 1, they were at 1900, and today, they're at just about 3000. Florida has become the third state to hit 300,000 cases. Nineteen states set new average highs. Hospitalizations and test positivity rates are also increasing. I am not seeing a silver lining to this cloud.

Considering the situation in which we find ourselves, I am struggling to explain this next. Thirty-six student-athletes from Lake Zurich High School outside Chicago, when screened at athletic camps after several showed symptoms, have tested positive for Covid-19; and as a result, all participants are being asked to isolate. I'm not having trouble with that part; it appears this outbreak was handled responsibly. The part I'm struggling with is that the infections have been traced to "multiple social gatherings" held before camps commenced on July 6. I don't expect high school students will always make excellent decisions; that's why we don't let them get their own apartments and go to bars. I do expect high school students' parents to make excellent decisions. During a pandemic in a state where cases are increasing in a country that is on fire, I would not classify letting your kid go off to "multiple social gatherings" as an excellent decision. I know well this has been tough on kids; but I suspect attending a grandparent's funeral—or a classmate's—would be tough. Knowing you infected someone who's clinging to life on a vent is tough too. So is living in a place where this pandemic will not die down because people keep attending "multiple social gatherings."

School districts across the country have responded to this staggering growth in cases by announcing they're beginning the school year online. Some of the largest of these are Houston, Prince George's County, MD, 11 of the 15 largest districts in California, and New York City. Kansas will delay the start of school several weeks. States are also issuing new restrictions. Many have implemented mask requirements, limits on gatherings, limited business capacity, bar and restaurant limitations and/or closures. Some major retailers have issued mask requirements, which should take the heat off local franchises. Mayor Lori Lightfoot, Chicago, expressed the mood of many, but certainly not all, elected officials in warning her citizens to serious up about this thing or she was prepared to tighten restrictions, saying, "I won't just turn the car around. I'm going to shut it off, I'm going to kick you out, and I'm going to make you walk home." I think we need more of that kind of talk. It would also be helpful to see more action from more governors since we know we are not going to see a coordinated federal response.

Quick update: The outbreak among US military personnel on Okinawa has grown. We are now looking

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at 136 cases and counting. You will recall from last night's conversation those were linked to parties too. Nearly 6500 cases had been reported within the military as of July 1.

We reported 914 new deaths today, which is an indication yesterday's 900+ count was not a fluke. This is a 0.7% rate of growth, and we're now at 137,234 deaths. In the past 14 days new deaths in the US increased by 43%. Arizona, Texas, Alabama, and Florida set records for seven-day average deaths, and Alabama and Florida also set records for single-day deaths today. As infections move from cities into more rural areas, it is important to remember that people in rural areas are more likely to die of flu than city-dwellers. We don't know that this will be true for Covid-19, but they're both respiratory infections spread in much the same way, so it's troubling.

We talked a little over a month ago about a study whose preliminary data seemed to show an association between ABO blood type and risk of serious infection. The suggestion was that Type A blood was associated with higher risk and Type O blood was associated with lower risk. That study was based on a very small sample, something which is always problematic. We now have new studies from Massachusetts General Hospital and Columbia Presbyterian Hospital in New York which did not have the same findings. They did not see an association with Type A, and the association with Type O was weak enough that, "No one should think they're protected," according to Nicholas Tatonetti from Columbia University. We can probably put this theory to bed. I'll watch for updates, but it's probably not going to pan out.

More study has been done on the relationship between Covid-19 and heart disease. We've known for a while now that people with heart disease are far more at risk for serious disease, with mortality rates that look to be about twice those in people with healthy hearts, as well as elevated risk for abnormal blood clotting and septic shock. There is CDC guidance on this point.

We are now also seeing some evidence that young, healthy people with no history of heart disease are having signs of damage to the heart following infection, a condition some have dubbed post-Covid-19 cardiac syndrome. Some 10-30% of hospitalized patients show molecular evidence of new cardiac injury, but they don't all have cardiac-related symptoms. As a result, we can't figure out for sure what this means to the patient in the future. There are certainly cases of post-Covid-19 cardiomyopathy (damage to the heart's muscle tissue), but the numbers haven't been as high as one might expect. It appears scar tissue might accumulate in the heart leading to arrhythmias (abnormal heart rhythms) and insufficient pumping action of the heart; but we don't have enough long-term data yet to know just how this might play out in the population. We can add this to the list of mysteries still awaiting solution; but it would be good to be aware that recovery may not always be complete. It is possible some people will be left with lingering, maybe life-long cardiac issues.

In a piece of not-great news, a case of transplacental (across the placenta, the temporary organ that connects a mother and her fetus during pregnancy) transmission of SARS-CoV-2 has been documented in a paper published in Nature. The child was born with neurologic complications which appear to have been caused by the infection; the mother was infected during her last trimester of pregnancy. Maternal viremia (virus in the bloodstream), placental inflammation, and neonatal (newborn) viremia have all been demonstrated, leaving little doubt the route of infection of the neonate was transplacental. There is no evidence at all that this is a frequent or common means for transmission, but it is unsettling nonetheless.

I've seen the abstract for a preprint (not yet peer-reviewed) paper by researchers at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, and the Klarman Cell Observatory regarding a prospective therapeutic for Covid-19. I suspect I'm going to need a very expensive subscription to access the full paper, so I am relying on a summary here. The work rests on an observation that cells have a specific metabolic response to this virus, one that involves elevated fatty acid and cholesterol production in the infected cell. Having made this observation, the scientists' next step was to screen FDA-approved drugs that interfere with this sort of lipid (fat) production and identify a drug called fenofibrate as a promising candidate. The drug enables cells to burn more fat, which, at least in the lab, inhibits the virus's ability to replicate. They claim that the virus almost disappeared within five days of treatment. I don't want to get too excited early, but this appears to be a promising avenue for exploration, and, in fact, is

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in animal studies now with a hope to advance to clinical trials within a few weeks. This whole enterprise is eased by the fact this drug already stands as approved, which avoids a number of places where the process can bog down.

Najibullah Seddiqi lives in Afghanistan and owns an oxygen factory, a place where oxygen is extracted from the air and pumped into tanks for use by people with a medical need for supplemental oxygen. He closed it some years ago due to his frustration with governmental corruption and recurring power cuts; but when the coronavirus made its way to Afghanistan, he saw people dying for lack of oxygen and decided he needed to help. He hired a dozen workers and opened back up. He has moved into his dusty factory for the duration because he is afraid someone will come for oxygen at night and find them closed, something he does not want to happen. Because of shortages, prices for oxygen have spiked to more than most people can pay, so he gives it away to individuals and sells it to hospitals for less than the going rate, just enough to cover the free distribution. Families of Covid-19 patients needing oxygen line up at his factory for the free refills that keep people alive. There are six oxygen factories in Kabul, but only one that gives it away.

He says, "My only aim is to save as many lives as I can. When the virus spread ends, then I'll go home."

And there we go again—people finding ways to meet a need and refusing to profit from the desperation of others. We do not need to move into a dusty facility to do the same. We just need to start looking around us, identifying a need, and doing the right thing. Easy, right?

Let's get to work.

And stay well. I'll be back.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

| | July 15 | July 16 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|
| Minnesota | 43,170 | 43,742 |
| Nebraska | 21,717 | 21,979 |
| Montana | 1,952 | 2,096 |
| Colorado | 37,686 | 38,155 |
| Wyoming | 1581 | 1,605 |
| North Dakota | 4493 | 4565 |
| South Dakota | 7572 | 7652 |
| United States | 3,431,574 | 3,499,398 |
| US Deaths | 136,466 | 137,419 |

| | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|
| Minnesota | +398 | +572 |
| Nebraska | +318 | +262 |
| Montana | +109 | +144 |
| Colorado | +444 | +469 |
| Wyoming | +36 | +24 |
| North Dakota | +51 | +72 |
| South Dakota | +48 | +80 |
| United States | +68,518 | +67,824 |
| US Deaths | +861 | +953 |

| | July 8 | July 9 | July 10 | July 11 | July 12 | July 13 | July 14 |
|---------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| Minnesota | 39,133 | 39,589 | 40,163 | 40,767 | 41,571 | 42,281 | 42,772 |
| Nebraska | 20,201 | 20,425 | 20,623 | 20,777 | 20,998 | 21,172 | 21,399 |
| Montana | 1,327 | 1,371 | 1466 | 1,593 | 1,677 | 1,758 | 1,843 |
| Colorado | 34,664 | 35,116 | 35,525 | 36,191 | 36,591 | 36,913 | 37,242 |
| Wyoming | 1,378 | 1,404 | 1428 | 1,445 | 1,488 | 1,506 | 1,545 |
| North Dakota | 3898 | 3971 | 4070 | 4154 | 4243 | 4334 | 4442 |
| South Dakota | 7,163 | 7242 | 7336 | 7401 | 7454 | 7499 | 7524 |
| United States | 2,994,776 | 3,055,144 | 3,118,168 | 3,187,270 | 3,247,782 | 3,304,942 | 3,363,056 |
| US Deaths | 131,626 | 132,309 | 133,291 | 134,117 | 134,815 | 135,205 | 135,605 |

| | | | | | | | |
|---------------|---------|---------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|
| Minnesota | +564 | +456 | +574 | +604 | +804 | +710 | +491 |
| Nebraska | +155 | +224 | +198 | +154 | +221 | +174 | +227 |
| Montana | +78 | +44 | +95 | +127 | +84 | +81 | +85 |
| Colorado | +407 | +452 | +409 | +666 | +400 | +322 | +329 |
| Wyoming | +29 | +26 | +24 | +17 | +43 | +18 | +39 |
| North Dakota | +49 | +73 | +99 | +84 | +99 | +91 | +108 |
| South Dakota | +58 | +79 | +94 | +65 | +55 | +45 | +25 |
| United States | +56,152 | +60,368 | +63,024 | 69,102 | +60,512 | +57,160 | +58,114 |
| US Deaths | +1,320 | +683 | +982 | +826 | +698 | +390 | +400 |

+ The Minnesota Department of Health took July 4th off so there is no update available.

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July 15th COVID-19 UPDATE

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from State Health Lab Reports

The active cases in South Dakota went up by 14, but those currently hospitalized dropped by three and I'm guessing two of them are from the two deaths recorded. Both were males in the 70-79 age group. One was in Hughes County and the other Pennington. Brown County had no change in active cases as one person was tested positive while another one recovered. There were 80 positive cases in the state with 25 of them in Pennington County.

Brown County:

Active Cases: 0 (20)
Recovered: +1 (340)
Total Positive: +1 (362)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (19)
Deaths: 2
Negative Tests: +31 (3514)
Percent Recovered: 93.9% (0)

South Dakota:

Positive: +80 (7652 total)
Negative: +1299 (85891 total)
Hospitalized: +8 (752 total). 59 currently hospitalized (Down 3 from yesterday)
Deaths: +2 (111 total)
Recovered: +64 (6663 total)
Active Cases: +14 (878)
Percent Recovered: 87.0 -0.2

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding +1 (43), Potter +2 (209), unassigned +261 (3363).

Fully recovered from positive cases: Campbell 1-1, Haakon 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Jones 1-1, Sanborn 12-12, Stanley 14-14, Sully 1-1.

It was brought to my attention that the active cases needed to be modified to reflect the deaths. So you will see a number in () after the county with the number of deaths in that county and the active cases number now reflects those deaths.

Aurora: 1 active case
Beadle (8): +4 positive, +4 recovered (34 active cases)
Bennett: 1 active case
Bon Homme: 1 active cases
Brookings: +1 positive, +3 recovered (16 active cases)
Brown (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)
Brule: +2 recovered (5 active cases)

Buffalo (3): 13 active cases
Butte: 3 active cases
Campbell: Fully Recovered
Charles Mix: +1 positive, +1 recovered (54 active cases)
Clark: +1 positive (2 active cases)
Clay: +2 recovered (8 active cases)
Codington: +3 positive 22 active cases)
Corson: +2 positive (4 active cases)
Custer: 2 active cases
Davison: +2 recovered (14 active cases)
Day: 3 active cases
Deuel: 1 active case

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Dewey: +1 positive (37 active cases)
 Douglas: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Edmunds: 2 active cases
 Fall River: 3 active cases
 Faulk (1): 3 active cases
 Grant: 3 active cases
 Gregory: 2 active case
 Haakon: Fully Recovered
 Hamlin: 1 active case
 Hand: 1 active case
 Hanson: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
 Harding: No infections reported
 Hughes (3): +1 positive +1 recovered (11 active cases)
 Hutchinson +1 recovered (3 active cases)
 Hyde: Fully Recovered
 Jackson (1): 4 active cases
 Jerauld (1): 1 active cases
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: 2 active cases
 Lake (1): +4 positive (19 active cases)
 Lawrence: 2 active cases
 Lincoln (1): +4 positive, +6 recovered (43 active cases)
 Lyman (1): 17 active cases
 Marshall: 1 active case
 McCook (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (4 active cases)
 McPherson: 1 active case
 Meade (1): +2 recovered (5 active cases)
 Mellette: +1 positive, +3 recovered (3 active cases)
 Miner: +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Minnehaha (60): +18 positive, +15 recovered (231

active cases)
 Moody: +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota: +7 positive, +1 recovered (31 active cases)
 Pennington (22): +25 positive, +9 recovered (158 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active case
 Potter: No infections reported
 Roberts: +1 positive (11 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: 2 active cases
 Stanley: Fully Recovered
 Sully: Fully Recovered
 Todd (2): +1 positive, (10 active cases)
 Tripp: 1 active case
 Turner: +1 positive (6 active cases)
 Union (1): +2 recovered (25 active cases)
 Walworth: +2 recovered (3 active cases)
 Yankton (2): +2 recovered (11 active cases)
 Ziebach: 2 active cases

The NDDoH & private labs report 3,093 completed tests today for COVID-19 with 72 new positive cases, bringing the statewide total to 4,565. NDDoH reports no new deaths.

State & private labs have reported 238,586 total completed tests. 3,760 ND patients are recovered.

RACE/ETHNICITY OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Race/Ethnicity | # of Cases | % of Cases |
|-------------------------------|------------|------------|
| Asian, Non-Hispanic | 716 | 9% |
| Black, Non-Hispanic | 987 | 13% |
| Hispanic | 1130 | 15% |
| Native American, Non-Hispanic | 1236 | 16% |
| Other | 768 | 10% |
| White, Non-Hispanic | 2815 | 37% |

| County of Residence | # of Deaths |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Beadle | 8 |
| Brown | 2 |
| Buffalo | 3 |
| Butte | 1 |
| Faulk | 1 |
| Hughes | 2 |
| Jackson | 1 |
| Jerauld | 1 |
| Lake | 1 |
| Lincoln | 1 |
| Lyman | 1 |
| McCook | 1 |
| Meade | 1 |
| Minnehaha | 60 |
| Pennington | 22 |
| Todd | 2 |
| Union | 1 |
| Yankton | 2 |

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| County | Positive Cases | Recovered Cases | Negative Persons |
|-------------|----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Aurora | 34 | 33 | 304 |
| Beadle | 557 | 511 | 1574 |
| Bennett | 4 | 3 | 448 |
| Bon Homme | 13 | 12 | 634 |
| Brookings | 96 | 80 | 2038 |
| Brown | 362 | 340 | 3514 |
| Brule | 34 | 29 | 598 |
| Buffalo | 86 | 70 | 548 |
| Butte | 3 | 0 | 584 |
| Campbell | 1 | 1 | 68 |
| Charles Mix | 98 | 44 | 955 |
| Clark | 16 | 14 | 348 |
| Clay | 94 | 86 | 1090 |
| Codington | 96 | 74 | 2215 |
| Corson | 22 | 18 | 217 |
| Custer | 11 | 9 | 657 |
| Davison | 57 | 43 | 1853 |
| Day | 19 | 16 | 464 |
| Deuel | 5 | 4 | 321 |
| Dewey | 38 | 1 | 1267 |
| Douglas | 10 | 6 | 355 |
| Edmunds | 9 | 7 | 342 |
| Fall River | 13 | 10 | 813 |
| Faulk | 24 | 20 | 144 |
| Grant | 18 | 15 | 587 |
| Gregory | 6 | 4 | 274 |
| Haakon | 1 | 1 | 254 |
| Hamlin | 13 | 12 | 529 |
| Hand | 7 | 6 | 222 |
| Hanson | 14 | 12 | 150 |
| Harding | 0 | 0 | 43 |
| Hughes | 73 | 59 | 1376 |
| Hutchinson | 18 | 15 | 769 |

| | | | |
|----------------|------|------|-------|
| Hyde | 3 | 3 | 105 |
| Jackson | 7 | 2 | 381 |
| Jerauld | 39 | 37 | 247 |
| Jones | 1 | 1 | 41 |
| Kingsbury | 8 | 6 | 449 |
| Lake | 41 | 21 | 741 |
| Lawrence | 21 | 19 | 1665 |
| Lincoln | 404 | 360 | 5125 |
| Lyman | 82 | 64 | 772 |
| Marshall | 5 | 4 | 331 |
| McCook | 19 | 14 | 532 |
| McPherson | 6 | 5 | 179 |
| Meade | 54 | 48 | 1568 |
| Mellette | 10 | 7 | 272 |
| Miner | 10 | 9 | 215 |
| Minnehaha | 3796 | 3505 | 22078 |
| Moody | 24 | 20 | 512 |
| Oglala Lakota | 118 | 87 | 2678 |
| Pennington | 674 | 495 | 8617 |
| Perkins | 1 | 0 | 101 |
| Potter | 0 | 0 | 209 |
| Roberts | 59 | 48 | 1255 |
| Sanborn | 12 | 12 | 183 |
| Spink | 14 | 12 | 952 |
| Stanley | 14 | 14 | 182 |
| Sully | 1 | 1 | 57 |
| Todd | 65 | 53 | 1491 |
| Tripp | 19 | 18 | 499 |
| Turner | 30 | 24 | 755 |
| Union | 156 | 130 | 1600 |
| Walworth | 16 | 13 | 449 |
| Yankton | 88 | 75 | 2623 |
| Ziebach | 3 | 1 | 174 |
| Unassigned**** | 0 | 0 | 3298 |

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

| Sex | # of Cases | # of Deaths |
|--------|------------|-------------|
| Female | 3708 | 58 |
| Male | 3944 | 53 |

| Age Range | # of Cases | # of Deaths |
|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 0-19 years | 859 | 0 |
| 20-29 years | 1588 | 1 |
| 30-39 years | 1591 | 5 |
| 40-49 years | 1204 | 7 |
| 50-59 years | 1186 | 12 |
| 60-69 years | 707 | 21 |
| 70-79 years | 275 | 17 |
| 80+ years | 242 | 48 |

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Baseball Schedule

| Date | Team | Opponent | Location | Time |
|---------|------------|------------|----------|----------|
| July 16 | SBU10/12 | Scrimmage | Groton | 7:30 (2) |
| July 20 | Jr. Legion | Clark | Clark | 6:00 (2) |
| July 20 | Legion | Northville | Groton | 6:00 (2) |
| July 21 | Legion | Webster | Groton | 6:00 (2) |

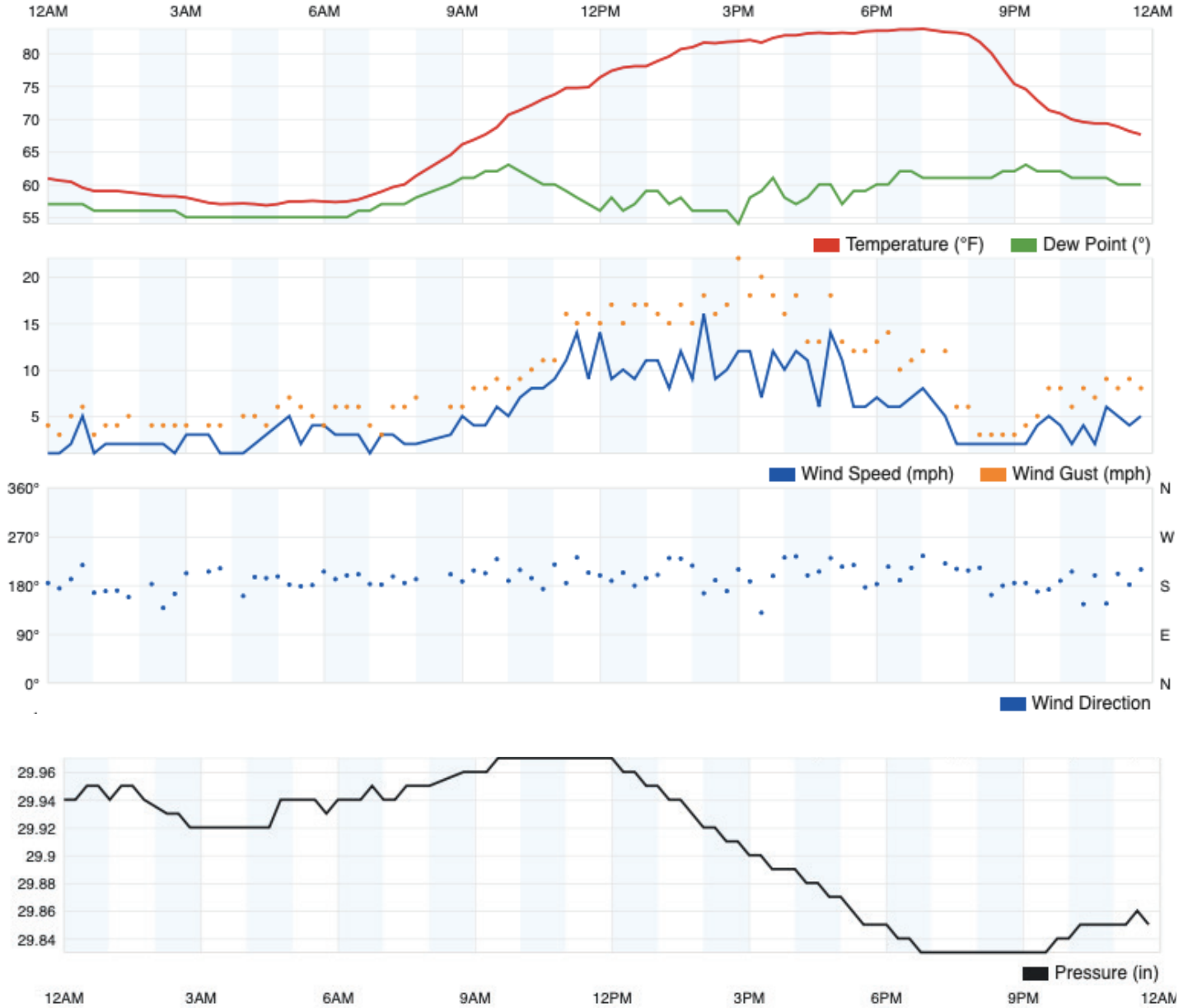
First Round State VFW Jr. Teener Schedule in Webster

| DATE | AWAY TEAM | HOME TEAM | Result/Time |
|-------------|---|-----------------------------------|-------------|
| Fri, Jul 17 | SDVFW 14U Castlewood | SDVFW 14U Groton | 12:00PM CDT |
| Fri, Jul 17 | SDVFW 14U Canova Gang | SDVFW 14U Parker | 2:30PM CDT |
| Fri, Jul 17 | SDVFW 14U Mt. Vernon-Plankinton | SDVFW 14U Gregory | 5:00PM CDT |
| Fri, Jul 17 | SDVFW 14U FH Hitmen | SDVFW 14U Webster | 7:30PM CDT |

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Isolated
T-storms then
Sunny

High: 90 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear

Low: 63 °F

Friday



Sunny then
Severe
Thunderstorms
and Breezy

High: 93 °F

Friday
Night



Severe
Thunderstorms

Low: 67 °F

Saturday



Hot

High: 90 °F

Today

Friday

Highs 81-92°F

Highs 85-102°F

*A few morning
showers, then
mostly dry*

*Hot, Chance of
severe storms
toward evening*

 NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION

Updated: 7/16/2020 3:15 AM Central

A few showers and thunderstorms are expected this morning across northern South Dakota, with the rest of the area remaining dry. Friday could bring strong to severe storms toward evening, as a cool front approaches from the west. Temperatures will be warm today, and HOT Friday. #sdwx #mnwx

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Enhanced Risk Severe Weather - Friday

ISSUED: 2:45 AM - Thursday, July 16, 2020

WHEN

Late Friday afternoon/evening. The highest risk period will be from 6pm - Midnight

WHAT

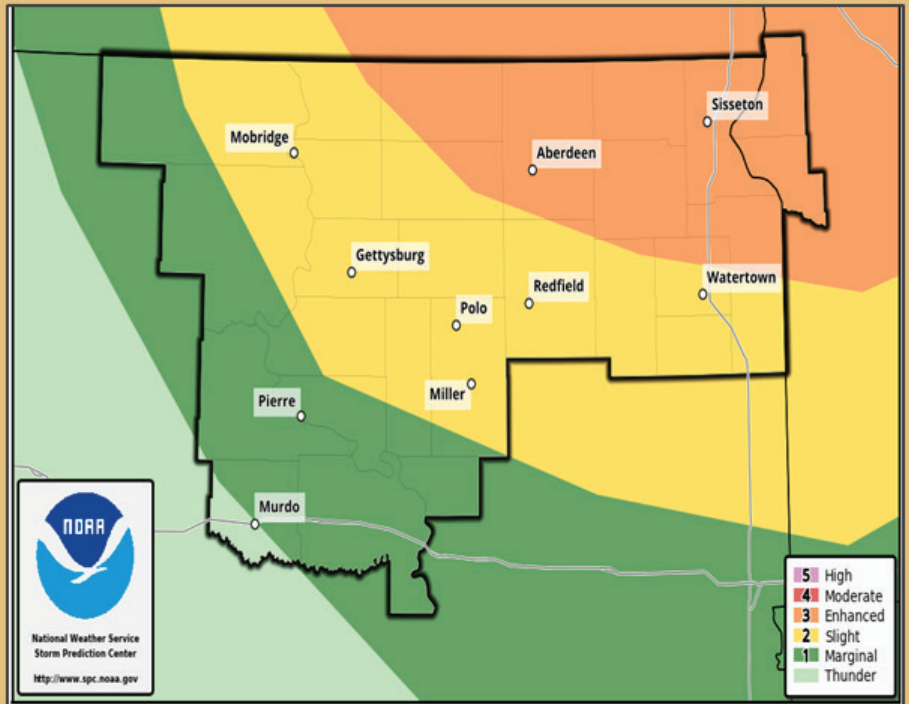
Scattered/Numerous severe thunderstorms possible. These storms could produce **wind gusts up to 80 mph, large hail up to tennis ball size, and isolated tornadoes.**

WHERE

Much of northeastern South Dakota and west central Minnesota, including Aberdeen, Sisseton and Ortonville.

ACTION

Pay close attention to the weather and be prepared to seek shelter if necessary.



| | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| MARGINAL | SLIGHT | ENHANCED | MODERATE |
| Isolated Severe Storms Possible | Scattered Severe Storms Possible | Numerous Severe Storms Possible | Widespread Severe Storms Likely |

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Today in Weather History

July 16, 1993: Thunderstorms, dumping two to seven inches of rain caused flooding problems in north-eastern South Dakota. Several dams and many roads were washed out. Most of the damage was in Marshall County. Six families were evacuated about six miles southeast of Britton as two private earthen dams broke. Winds, as high as 70 mph were also reported in a couple of locations in Marshall County. The torrential rains resulted in flooded farmland, roads, and basements in northeast South Dakota through July 21st. In Groton and Claremont at least 90 percent of the homes had water in the basements. Some storm total rainfall amounts include 3.20 inches in Leola; 3.14 in Ipswich; 3.13 in Britton; and 2.77 in Eureka.

July 16, 2001: Very heavy rains of 3 to 7 inches fell across north central Corson County causing flash flooding. Oak Creek along with several other streams washed out several roads and damaged some fences from Watauga to McIntosh to McLaughlin and north. Travel stopped for a while on the Highway north of McLaughlin.

1979: The most damaging tornado in Wyoming history touched down 3 miles west-northwest of the Cheyenne airport. This strong tornado moved east or east-southeast across the northern part of Cheyenne, causing \$22 million in damage and one fatality. 140 houses and 17 trailers were destroyed. 325 other homes were damaged. Four C-130 aircraft and National Guard equipment sustained \$12 million damage. Municipal hangars and buildings suffered \$10 million in losses.

2009: A hailstone, 3.3 inches in diameter, 6.8 inches circumference, and weighing 2.1 ounces fell in Westford, Vermont. This hailstone is the largest ever found in Vermont.

1920 - A severe hailstorm over parts of Antelope and Boone counties in Nebraska stripped trees of bark and foliage, ruined roofs, and broke nearly every window facing north. (The Weather Channel)

1946 - The temperature at Medford, OR, soared to an all-time high of 115 degrees to begin a two week heat wave. During that Oregon heat wave the mercury hit 100 degrees at Sexton Summit for the only time in forty years of records. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1975 - An early afternoon thunderstorm raked the east side of Tucson, AZ, with gale force winds, heavy rain, and numerous lightning strikes. A thirteen year old boy was swept through a forty foot long culvert by raging waters before being rescued. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Showers and thundestorms in the southwestern U.S. ended a record string of thirty-nine consecutive days of 100 degree heat at Tucson, AZ. A thunderstorm at Bullhead City, AZ, produced wind gusts to 70 mph reducing the visibility to near zero in blowing dust. Southerly winds gusting to 40 mph pushed temperature readings above 100 degrees in the Northern Plains. Rapid City, SD, reported a record high of 106 degrees, following a record low of 39 degrees just three days earlier. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thirty-seven cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Highs of 96 degrees at Bluefield, WV, and 104 degrees at Charleston WV were all-time records, and afternoon highs of 98 degrees at Binghamton, NY, 99 degrees at Elkins, WV, and 103 degrees at Pittsburgh PA, tied all-time records. Highs of 104 degrees at Baltimore, MD, and 105 degrees at Parkersburg WV were records for July, and Beckley, WV, equalled their record for July with a high of 94 degrees. Martinsburg, WV, was the hot spot in the nation with a reading of 107 degrees. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms raked the northeastern U.S. with large hail and damaging winds. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Showers and thunderstorms developing along a stationary front drenched the Middle Atlantic Coast States with heavy rain, causing flooding in some areas. More than five inches of rain was reported near Madison and Ferncliff, VA. Hot weather prevailed in Texas. San Angelo reported a record high of 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 84 °F at 6:22 PM

Low Temp: 57 °F at 4:53 AM

Wind: 22 mph at 2:59 PM

Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 112° in 1936

Record Low: 42° in 1976

Average High: 84°F

Average Low: 59°F

Average Precip in July.: 1.59

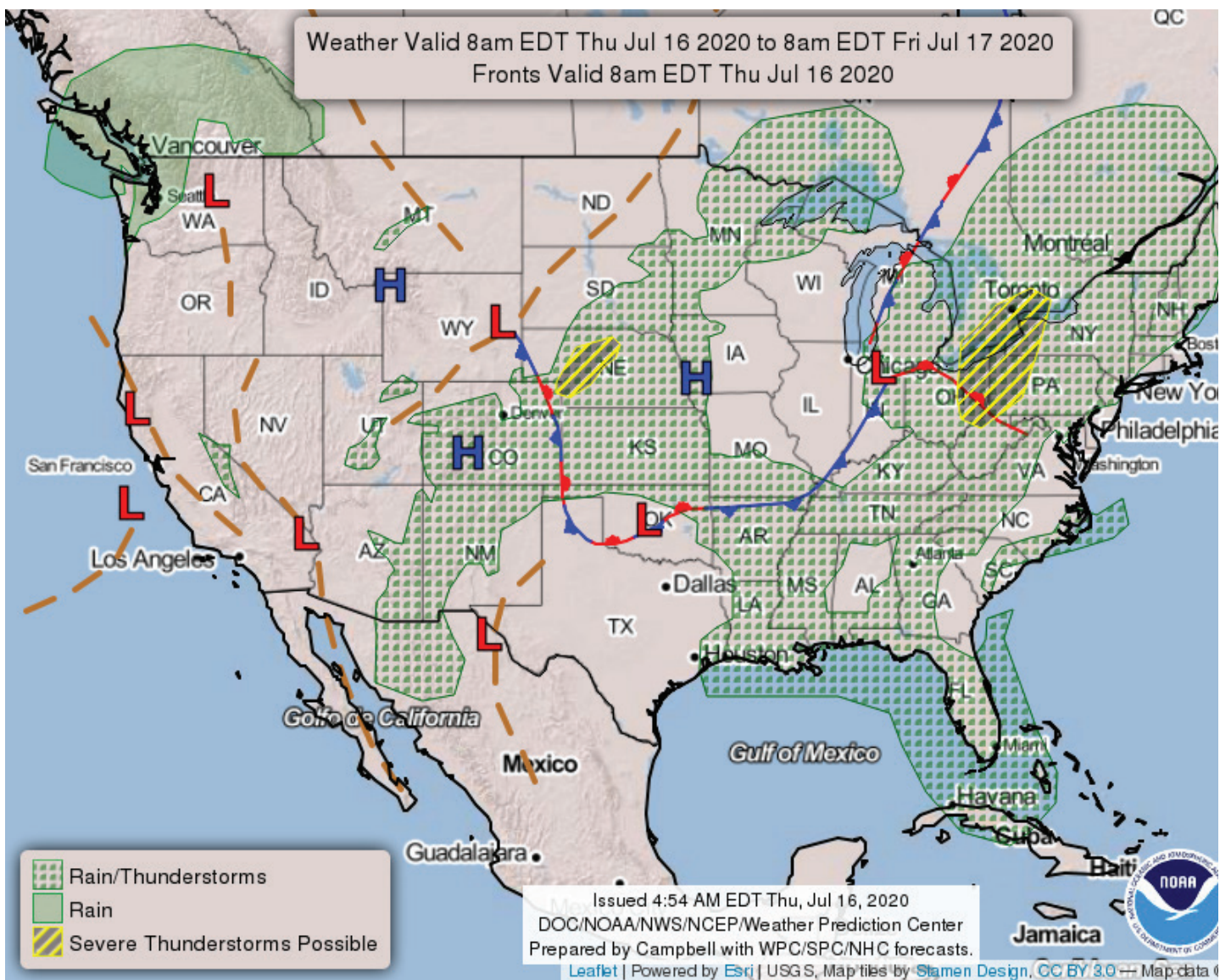
Precip to date in July.: 0.47

Average Precip to date: 12.43

Precip Year to Date: 8.79

Sunset Tonight: 9:18 p.m.

Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:02 a.m.



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FAITH AND OBEDIENCE

Charlie Brown decided that he would take a break from baseball and take up archery. His friend and advisor, Lucy, approached him one day while he was practicing. She became somewhat puzzled. He would place an arrow on the string of his bow, pull it back, and then let the arrow fly into the fence. Then he would do it again. And again. And again.

After he had several arrows sticking in the fence, he would walk up to each one and draw a target around it.

"Charlie Brown," said Lucy, "that's not right. You always do things the wrong way, and you are wrong again. You are supposed to draw the target first and then shoot at it!"

"I know," he said. "But if you do it my way, you never miss."

Many of us go through life the same way. We do not have a courage-based faith that enables us to step out in a faith-tested-life that believes God in, through, and for all things.

A good example is Abraham. God "called him to leave his home and go to another land that God would eventually give him as his inheritance." Upon God's command, he left home without asking God one question because he not only believed God but also trusted Him. He left everything not knowing where he was going, only knowing Whom he trusted. And the result?

He became a pioneer and founded an empire for God. Trust. Obey. Believe. Be rewarded.

Prayer: Help us, Lord, to believe Your Word, knowing that when we place our faith in You, You will not only guard us but guide us and give us Your eternal rewards. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today : It was by faith that Abraham obeyed when God called him to leave home and go to another land that God would give him as his inheritance. He went without knowing where he was going. Hebrews 11:8

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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
- 07/25/2020 City-Wide Rummage Sales
- **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

News from the Associated Press

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

10-16-17-22-33

(ten, sixteen, seventeen, twenty-two, thirty-three)

Estimated jackpot: \$59,000

Lotto America

11-13-14-45-51, Star Ball: 1, ASB: 3

(eleven, thirteen, fourteen, forty-five, fifty-one; Star Ball: one; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$3.45 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$101 million

Powerball

27-47-61-62-69, Powerball: 4, Power Play: 10

(twenty-seven, forty-seven, sixty-one, sixty-two, sixty-nine; Powerball: four; Power Play: ten)

Estimated jackpot: \$87 million

Tribal nations appeal ruling over federal virus relief funds

Associated Press undefined

FLAGSTAFF, Ariz. (AP) — Tribal nations are challenging a court decision that allows Alaska Native corporations to receive a share of \$8 billion in federal coronavirus relief funding set aside for tribes.

The tribal nations filed a notice of appeal Tuesday in the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., meeting the deadline set by a lower court judge. U.S. District Court Judge Amit Mehta had said the U.S. Treasury Department could release funding to the corporations if the tribes didn't move forward with the appeal by then.

Congress approved the funding as part of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act. The U.S. Treasury Department and the tribal nations disagree over which entities Congress intended to be eligible for the tribal set-aside and the meaning of language included in the bill.

Mehta ruled against the tribes in late June, saying the corporations can be treated as tribal governments for limited purposes. But Mehta acknowledged he wrestled with the decision.

He granted a request from the tribal plaintiffs to halt funding to the corporations while his decision is appealed.

The Treasury Department has disbursed most of the money to the country's 574 federally recognized tribes. It set aside at least \$162 million for the corporations, according to court documents, but hasn't disclosed the exact amount.

Two other cases that tribes brought against the Treasury Department over CARES Act funding have been dropped. A lawsuit filed by the Shawnee Tribe of Oklahoma over the department's methodology for distributing an initial round of relief funding is ongoing.

This story has been corrected to reflect the deadline to file an appeal was Tuesday, not Monday.

South Dakota records 80 new cases, 2 deaths from COVID-19

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota on Wednesday recorded 80 new cases of COVID-19, along with two deaths from the disease.

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While the number of new cases is the highest recorded this week, the average number of new cases over the last two weeks has remained mostly constant. Pennington County, which contains Rapid City, recorded the most cases, with 25.

The deaths were two men in their 70s. One was from Butte County, and the other was from Pennington.

Major retailers and elected leaders across the nation have pushed for requirements to wear masks in an effort to hamper the spread of the coronavirus. While South Dakota retailers like Walmart will start to require masks in their stores on Monday, a state-backed mandate for masks appears unlikely anytime soon.

Gov. Kristi Noem tweeted on Wednesday, "As I said months ago, the call to apply a one-size-fits-all approach to #COVID19 is herd mentality; it's not leadership."

The state has recorded 7,652 cases of COVID-19, but about 87% have recovered. A total of 111 people have died over the course of the pandemic.

Police: Man yelling racist, homophobic words within rights

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities in Sioux Falls received a number of calls about a man who was downtown yelling racial slurs and homophobic words, but police say he was within his rights.

Police spokesman Sam Clemens says multiple people reported the man's behavior, some recorded video of it and one person even threw water on the man who was standing in a public area Monday evening, the Argus Leader reported.

Clemens says the man was not arrested because his behavior and actions fall under his rights to free speech. He said the man was likely trying to incite a reaction from people.

Clemens said officers have come into contact with the man before about similar issues.

Victim of Jet Ski accident in Butte County identified

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified the man who died in a Jet Ski accident in Butte County.

Joshua Weisz, 33, of Rapid City, died last Friday after falling off the personal watercraft in the Belle Fourche Reservoir, according to sheriff's officials.

A preliminary investigation found that Weisz and a woman were about 100 to 200 yards from the shore when they fell off the Jet Ski. The woman was able to grab onto the watercraft, but Weisz could not. Neither were wearing life vests.

Several people jumped in the water, brought Weisz to shore and began CPR. Paramedics arrived and took him to Spearfish Regional Hospital where he was pronounced dead.

The South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks is investigating the accident.

Tourists facing restrictions amid fears of new virus spikes

By ARITZ PARRA, MIKE CORDER and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

MADRID (AP) — From the palm-fringed beaches of southern India to the bar-lined streets of a Spanish island and the rolling hills of Ireland, restaurants, pubs and clubs are emerging as front lines in efforts to prevent the re-emergence of the coronavirus.

With Europe's summer vacation season kicking into high gear for millions weary of months of lockdown, scenes of drunken British and German tourists on Spain's Mallorca island ignoring social distancing rules and reports of American visitors flouting quarantine measures in Ireland are raising fears of a resurgence of infections in countries that have battled for months to flatten the COVID-19 curve.

Germany's foreign minister condemned the rowdy tourists for imperiling hard-won gains in efforts to contain the virus.

"We just recently managed to open the borders again in Europe. We cannot risk this by reckless behavior," Heiko Maas told Funke Media Group on Thursday. "Otherwise, new measures will be inevitable."

In a move designed to stop the spread of the new coronavirus and shake off the region's reputation as

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a party hub, regional authorities in the Balearic Islands ordered the closure from Thursday of all establishments along Mallorca's "Beer St." and "Ham St.," as the popular party areas near the beach of Palma de Mallorca are known, and another boulevard in nearby Magaluf.

Images that have gone viral on social media of tourists packing Mallorca streets were in stark contrast to a solemn commemoration service Thursday morning in Madrid, where relatives of about 100 COVID-19 victims sat, socially distanced, with representatives of health workers and other vital professions and with Spain's king and queen to pay tribute to the dead and those fighting the pandemic.

In an emotional speech, Hernando Calleja said he was sharing the pain of the loss of his brother José María, a well-known journalist and writer in Madrid, with other relatives of "anonymous" victims.

"Let's not forget that the coronavirus was and continues to be a cold, cruel and wrecking executioner," Calleja said at the ceremony at Madrid's Royal Palace.

While stringent lockdown measures have slowed the spread of the virus across much of Europe, there are growing signs of second waves of infections, and the pandemic is still gathering pace elsewhere.

More than 13.5 million people have been infected worldwide and over 580,000 have died, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The true numbers are thought to be far higher for a number of reasons, including limited testing.

India's record daily increase of nearly 32,700 cases pushed its total close to 1 million and led authorities to reimpose a three-day lockdown and night curfew in the popular western beach state of Goa, two weeks after it was reopened to tourists.

The state's top elected official, Pramod Sawant, said people there were flouting social distancing rules and not wearing face masks. Nearly 40,000 people have been fined in the past two weeks for not wearing masks.

Even in Japan, which has fewer than 23,000 confirmed cases and about 1,000 deaths, officials are fretting about moves to revitalize the hard-hit tourism industry.

Prime Minister Shinzo Abe acknowledged a need to re-examine a government campaign offering discounts for traveling within Japan that is set to start next week. "We are looking at the situation with a high level of nervousness," Abe said.

Tokyo's bars, clubs, cabarets and karaoke parlors have been seen as a weak link in efforts to contain the virus. But the most recent data show the illness also spreading in offices, in nursery schools and in senior facilities, undoing earlier progress.

Confirmed coronavirus cases in Tokyo for Thursday totaled 286, a record for the capital, Gov. Yuriko Koike said.

At the southern tip of Mexico's Baja California peninsula, the laid-back resort city of La Paz closed its beaches once again after having re-opened them in June. Municipal authorities reported that this week, 1,230 people and 673 vehicles were turned back or removed from beaches as part of the closure, after beachgoers largely ignored social distancing, maximum capacities and other sanitary measures.

In California, organizers canceled the 2021 New Year's Day Rose Parade in Pasadena for the first time in 75 years, fearing that even six months from now infections could spread among participants and the hundreds of thousands who line the route.

That move came two days after California Gov. Gavin Newsom shut bars and indoor dining statewide, and ordered closures of hair salons, gyms, malls and other indoor businesses in Los Angeles and other counties experiencing the most significant surge of virus cases.

Americans heading overseas were causing consternation in Ireland, amid fears that some were ignoring the government's requirement that they self-isolate for 14 days after arrival. The Irish Post cited restaurant owners who complained that they had no way of knowing if American visitors had completed the two-week quarantine.

Showing that there can be a way forward, China became the first economy to resume growing since the pandemic began in its central city of Wuhan. It reported an unexpectedly strong 3.2% expansion in the latest quarter after anti-virus lockdowns were lifted and factories and stores reopened. The 6.8% contrac-

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tion in January-March was the country's worst downturn since at least the mid-1960s.

Economists say China is likely to recover faster than some other major economies due to the ruling Communist Party's decision to impose the most intensive anti-disease measures in history. Those cut off most access to cities with a total of 60 million people and suspended trade and travel — steps later imitated by some Asian and European governments as the virus spread.

Corder reported from The Hague, Netherlands, and Kurtenbach from Bangkok. Associated Press reporters around the world contributed to this report.

Demand for jobless aid high, even as economy slowly picks up

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Unemployment remains painfully high in the U.S. even as economic activity slowly picks up.

That reality will be on display Thursday morning when the U.S. government releases data on how many workers sought unemployment benefits last week, as well as how retailers did in June.

Both reports will be closely watched as new confirmed cases of coronavirus rise in 40 states, including huge spikes in California, Texas and Florida. Surging infections threaten to slow the nascent economic recovery.

"The risk of a dip lower in the economy has increased as more states adopt policies to combat the virus spread," economists at Bank of America said in research note. "Until the country manages to get the virus under control, the recovery is likely to be one of fits and starts."

Applications for jobless aid are expected to remain stuck at the worrisome level of around 1.2 million, the 17th straight week of claims above the 1 million mark. Before the pandemic intensified in mid-March, the highest weekly figure on record was about 700,000.

Sales at retail stores and restaurants likely rose 5.4% in June, according to data provider FactSet. That would follow a record gain of nearly 18% in May as shops, restaurants and bars reopened after nationwide shutdowns in the previous months, when sales plummeted. Still, sales will likely remain sharply below their levels of a year ago. California, Florida and other states have closed down bars for a second time and barred indoor dining because cases are surging.

The impact of those new shutdowns likely won't surface until next month's job report. The other cloud hanging over the economy is the pending expiration of an extra \$600 in weekly jobless aid provided by the federal government, part of a \$2 trillion relief package approved in late March.

A new report suggests that the additional aid enabled unemployed workers to actually increase their spending above pre-pandemic levels, helping fuel the economy's rebound.

The Thursday report, by the JPMorgan Chase Institute, also concluded that the elimination of the additional benefit could force unemployed households to cut their spending by nearly 30%.

The government's employment report for June showed a solid gain of 4.8 million jobs and an unemployment rate that fell to 11.1%, from 13.3%.

But it's not clear that such a pace can be sustained. The number of employees working at small businesses declined last week, particularly in states with worsening viral outbreaks, according to data from Homebase, a company that makes scheduling and work-tracking software.

And companies continue to lay off people. American Airlines warned its workers Wednesday that it may have to cut up to 25,000 jobs in October because of sharply reduced air travel. Airlines are barred from layoffs until then as a condition of federal aid they have received. United Airlines has already told 36,000 workers they may lose their jobs.

Air traffic began to slowly rebound in mid-April, but like other parts of the economy, the improvement plateaued in July as the viral outbreak worsens.

Court clears way for federal execution of man with dementia

By MICHAEL BALSAMO and JESSICA GRESKO Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. (AP) — The Supreme Court early Thursday cleared the way for a second federal execution this week. The vote to allow the execution of Wesley Ira Purkey, said to be suffering from dementia, was 5-4, with the court's four liberal members dissenting.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor wrote that "proceeding with Purkey's execution now, despite the grave questions and factual findings regarding his mental competency, casts a shroud of constitutional doubt over the most irrevocable of injuries." She was joined by fellow liberal justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan.

But a lower court put an emergency hold on the execution for one hour as it weighed issues in the case, further delaying what initially had been slated for Wednesday evening at the Federal Correctional Complex in Terre Haute, Indiana.

Purkey was convicted of kidnapping, raping and killing a 16-year-old girl before dismembering, burning and then dumping her body in a septic pond. He also was convicted in a state court in Kansas after using a claw hammer to kill an 80-year-old woman who suffered from polio.

On Tuesday, Daniel Lewis Lee was put to death at the facility after his eleventh hour legal bids failed. It was the first federal execution after a 17-year hiatus.

Lawyers for the 68-year-old Purkey, of Kansas, argued that he has dementia and is unfit to be executed. They said his condition has deteriorated so severely that he didn't understand why he was being executed. They also said that if Purkey's execution did not take place Wednesday, the government would need to set a new date. But government lawyers said there was no obstacle to going through with the execution Thursday if the Supreme Court lifted the injunctions.

The issue of Purkey's mental health arose in the run-up to his 2003 trial and when, after the verdict, jurors had to decide whether he should be put to death in the killing of 16-year-old Jennifer Long in Kansas City, Missouri. Prosecutors said he raped and stabbed her, dismembered her with a chainsaw, burned her and dumped her ashes 200 miles (320 kilometers) away in a septic pond in Kansas. Purkey was separately convicted and sentenced to life in the beating death of 80-year-old Mary Ruth Bales, of Kansas City, Kansas, who suffered from polio.

Gresko reported from Arlington, Va. Associated Press writers Michael Tarm in Chicago and Colleen Long in Washington contributed to this report.

EU to meet face-to-face at summit to carve up \$2.1 trillion

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — There are limits to videoconferencing. When there is a lot of money at stake, people like to look each other in the eye.

So on Friday, leaders from 27 European Union nations will be meeting face-to-face for the first since February despite the dangers of the coronavirus pandemic — simply to try to carve up a potential package of 1.85 trillion euros (\$2.1 trillion) among themselves, and, just as importantly, see who will pay in the most.

In perhaps the first such major meeting of leaders since the COVID-19 outbreak hit the world, the stakes were just too high to maintain extreme social distancing.

"You can feel the mood, as it were," Germany's Europe minister, Michael Roth, said of such flesh-and-blood summits. "I wouldn't claim to be a psychologist, but I would say it really does help."

It had better since five remote video summits so far this year failed at bridging the financial gap between rival nations needing to agree on a more than 1-trillion-euro budget for the next seven years and a 750-billion-fund to allow nations to recover from the coronavirus crisis.

"It was already clear at Easter when I was calling, the first time, all the different capitals that such a decision can only be taken if the leaders, prime ministers, heads of state, meet in person in Brussels," EU Budget Commissioner Johannes Hahn said.

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French President Emmanuel Macron is already sweeping into town late Thursday, eager to get as many encounters in as possible. German Chancellor Angela Merkel holds out until the official kickoff time early Friday. Whatever happens, it will make for an EU summit unlike any other at the urn-shaped Europa headquarters.

For starters, the cozy meeting room on the top floor, where the leaders have clashed at close quarters over everything from Brexit to migration issues, will be exchanged for the prosaically-named meeting room EBS-5, where normally 330 people fit in a space of 850 square meters (9,150 square feet).

"They will be well spaced" when they go into a restricted session with barely a few delegates, deadpanned an EU official preparing the summit.

There will be no group photo of the leaders like at last December's summit because of social distancing requirements.

Often, the toughest of summits have so-called confessionals where the president of the proceedings takes one or more leaders to the side to see where they might budge. Other leaders can gather in mini-sessions to defend common regional or financial interests.

It's bound to happen again, but this time, every room which will be used at the summit center will be deep cleaned. The main summit room will only use filtered, non-recycled air.

As soon as their vehicles pull up into driveway outside the Europa building, the leaders will immediately experience the difference, officials said. Most of their delegations will be split off immediately and parked in an adjacent building. And instead of a warren of microphones and cameras seeking early comment, they will have the option to make a comment to a neutral outlet, no questions asked.

The already byzantine map of the building has been redrawn to avoid unexpected crowds and certain elevators for the leaders will be limited to a maximum capacity of two.

At the start of a session, leaders will be urged to mask themselves and respect at least 1.5 meters of distance for the informal greetings, often a moment when body language gives away how tough a summit will be. Yet if Monday's trial run of foreign ministers was anything to go by, discipline was often lacking.

Should the worst happen and a leader suddenly shows symptoms, doctors will be on site once he or she is taken out of the room. A nation can't put in a replacement, and it can only ask a friendly colleague to vote or speak in its place.

So, even if it will be a true face-to-face meeting, it will be one laden with provisos.

"It doesn't automatically mean that excellent results will be achieved and that agreement will be reached quickly," Roth said. "But after all, I am an optimist."

Others are already looking at an extended summit running even into Sunday, with another one possible within two weeks.

Four more years? Trump struggles to outline second term plan

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump is adamant that he wants another four years in office. It's less clear what he would do with them.

The Republican president repeatedly assailed Democratic rival Joe Biden during a rambling, hourlong Rose Garden news conference Tuesday that doubled as a reelection rally. But he offered few clues about what he would do if he remains in the White House. He similarly stammered through an interview last month when pressed by a friendly TV host to talk about what a second term would look like.

With the election less than four months away, Trump's focus is more on winning than on how he would govern. He's offered no substantive policy proposal, opting instead for heated rhetoric on race, crime and socialism aimed at his most loyal supporters. Biden, meanwhile, is releasing a growing number of proposals touching on topics including trade and climate change.

Trump is reshaping his campaign, announcing Wednesday that veteran GOP operative Bill Stepien will replace Brad Parscale as campaign manager. But it's unlikely the move will change Trump's preference to focus more on messaging rather than a policy agenda. Some Republicans said that reflects the challenge

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of asking voters for another term amid overlapping public health and economic crises.

"During a reelection campaign, you basically are making the argument that the status quo is really good and that the challenger is insufficient to do the job. And for more than three years, he could credibly make that argument about the economy," said Mike DuHaime, senior adviser to former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie's 2016 presidential campaign.

"The problem comes when the status quo isn't good and there is hard data — both on the economy and with COVID — that shows that," DuHaime said, referring to the coronavirus. "That makes it much harder to make an argument about the next four years."

Still, the question of what to do with four years in the White House is one of the most basic elements of a presidential campaign — even for an incumbent. Trump's challenge became apparent late last month when he struggled to answer the question during an interview with Sean Hannity of Fox News Channel.

"You know the story, riding down Pennsylvania Avenue with our first lady and I say, 'This is great,' but I didn't know very many people in Washington. It wasn't my thing. I was from Manhattan," Trump said as part of his answer, before eventually calling John Bolton, his former national security adviser, an "idiot."

Trump didn't name a single policy objective, and, in the days that followed, the messaging from the White House seemed to rely solely on the idea that because Trump presided over a strong economy once, he would be the right person to build it back. But it has yet to put forth much of a positive agenda, instead focusing on painting a dystopic picture of the nation if Biden came to power.

"There has never been an election where we've had this kind of difference" between the candidates, Trump said, before painting a bleak, crime-filled portrait of the Democrats' governing philosophy. "It's radical left, and it'll destroy our country."

His Rose Garden address on Tuesday haphazardly bounced from topic to topic, from China to statues to Biden and back again, resembling not an official government event but rather a facsimile of the campaign speech the president had wanted to give three nights earlier at a New Hampshire rally that was called off because of sparse crowds and a somewhat ominous weather forecast.

It was a display of Trump in full, an equal mix of braggadocio, grievance and vicious partisan politics. But what was missing were any specific plans to right the country's economy or improve the fortunes of its citizens.

"There's no agenda because he himself is the agenda," said presidential historian Jon Meacham. "In 2016, Trump was a vehicle; now, amid a cataclysmic pandemic that he has failed to manage, fewer people outside the core base want to hear anything other than how do we get safely back to real life. Because he has no answer to that overarching question, he just talks — about, inevitably, himself."

There have been presidential candidates in the past tripped up by the question "Why do you want to be president?" including, perhaps most notably, Ted Kennedy ahead of the 1980 election. But it is rare for an incumbent to have so little to detail as to why he should be able to keep his job.

When asked for the president's second-term agenda, the White House pointed to Trump's response to COVID-19 but offered little in the way of specifics.

"As the President continues to lead a whole-of-government response to a global pandemic, restore law and order to our communities, and rebuild the economy," said spokesperson Judd Deere, "the White House is engaged in an ongoing policy process for a bold second term agenda that continues the 'Transition to Greatness' that ensures we are a safer, stronger, more prosperous America."

White House officials also pointed to promises of better trade deals and maintaining law and order, but the lack of details gave Biden's team an opening.

"This president's inaction to get the virus under control has cost thousands of lives and millions of jobs. Why should voters continue to let him lead during this once-in-a-generation crisis?" said Biden national campaign spokesperson TJ Ducklo. "Don't ask him, he doesn't have an answer."

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/@JonLemire>.

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

The Latest: Africa CDC wants local vaccine manufacturing

By The Associated Press undefined

JOHANNESBURG — As the first wave of the coronavirus pandemic crashes across Africa, the head of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says the intellectual property from any effective vaccine should be made available for local manufacturing and swifter distribution.

John Nkengasong also told reporters that Africa's 1.3 billion people have "all kinds of differences in genetic makeup, so we want to be sure that we are participating fully" in vaccine trials.

Africa has had more than 644,000 confirmed virus cases, nearly half in South Africa alone.

Concerns are widespread that any successful vaccine will be snapped up by richer countries and that Africa will be last in line, an echo of the time when it took years for affordable HIV drugs to become available.

The Africa CDC chief said the continent has more than 80 potential clinical trial sites with the ability to enroll participants and monitor them carefully. He also warned that "we are in for a long, long journey" in this pandemic.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRUS OUTBREAK:

- China firm uses workers to 'pre-test' vaccine in global race
- Rising virus totals force rethink of bars, schools, tourism
- Coronavirus data is funneled away from CDC, sparking worries
- Infighting over the White House's handling of the coronavirus pandemic is spilling further into public view, with trade adviser Peter Navarro panning Dr. Anthony Fauci as President Donald Trump stands watch.
- Early-stage testing showed the first COVID-19 vaccine tested in the U.S. revved up people's immune systems the way scientists had hoped.
- Coronavirus cases have surged to record levels in the Los Angeles area. Health officials say the nation's most populous county is in "an alarming and dangerous phase" that if not reversed could overwhelm intensive care units and usher in more sweeping closures.

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

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

TOKYO — Confirmed coronavirus cases in Tokyo hit a new daily record with 286, raising alarm Japan may be reopening too quickly.

Tokyo Gov. Yuriko Koike says one reason for the recent rise in cases is increased testing, which numbered more than 4,000 on Thursday. She said 760 people are hospitalized, seven of them in serious condition, while more than 350 are quarantined at hotels and homes.

Separately, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe acknowledged a need to reexamine the government's tourism campaign offering discounts for traveling within Japan, set to start next week.

Abe says, "We are looking at the situation with a high level of nervousness."

Tourism is among the hardest hit in the massive fallout from the pandemic, causing the world's third largest economy to tumble into recession.

Japan has had fewer than 23,000 confirmed coronavirus cases, and about 1,000 deaths.

PARIS — New French Prime Minister Jean Castex says masks will be mandatory in closed public places as of next week, sooner than Aug. 1 as announced earlier by President Emmanuel Macron.

The change in date comes as the Mayenne area of the Loire region has seen several COVID-19 outbreaks, and authorities have recorded a marginal increase in infections in the Paris region.

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Calling the situation in Mayenne “problematic,” French Health Minister Olivier Veran said he asked the prefect of Mayenne personally to make masks compulsory in closed public places without waiting for the later date.

ISLAMABAD-- Pakistan has reported its lowest number of daily COVID-19 deaths in about a month. It recorded 40 deaths in the past 24 hours on Thursday, compared to the highest single-day toll of 153 on June 19.

Pakistan has recorded 257,914 confirmed cases, including 2,145 in the past 24 hours, and 5,426 fatalities. Until weeks ago, Pakistan had witnessed a 20% infection rate as a result of daily testing. It is now less than 10%, but authorities fear another spike if people ignore social distancing during the Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha, which will be celebrated on July 31.

MADRID — Spain is paying homage to the nation’s victims of the new coronavirus and workers who put their lives at risk during the worst of the pandemic.

Relatives of around 100 people who died, representatives of medical personnel, police and other essential workers are joining King Felipe VI and Queen Letizia, government authorities and officials from the European Union and the World Health Organization in a solemn ceremony at an esplanade in Madrid’s Royal Palace.

The guests, masked and seated in a socially distanced fashion surrounding a central cauldron, include representatives from a dozen religious organizations and ambassadors. The ceremony is being shown live on television and online.

All political parties are attending except the far-right Vox, whose leader has called the event “an exculpatory ceremony” for the left-wing ruling coalition led by Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez.

Spain has officially recorded 28,413 fatalities among some 258,000 confirmed cases, although excess mortality figures suggest the actual number is thousands higher.

CANBERRA, Australia — Australian authorities say a COVID-19 patient apparently became infectious within a day of contracting the coronavirus.

Deputy Chief Medical Officer Michael Kidd gave no details of how the patient was infected in New South Wales state or whether that patient infected anyone else before COVID-19 was diagnosed.

The Australian Health Protection Principal Committee, the country’s peak decision-making body for public health emergency, reported such a short incubation was “unusual,” but “not implausible,” Kidd said.

People usually develop symptoms within five to seven days but may become infectious a day or two before their symptoms develop, Kidd said.

A person becoming infectious within 24 hours was unlikely to be evidence of the virus changing, Kidd said. It more likely reflected differences in individual reactions to the virus, he said.

NEW DELHI — India’s virus cases have surged another 32,695, taking the nation closer to 1 million and forcing a new lockdown in the popular western beach state of Goa, two weeks after it reopened to tourists.

The new confirmed cases took the national total to 968,876. The Health Ministry on Wednesday also reported a record number of 606 deaths for a total of 24,915.

The Indian Medical Association said 99 doctors have died and another 1,302 are infected with the coronavirus. It called for shortening of working hours for health workers following safety concerns.

It also said the fatality rate among doctors was 7.6%, much high than the national average of about 2.5%.

About a dozen states, including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam, have put high-risk areas under lockdowns, allowing only essential food supplies and health services.

Goa state’s top elected official, Pramod Sawant, announced a three-day lockdown and a night curfew in the popular backpacking tourist destination, beginning Thursday night.

He said people were flouting social distancing norms. Nearly 40,000 were fined 100 rupees (\$1.3) each

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in the past two weeks for not wearing masks.

SAN FRANCISCO — San Francisco and Sacramento have become the latest cities in California to announce that public school students will not return to classrooms when the new term begins because of surges in coronavirus cases and delays in getting test results back.

They join Los Angeles and San Diego, the state's two largest districts. Also not reopening are schools in Oakland, Long Beach, Santa Ana, San Bernardino and others that have chosen to start the new term with digital learning amid strong concerns from teachers unions and public health officials about the safety of staff on school campuses.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tony Thurmond says he expects more districts to announce plans for distance learning.

MELBOURNE, Australia — Australia's coronavirus hot spot — Victoria state — is reporting a record 317 newly confirmed cases in a day.

The tally for Thursday surpassed the state's previous high of 288 on July 10. The previous one-day Australian record was 212 cases set March 28 by New South Wales state at the first peak of the pandemic. New South Wales reported only 10 new cases Thursday.

Two men in their 80s died in Victoria in the last 24 hours, bringing the national death toll for the pandemic to 113.

Victoria's government is reducing the number of non-urgent surgeries allowed in hospitals to increase beds available for COVID-19 patients. State officials had planned to restore hospitals to normal medical services by the end of July before infections began to rise in recent weeks.

Victoria Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton says of the latest case load: "It's a big number. It needs to turn around."

SEOUL, South Korea -- South Korea has reported 61 new confirmed cases of the coronavirus, most of them tied to international arrivals.

The tally reported Thursday by the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention raised the country's caseload to 13,612 during the pandemic, including 291 deaths. The center says 12,396 people have been released from hospitals while 925 remain in treatment.

Officials say 47 of the new cases involved people arriving from overseas. South Korea has been requiring two-week quarantines on all passengers arriving from abroad since April. This week, it began requiring foreign nationals arriving from Bangladesh, Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan to provide health certificates proving they have tested negative for the coronavirus.

HARRISBURG, Pa. — Pennsylvania is imposing broad new statewide restrictions on bars and restaurants and larger indoor gatherings amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Gov. Tom Wolf said Wednesday there has been an "alarming escalation" in new infections.

Nightclubs will be shut down, bars must close unless they also offer dine-in meals, and bars and restaurants will be limited to 25% capacity under Wolf's order that takes effect Thursday. The order also requires businesses to have their employees work from home to the extent possible.

The new restrictions come more than two months after Pennsylvania began reopening its pandemic-battered economy and they risk major backlash in large swaths of the state where COVID-19 has largely been kept at bay.

But Wolf warns that a "new surge is in the offing" that could eclipse what happened in the spring, when the virus killed thousands and sickened tens of thousands of Pennsylvanians. **CHEYENNE, Wyo.** -- Wyoming's governor and top public health officer are speaking out firmly in support of wearing face masks in public amid an accelerating spread of the coronavirus and doubt among some that masks are necessary.

Gov. Mark Gordon said Wednesday that it is important to be "conscientious to one another" and that "there is no constitutional right to go infect somebody else." Gordon had a face mask hanging around his

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neck during the news conference.

The governor blamed a "casual attitude" about mask wearing and social distancing for Wyoming's growing number of cases and his recent decisions to extend health orders affecting public gatherings through July.

JACKSON, Miss. — Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves says he may set restrictions on bars in hopes of slowing the spread of the coronavirus, but he isn't revealing any timetable and hasn't indicated if the rules will be statewide.

The governor commented Wednesday after meeting with Dr. Deborah Birx from the White House coronavirus task force. Reeves says Birx praised the Mississippi order that took effect this week requiring people to wear masks in public in 13 of the state's 82 counties.

The Mississippi Health Department reported that a record 1,099 people were hospitalized with confirmed or suspected cases of the coronavirus in the state as of Tuesday evening. That is up from 664 on June 22. Mississippi has had more than 38,500 confirmed cases of the virus since the pandemic began.

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — California has reported its second-highest daily total of new coronavirus cases and equaled its second worst day for deaths.

More than 11,000 new cases were recorded by state officials Tuesday, a rise of 3.3%. California also recorded 140 deaths, tying a recent tally for its second-highest daily figure.

The number of tests and the rate of those testing positive also rose. The positivity rate over the past two weeks has now topped 7%, while in hard-hit Los Angeles County with a quarter of California's population that rate has soared to nearly 10%.

Public Health Director Barbara Ferrer said Wednesday that Los Angeles County is in "an alarming and dangerous phase" that could overwhelm intensive care units and prompt sweeping closure orders if not reversed.

LAS VEGAS -- Several Las Vegas casinos are limiting smoking to keep patrons from removing the protective face masks they are required to wear.

Las Vegas Sands Corp. in mid-June updated its policy to ask that table game players and spectators do not smoke or vape in its Venetian and Palazzo resorts. Wynn Resorts Ltd. has designated any table games without a plexiglass barrier as nonsmoking areas inside its Wynn and Encore casinos on the Las Vegas Strip.

Nevada on Wednesday reported 849 new cases of COVID-19, a decline from a day earlier, when the state set a new daily high of 1,104 cases.

SPOKANE, Wash. — A federal judge has rejected a water park's challenge to Washington Gov. Jay Inslee's emergency powers as the state responds to the coronavirus pandemic.

The Slidewaters water park in Chelan sued the governor and the Department of Labor Industries last month, arguing that Inslee abused his power in declaring the emergency and that the state's restrictions were likely to prevent it from opening for the summer.

Slidewaters nevertheless opened on June 20 and has remained in operation despite the threat of \$10,000 or more in fines from the state.

In ruling against the park Wednesday, U.S. District Judge Thomas Rice in Spokane returned the case to Chelan County Superior Court for consideration of the state's counterclaims seeking an order to close Slidewaters.

India virus cases surge nearly 32,700, beach state shut anew

ASHOK SHARMA Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's virus cases surged another 32,695 as of Thursday, taking the nation closer to 1 million and forcing a new lockdown in the popular western beach state of Goa two weeks after it was reopened to tourists.

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The new confirmed cases took the national total to 968,876. The Health Ministry also reported a record number of 606 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities up to 24,915.

The actual numbers, like elsewhere in the world, are thought to be far higher due to a number of reasons including limited testing.

The Indian Medical Association, a voluntary organization of Indian doctors, said 99 doctors have died and another 1,302 are infected with the coronavirus. It called for shortening of working hours for health workers following safety concerns.

It also said the fatality rate among doctors was 7.6%, much higher than the national average of about 2.5%.

About a dozen states, including Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Assam, have put high-risk areas under lockdowns, only allowing essential food supplies and health services.

Goa state's top elected official, Pramod Sawant, announced a three-day lockdown and a night curfew in the popular backpacking tourist destination, beginning Thursday night.

He said people were flouting social distancing norms. Nearly 40,000 people were fined 100 rupees (\$1.3) each in the past two weeks for not wearing masks.

A two-week lockdown also started Thursday in the eastern state of Bihar, with a population of 128 million and a fragile health system. Bihar is reporting over 1,000 cases a day despite limited testing.

The initial boost that India's economy received in June after the nationwide lockdown was relaxed is being jeopardized by the localized lockdowns in high-risk areas, experts say.

India's minister for small and medium businesses, Nitin Gadkari, said last week that experts were predicting a loss of \$133.3 billion in the next year.

The Health Ministry said the recovery rate has climbed to 63.24% and the increase in recovered cases is driven by aggressive testing, timely diagnosis and effective management of patients either through supervised home isolation or hospital care.

It also said that India followed WHO guidelines of 140 tests per day per 1 million people.

Dr. Ashish Jha, director of the Harvard Global Health Institute, said that with new cases accelerating, India's strategy must focus on keeping numbers as low as possible and saving as many lives as it can.

Experts say Twitter breach troubling, undermines trust

By ZEN SOO AP Technology Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — A breach in Twitter's security that allowed hackers to break into the accounts of leaders and technology moguls is one of the worst attacks in recent years and may shake trust in a platform politicians and CEOs use to communicate with the public, experts said Thursday.

The ruse discovered Wednesday included bogus tweets from Barack Obama, Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and a number of tech billionaires including Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. Celebrities Kanye West and his wife, Kim Kardashian West, were also hacked.

Hackers used social engineering to target some of Twitter's employees and then gained access to the high-profile accounts. The attackers sent out tweets from the accounts of the public figures, offering to send \$2,000 for every \$1,000 sent to an anonymous Bitcoin address.

Cybersecurity experts say such a breach could have dire consequences since the attackers were tweeting from verified, globally influential accounts with millions of followers.

"If you receive a tweet from a verified account, belonging to a well-known and therefore trusted person, you can no longer assume it's really from them," said Michael Gazeley, managing director of cybersecurity firm Network Box.

Reacting to the breach, Twitter swiftly deleted the tweets and locked down the accounts to investigate. In the process it prevented verified users from sending out tweets for several hours.

The company said Thursday it has taken "significant steps to limit access to internal systems and tools."

Many celebrities, politicians and business leaders often use Twitter as a public platform to make statements. U.S. President Donald Trump, for example, regularly uses Twitter to post about national and geopolitical matters, and his account is closely followed by media, analysts and governments around the world.

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Twitter faces an uphill battle in regaining people's confidence, Gazeley said. For a start, it needs to figure out exactly the accounts were hacked and show the vulnerabilities have been fixed, he said.

"If key employees at Twitter were tricked, that's actually a serious cybersecurity problem in itself," he said. "How can one of the world's most used social media platforms have such weak security, from a human perspective?"

Rachel Tobac, CEO of Socialproof Security, said that the breach appeared to be largely financially motivated. But such an attack could cause more serious consequences.

"Can you imagine if they had taken over a world leader's account, and tweeted out a threat of violence to another country's leader?" asked Tobac, a social engineering hacker who specializes in providing training for companies to protect themselves from such breaches.

Social engineering attacks typically target human weaknesses to exploit networks and online platforms. Companies can guard themselves against such attacks by beefing up multi-factor authentication -- where users have to present multiple pieces of evidence as authentication before being allowed to log into a system, Tobac said.

Such a process could include having a physical token that an employee must have with them, on top of a password, before they can log into a corporate or other private system. Other methods include installing technical tools to monitor for suspicious insider activities and reducing the number of people who have access to an administrative panel, Tobac said.

U.S. Sen. Josh Hawley called on Twitter to co-operate with authorities including the Department of Justice and the FBI to secure the site.

"I am concerned that this event may represent not merely a coordinated set of separate hacking incidents but rather a successful attack on the security of Twitter itself," he said.

He added that millions of users relied on Twitter not just to send tweets but also communicate privately via direct messaging.

"A successful attack on your system's servers represents a threat to all of your users' privacy and data security," said Hawley.

Statue of Black UK protester removed from plinth in Bristol

By JO KEARNEY and JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

BRISTOL, England (AP) — Officials in the English city of Bristol on Thursday removed a statue of a Black Lives Matter activist that was installed on a plinth once occupied by a monument to a 17th-century slave trader.

Artist Marc Quinn created the resin and steel likeness of Jen Reid, a protester photographed standing on the plinth after demonstrators pulled down the statue of Edward Colston and dumped it in Bristol's harbor on June 7.

It was erected before dawn on Wednesday without the approval of city authorities, but 24 hours later it was gone.

Bristol City Council said the sculpture "will be held at our museum for the artist to collect or donate to our collection."

Colston was a trader who made a fortune transporting enslaved Africans across the Atlantic to the Americas on Bristol-based ships. His money funded schools and charities in Bristol, 120 miles (195 kilometers) southwest of London.

The toppling of his statue was part of a worldwide reckoning with racism and slavery sparked by the death of a Black American man, George Floyd, at the hands of police in Minneapolis in May.

City authorities fished the Colston statue out of the harbor and say it will be placed in a museum, along with placards from the Black Lives Matter demonstration.

Bristol Mayor Marvin Rees said the decision about what replaces it must be made by the people of Bristol. "This is not about taking down a statue of Jen, who is a very impressive woman," Rees told the BBC. "This is about taking down a statue of a London-based artist who came and put it up without permission."

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The speed with which events transpired disappointed people who had heard about the new statue and wanted to see it. Activist Deasy Bamford alluded to the long dispute over the presence of the Colston statue in expressing her exasperation over the new work's quick exit.

"It took them 35 years to do nothing and 24 hours to do something," Bamford said. "That says something, However I understand that they are playing a role so hopefully that statue will go somewhere in another iconic spot where everyone will see it where there is a proper plaque which explains exactly why it was put up and it belongs to Bristol."

Jill Lawless reported from London.

US prison populations down 8% amid coronavirus outbreak

By DAMINI SHARMA and WEIHUA LI of The Marshall Project and DENISE LAVOIE and CLAUDIA LAUER of The Associated Press undefined

RICHMOND, Va. (AP) — Stephanie Parris was finishing a two-year prison sentence for a probation violation when she heard she'd be going home three weeks early because of COVID-19.

It made her feel bad to leave when she had so few days left at the Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women. She said she wasn't sick and there were no cases at the facility. But there were others still inside who could have used the reprieve.

"I would have helped someone who had nine or 10 months, someone who absolutely needed it," she said recently. "There was a lady in there who was very elderly, and she has very bad health problems. I would have given my place to her."

There has been a major drop in the number of people behind bars in the U.S. Between March and June, more than 100,000 people were released from state and federal prisons, a decrease of 8%, according to a nationwide analysis by The Marshall Project and The Associated Press. The drops range from 2% in Virginia to 32% in Rhode Island. By comparison, the state and federal prison population decreased by 2.2% in all of 2019, according to a report on prison populations by the Vera Institute of Justice.

But this year's decrease has not come because of efforts to release vulnerable prisoners for health reasons and to manage the spread of the virus raging in prisons, according to detailed data from eight states compiled by The Marshall Project and AP. Instead, head counts have dropped largely because prisons stopped accepting new prisoners from county jails to avoid importing the virus, court closures meant fewer people were receiving sentences and parole officers sent fewer people back inside for low-level violations, according to data and experts. So the number could rise again once those wheels begin moving despite the virus.

This story is a collaboration between The Associated Press and The Marshall Project exploring the state of the prison system in the coronavirus pandemic. Damini Sharma and Weihua Li reported for The Marshall Project.

In Virginia, about 250 prisoners were released as corrections officials scrambled to minimize the spread of the virus, accounting for less than half of the decrease in population in that state between March and June, the news organizations found.

In California, Gov. Gavin Newsom last week ordered the release of up to 8,000 people by the end of August after a series of coronavirus outbreaks in the state's prisons. Between mid-March and mid-June, California's prison population dropped by more than 7,000, less than half of which can be attributed to an earlier decision by the state to let vulnerable prisoners out early.

More than 57,000 prisoners have tested positive for the coronavirus in facilities across the country since the outbreak began. Of those, at least 34,000 have recovered, and at least 651 have died, the data showed. Over 12,400 infections have been reported among staff, including 46 deaths.

Experts and advocates said whether the public perceives a public safety threat from people who are

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released early because of COVID-19 is likely to affect the larger criminal justice reform movement, especially the push to decrease prison populations.

While many people may be qualified for early releases, very few actually got out. In April, Pennsylvania launched a temporary reprieve program, allowing the state's corrections department to send people home under the condition that they return to finish their sentences once the pandemic passes. The governor's office predicted more than 1,500 would be eligible for release.

So far, the state's corrections department has recommended 1,200 people for reprieves, but the application process is slow and tedious, said Bret Bucklen, the department's research director. Each application needs approval from the governor, the secretary of corrections and the assistant district attorney who oversaw the initial conviction.

Nearly three months later, fewer than 160 people have been released through the reprieve program, while Pennsylvania's total prison population dropped by 2,800.

As in Pennsylvania, data from states such as North Carolina, Illinois and New Jersey shows coronavirus releases only account for less than one-third of the decrease in prison population, which suggests something else is driving the drop. According to Martin Horn, professor emeritus at John Jay College of Criminal Justice and a former corrections commissioner for New York City, the pandemic has slowed the entire criminal justice system, which means fewer people are going to prisons.

Before the pandemic, parolees were required to meet with their parole officers in person. For the last four months, those meetings have mostly been by phone, and people on parole are under less scrutiny and less likely to be returned to prison for violating the rules right now, Horn said.

Even many who have been sentenced for crimes are not being transferred to state prisons. In North Carolina, the courts enacted a two-month moratorium on accepting newly sentenced individuals into prisons. By the time the moratorium was lifted in May, about 1,800 people were in county jails awaiting transfer to state prisons, said John Bull, a spokesman for North Carolina's Department of Public Safety.

Whether prison populations rise once the pandemic eases will depend in part on how the public perceives people who are released early now, said Wanda Bertram, spokeswoman for the Prison Policy Initiative, a nonpartisan think tank that focuses on mass incarceration.

For example, if people leaving prison have little support and end up homeless, Bertram said she fears they may be more likely to get arrested for things like sleeping on the street, and the community may in turn associate early releases with more crime.

Garland King, who will turn 78 in a few weeks, spent 12 years in a North Carolina prison for shooting and killing his son-in-law during an argument. Like many older prisoners, he has mounting medical issues, including asthma and arthritis.

King was scheduled to be released in June, but on April 17 he became one of almost 500 prisoners who were let go early for good behavior. Since his wife died two years ago, he needed to find housing and apply for social services. He fretted over everything so much that he barely ate in the days leading to his freedom and nearly had a medical crisis as a result. He eventually found housing through a community health program in Durham, North Carolina.

Nazgol Ghandnoosh, a senior research analyst at the Sentencing Project, a group that advocates for sentencing reform, said that while the prison population decreases are a step in the right direction, she is disappointed by the numbers. Even if the COVID-19 release policies work as intended, they might not lower the prison population enough because states often exclude violent offenders from such releases, Ghandnoosh said.

"Even though we are sending too many people to prison and keeping them there too long, and even though research shows people who are older have the highest risk from COVID-19 and the lowest risk of recidivism, we are still not letting them out," Ghandnoosh said.

Lauer reported from Philadelphia. Sharma reported from Mountainview, California, and Li from Stamford, Connecticut.

Pompeo downplays possibility of summit with North Korea

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo downplayed the possibility of another summit between President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un before the U.S. presidential election, saying Trump would only want to engage if there were real prospects of progress.

South Korean President Moon Jae-in, who has called for another Trump-Kim meeting ahead of the election in November, acknowledged Thursday that U.S. and South Korean relations with North Korea were still like “walking on ice” after two years of high-stakes summitry.

During a parliamentary speech, Moon urged North Korea to return to inter-Korean dialogue, which has also stalled, and called for South Korean lawmakers to support government policies aimed at reviving cross-border cooperation. He made no direct comment on the prospects for U.S.-North Korea talks.

Pompeo’s comments during a forum in Washington on Wednesday followed repeated North Korean statements insisting it would no longer gift Trump high-profile meetings he could boast as foreign policy achievements when it’s not being substantially rewarded in return.

“The North Koreans have given mixed signals, but the truth is President Trump only wants to engage in a summit if we believe there’s a sufficient likelihood that we can make real progress in achieving the outcomes that were set forth in Singapore,” Pompeo said during the event hosted by The Hill, referring to the first Trump-Kim summit in June 2018.

“You need to have a willing partner, and the North Koreans have chosen at this point in time not to engage in a way that can lead to a potential solution. We hope they’ll change their mind.”

Trump and Kim have met three times since embarking on high-stakes nuclear diplomacy in 2018, beginning with their meeting in Singapore where they issued vague vows for a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula without describing when and how it would occur.

But negotiations have faltered since their second summit in February 2019, where the Americans rejected North Korean demands for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capability.

Some analysts believe North Korea will avoid serious talks with the Americans for now before attempting an eventual return to negotiations after the U.S. election. They say North Korea likely doesn’t want to make any major commitments or concessions when there is a chance U.S. leadership could change.

But others say another Trump-Kim meeting wouldn’t be impossible. Trump could opt for something dramatic to improve his sliding poll numbers while Kim could see a window of opportunity closing with a Trump presidency and attempt a quick exchange between reversible denuclearization steps and hard-to-reverse sanctions relief.

Amid the stalled negotiations the Trump administration, North Korea has been ramping up pressure on the South, cutting off virtually all bilateral cooperation and blowing up an inter-Korean liaison office in its territory last month.

The made-for-TV demolition followed months of North Korean frustration over Seoul’s unwillingness to defy U.S.-led sanctions and restart joint economic projects that would help revive the North’s broken economy.

In a statement last week, Kim Yo Jong, the powerful sister of the North Korean leader, said she doesn’t expect another summit with the United States this year, insisting that such a meeting would be “unpractical” for the North.

But she also said “you never know,” saying that a meeting would depend on the determination of the two leaders, and called for major concessions from Washington to keep alive the nuclear diplomacy.

The prolonged stalemate in nuclear talks have raised doubts on whether Kim Jong Un would ever agree to fully relinquish the weapons he likely sees as his strongest guarantee of survival. Some experts see him as trying to shape the diplomacy as an arms reduction negotiation between nuclear states rather than talks that would culminate in a surrender of his nuclear program.

Analysis: Risks grow after blast hits Iran's nuclear program

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A mysterious explosion and fire at Iran's main nuclear facility may have stopped Tehran from building advanced centrifuges, but it likely has not slowed the Islamic Republic in growing its ever-increasing stockpile of low-enriched uranium.

Limiting that stockpile represented one of the main tenets of the nuclear deal that world powers reached with Iran five years ago this week — an accord which now lies in tatters after President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from it two years ago.

The larger that stockpile grows, the shorter the so-called "breakout time" becomes — time that Iran would need to build a nuclear weapon if it chooses to do so. And while Tehran insists its atomic program is for peaceful purposes, it has renewed threats to withdraw from a key nonproliferation treaty as the U.S. tries to extend a U.N. arms embargo on Iran due to expire in October.

All this raises the risk of further confrontation in the months ahead.

Iranian officials likely recognized that as they realized the scope of the July 2 blast at the Natanz compound in Iran's central Isfahan province. They initially downplayed the fire, describing the site as a "shed" even as analysts immediately told The Associated Press that the blast struck Natanz's new advanced centrifuge assembly facility.

Days later, Iran acknowledged the fire struck that facility and raised the possibility of sabotage at the site, which was earlier targeted by the Stuxnet computer virus. Still, it has been careful not to directly blame the U.S. or Israel, whose officials heavily hinted they had a hand in the fire. A claim of responsibility for the attack only raised suspicions of a foreign influence in the blast.

A direct accusation by Tehran would increase the pressure on Iran's Shiite theocracy to respond, something it apparently does not want to do yet.

The explosion and fire, however, did not strike Natanz's underground centrifuge halls. That's where thousands of first-generation gas centrifuges still spin, enriching uranium up to 4.5% purity. Meanwhile, enrichment also has resumed at Iran's Fordo nuclear facility, built deep inside a mountain to protect it from potential airstrikes. Iran continues to experiment with previously built advanced centrifuges as well.

The explosion "at Natanz was above all a blow to Iran's plans to move on to more advanced stages in its nuclear project," wrote Sima Shine, the head of the Iran program at the Institute for National Security Studies in Israel who once worked in the country's Mossad intelligence service.

Shine cautioned: "However, it will not prevent Iran's continued accumulation of enriched uranium, underway since Iran began its gradual violations of the nuclear agreement."

As of June, the International Atomic Energy Agency said Iran had over 1,500 kilograms (3,300 pounds) of low-enriched uranium. The 2015 accord limited Iran to having only 300 kilograms (661 pounds) of uranium enriched to only 3.67%, far below weapons-grade levels of 90%.

Now at 1,500 kilograms, Iran has enough material for a single nuclear weapon if it decides to pursue one. However, that stockpile still is far less than in the days before the 2015 deal, when Tehran had enough for over a dozen bombs and chose not to weaponize its stockpile.

Iran would also need to further enrich that uranium, which would draw the attention of international inspectors still able to access its atomic facilities. And it would still need to build a bomb. But the "breakout time" Iran would require to assemble a weapon — estimated to be at least a year under the 2015 deal — has narrowed.

All this comes after a series of incidents last year culminated in a U.S. drone strike that killed a top Iranian general in Baghdad in January, followed by a retaliatory Iranian ballistic missile attack targeting American troops in Iraq. Those tensions remain even today as the coronavirus pandemic engulfs both the U.S. and Iran.

Iran has already signaled willingness to use its nuclear program as a lever as a longstanding United Nations arms embargo on Tehran is set to expire in October. That ban has barred Iran since 2010 from buying major foreign weapon systems such as fighter jets and tanks.

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Iran has threatened to expel IAEA inspectors and withdraw from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty amid the U.S. pressure campaign. North Korea, which now has nuclear weapons, is the only country to ever withdraw from the treaty.

Expelling IAEA inspectors and potentially shutting down their cameras now watching Iranian nuclear facilities would blind them from being able to see if Iran pushes its uranium enrichment closer to weapons-grade levels. But that also could see Iran alienate China and Russia, which have both urged all parties to remain in the nuclear deal.

The U.S. hopes to extend the embargo, calling Iranian threats over it being renewed a "mafia tactic." But Washington has issued its own threats, claiming it could invoke the "snapback" of all U.N. sanctions on Iran that were eased under nuclear deal unless the embargo is prolonged — despite having left the atomic accord.

As Trump campaigns ahead of a November election, he may be more willing to take those risks to highlight that he followed through on his 2016 campaign promise to pull out of the Iran nuclear deal and take a harder line on Tehran.

The Islamic Republic in turn may be more willing to take risks as well.

"The U.S. diplomatic campaign, as well as suspected Israeli sabotage and continued attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq, will raise overall tension with Iran and introduce new uncertainty into the calculations of the Iranian leadership," the Eurasia Group warned in an analysis on Tuesday. "That could induce Iran to take more risky action in the nuclear realm, or retaliate for ... snapback in Iraq or the region."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jon Gambrell, the news director for the Gulf and Iran for The Associated Press, has reported from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iran and other locations across the world since joining the AP in 2006. Follow him on Twitter at www.twitter.com/jongambrellap.

Minorities under attack as PM pushes 'tolerant' Pakistan

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

PESHAWAR, Pakistan (AP) — It's been a tough month for religious minorities in Pakistan, and observers warn of even tougher times ahead as Prime Minister Imran Khan vacillates between trying to forge a pluralistic nation and his conservative Islamic beliefs.

A Christian was gunned down because he rented in a Muslim neighborhood in northwest Peshawar, not far from the border with Afghanistan.

Another Christian, pastor Haroon Sadiq Cheeda, his wife and 12-year-old son were beaten by their Muslim neighbors in eastern Punjab and told to leave their village. The attackers screamed "you are infidels."

An opposition politician was charged this week with blasphemy after declaring all religions were equal. A senior political figure, allied with the government and backed by Islamic extremists, stopped construction of a Hindu temple in the capital Islamabad.

Analysts and activists blame an increase in attacks on an indecisive Khan. They say he preaches a vision of a tolerant Pakistan where its religious minorities thrive as equals among an overwhelming Muslim majority. They say that at the same time he cedes power to extreme Islamic clerics, bowing to their demands and turning to them for the final say, even on matters of state.

"Imran Khan no doubt wants a more tolerant Pakistan, wants more accommodation for minorities, but the problem is he nullifies all of this by empowering extremist elements, so much so that it seems they can dictate to the state," said Zahid Hussain, analyst and author of two books that track militancy in the region.

Phone and text messages left with Khan's spokesman were not immediately returned.

The spokesman for Khan's religious affairs ministry, Imran Siddiqui, dismissed complaints that minorities have reason to be concerned. He said in every religion there are "aggressive" clerics but neither Pakistan nor the prime minister were unduly pressured by them.

Still, Khan's list of concessions to the radical religious is lengthy.

When the coronavirus first emerged as a threat, Khan refused to shut down a gathering of tens of

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thousands of Islamic missionaries from across the globe. It wasn't until they had reached Pakistan that he ordered it canceled.

When Saudi Arabia closed its mosques and made the historic decision to cancel the Islamic pilgrimage of Hajj to the faithful outside its borders, Pakistan refused to close its mosques after religious clerics vowed to take to the streets.

Khan hadn't been in office more than a few months when he buckled to extremists and fired a minority Ahmadi Muslim from his economic commission despite his stellar qualifications.

He also drew criticism when he stood in Parliament earlier this month and called 9/11 mastermind Osama bin Laden a "martyr." A frequent guest to Khan's residence in Islamabad is cleric Maulana Tariq Jameel, who on national TV blamed the pandemic on women who danced and dressed scantily.

When his political ally and speaker of the Punjab Provincial Parliament Pervez Elahi denounced the construction of a Hindu temple in the federal capital as being against Islam, Khan turned to the Council of Islamic Ideology to let it decide if public money can be used for its construction. Khan had promised \$600,000 for its construction.

Khan isn't the first politician to walk a religious tightrope in Pakistan. Successive military and democratically elected governments have buckled to the pressure of Islamic extremists, who critics say terrorize with their ability to bring impassioned mobs on to the street.

"It's the fear of the establishment as to what they can do. They can cause mayhem across Pakistan," said human rights activist Tahira Abdullah.

Khan, like governments before him, has tried to present an image of Pakistan as a country that protects its minorities. He even allowed visa-free access for Sikhs from enemy India to visit one of their holiest of sites in Pakistan.

But Amir Rana, executive director with the Islamabad-based Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies, said the initiatives have been mostly symbolic, not structural.

"They don't have the political courage or political capital to challenge the radical religious elements who target the religious minorities," said Rana.

Fear haunts the family of Nadeem Jordan, the Christian man who was shot and killed because he rented in a Muslim neighborhood in Peshawar. Investigators say the gunmen have fled but also say they stalk Nadeem's family, threatening his brother-in-law.

"They say 'we will teach you a lesson.' They say 'you don't belong here.' We are always afraid," said Nadeem's mother-in-law, Elizabeth Lal. She was shot in the arm during the attack in early June. Her left arm is shattered, with the bullet still lodged in her limb.

Pastor Cheeda, who was beaten along with his wife and son, alleges that a large parcel of land on which he was going to build a Christian school was stolen with the help of local police. The powerful in the village said Christians weren't welcome there.

"We have sympathies of some local Muslims, but these people are so powerful that even local Muslims can't dare to help us."

In the case of the Hindu temple, fatwas were issued and extremists took to social media to warn the faithful that it would be blasphemy to support the temple.

Yet a council of clerics stood in support of the temple giving Lal Malhi, a Hindu minority Parliamentarian with Khan's Pakistan Insaaf (Justice) party solace, even as the temple walls lie in ruins, destroyed by extremists.

But the most vulnerable of Pakistan's minorities are Ahmadis, They are reviled by many mainstream Muslims because they believe a prophet after Muhammad arrived more than 100 years ago by the name of Ahmad. In Pakistan it is illegal for Ahmadis to call themselves Muslim.

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom declared Pakistan a "country of particular concern" in its 2020 report released last month because of its treatment of minorities.

The report said Pakistan would have to end a ban on texts and publications of Ahmadis if it wants to get off the commission's watch list as well as re-examine the cases of many non-Muslims and Muslims

facing blasphemy charges.

Nadine Maenza, a commission member, said Pakistan "still has a long way to go toward reaching the prime minister's stated vision of a more tolerant Pakistan."

Associated Press writers Asim Tanvir in Multan, Pakistan; Munir Ahmed in Islamabad and Riaz Khan in Peshawar, Pakistan contributed to this report.

China becomes first economy to grow since virus pandemic

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — China became the first major economy to grow since the start of the coronavirus pandemic, recording an unexpectedly strong 3.2% expansion in the latest quarter after anti-virus lockdowns were lifted and factories and stores reopened.

Growth reported Thursday for the three months ending in June was a dramatic improvement over the previous quarter's 6.8% contraction — China's worst performance since at least the mid-1960s. But it still was the weakest positive figure since China started reporting quarterly growth in the early 1990s.

"We expect to see continuous improvement in the upcoming quarters," said Marcella Chow of JP Morgan Asset Management in a report.

China, where the coronavirus pandemic began in December, was the first economy to shut down and the first to start the drawn-out process of recovery in March after the ruling Communist Party declared the disease under control.

"The national economy shifted from slowing down to rising in the first half of 2020," the National Bureau of Statistics said in a statement.

Asian financial markets fell despite the show of strength by the region's biggest economy as investor enthusiasm following announcements about research into a possible coronavirus vaccine receded.

China's market benchmark, the Shanghai Composite Index, was down 1.4% at midday. In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 lost 0.7%. Hong Kong's Hang Seng declined 1.4% and the Kospi in South Korea fell 0.8%.

Economists say China is likely to recover faster than some other major economies due to the ruling Communist Party's decision to impose the most intensive anti-disease measures in history. Those cut off most access to cities with a total of 60 million people and suspended trade and travel — steps later imitated by some Asian and European governments as the virus spread.

Manufacturing and some other industries are almost back to normal. But consumer spending is weak due to fear of possible job losses. Cinemas and some other businesses still are closed and restrictions on travel stay in place.

"The pandemic is creating winners and losers," said Bill Adams of PNC Financial Services Group in a report. "Manufacturing is leading China's recovery."

In light of the latest data, Chinese leaders are "likely to keep the current policy stance largely unchanged," said Larry Hu and Xinyu Ji of Macquarie Capital in a report.

The International Monetary Fund is forecasting China's growth at 1% this year. That would be the weakest since the 1960s but better than the Fund's outlook for an 8% contraction in U.S. output and a 4.9% decline for the world.

Private sector analysts say as much as 30% of China's urban workforce, or as many as 130 million people, may have lost their jobs at least temporarily. They say as many as 25 million jobs might be lost for good this year.

The ruling party promised in May to spend \$280 billion on meeting goals including creating 9 million new jobs. But it has avoided joining the United States and Japan in rolling out relief packages of \$1 trillion or more due to concern about adding to already high Chinese debt.

China has reported 4,634 coronavirus deaths and 83,611 cases. No domestically transmitted cases have been reported since an outbreak in Beijing that infected more than 330 people before it faded early this month.

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On Tuesday, the government eased some curbs on domestic tourism after China reported no new locally acquired infections in nine days. The Ministry of Culture and Tourism said tourist sites can allow 50% of their daily visitor capacity, up from 30%, and tours from one province to another can resume.

In the three months ending in June, factory output rose 4.4%, rebounding from the previous quarter's 8.4% contraction after factories that make the world's smartphones, shoes, toys and other goods reopened.

Retail sales shrank by 3.9%, but that was a marked improvement over the previous quarter's 19% contraction while millions of families were confined to their homes and shopping malls were shut down. Online retail sales rose 14.3%, up from the previous quarter's 5.9%.

June exports grew by an unexpectedly strong 0.4% but still are off 3% for the first half of the year. Imports rose 3% — including a 10.6% jump in purchases of U.S. goods despite a tariff war — but are down 3.3% so far this year.

Forecasters warn exporters are likely to face another decline in demand as sales of masks and other medical supplies taper off and U.S. and European retailers cancel orders.

"This suggests sustained pressure on employment, currently the government's foremost policy priority," said JP Morgan's Chow.

A potential stumbling block is worsening relations with the United States, China's biggest national export market, over disputes about trade, technology, human rights and Hong Kong.

The two governments signed an agreement in January to postpone further tariff hikes in their fight over Beijing's technology ambitions and trade surplus. But most increases already imposed remained in place.

"The darkest moment is behind us, but given the huge uncertainties from the COVID-19 and the global economy, it's too early to say that China is out of the woods," said Macquarie's Hu and Ji.

National Bureau of Statistics (in Chinese): www.stats.gov.cn

Stacked chairs a symbol of California reclosing amid virus

By JAE C. HONG Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — When restaurants and bars began reopening in California after a stay-at-home order, employees took down caution tape, hung "Welcome Back" signs and placed chairs neatly around tables in preparation for customers.

Hair salons and stores also started to open their doors, as people began to claw back some normalcy.

Then the virus surged again. The yellow tape went back up. The signs came down. And the chairs were again stacked up.

All those chairs — piled up, roped off, flipped on top of tables — are a symbol of the return to anti-virus restrictions in the state.

California, which imposed the nation's first statewide stay-at-home order in March, initially successfully managed the virus. Gov. Gavin Newsom moved quickly to reopen the economy in May. But then confirmed cases and hospitalizations began skyrocketing, and restrictions began mounting again. This week, Newsom shut bars and banned inside restaurant dining throughout the state; indoor religious services, gyms and hair and nail salons are also now off-limits in most places.

Now, through the window of a restaurant in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles, chairs can be seen flipped over on top of tables. At a food court in the same neighborhood, yellow-and-blue caution tape is draped over tables and chairs.

Seats in the waiting area at the city's Union Station are pushed up against the wall and roped off. In a condominium complex in La Habra, poolside chairs are stacked and covered with plastic.

In the open: White House advisers tussle over virus response

By JILL COLVIN and ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Infighting over the White House's handling of the coronavirus pandemic is spilling further into public view, with trade adviser Peter Navarro panning Dr. Anthony Fauci as President Donald

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Trump stands watch.

Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, called the criticism "nonsense" and "a bit bizarre."

The long-simmering tiff escalated when Navarro wrote an op-ed in USA Today skewering Fauci, writing that the doctor "has been wrong about everything I have interacted with him on. ... So when you ask me whether I listen to Dr. Fauci's advice, my answer is: only with skepticism and caution."

In an interview with The Atlantic, Fauci responded: "I can't explain Peter Navarro. He's in a world by himself. So I don't even want to go there."

And Trump, who has complained about Fauci privately for months — and publicly in recent days — stepped in to referee.

Navarro "made a state statement representing himself. He shouldn't be doing that," Trump told reporters as he departed the White House for Atlanta. The president insisted he had a "very good relationship with Dr. Fauci" and said his staffers were working together.

The back-and-forth is the latest episode of infighting in a White House that has been riven by rivalries since its earliest days. It comes as the White House's handling of the pandemic has come under even deeper scrutiny at a time when cases are surging and the president is pressing to restart economic activity, in part to bolster his reelection chances.

Trump has been known to encourage disputes between aides, believing differing viewpoints serve him better. Others in the White House have waged an open campaign to discredit Fauci, who has been increasingly vocal in his disagreements with the president's enthusiasm for reopening high-risk venues like schools and sporting arenas.

"We're all on the same team," Trump said. "We want to get rid of this mess that China sent us. So everybody's working on the same line and we're doing very well."

Still, a person familiar with the matter said Trump himself was amused by the spat, believing Navarro highlighted errors by Fauci and helped reduce his public stature, which has grated on some in the West Wing for months.

One White House official, also speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss private conversations, said Navarro had been warned by the White House communications team in recent days to de-escalate his beef with Fauci, but went ahead with the op-ed nonetheless.

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows did not approve the article and is "fully engaged," according to the official.

"Peter Navarro's statement or op-ed, whatever you want to classify it as, was an action that is a violation of well-established protocols that was not supported overtly or covertly by anyone in the West Wing," Meadows told reporters aboard Air Force One on Wednesday evening. His "comments really just reflect Peter Navarro's personal thinking and not the thinking of the West Wing."

Asked whether Navarro had committed a fireable offense, Meadows said, "I don't talk about personnel matters."

Navarro, an economist and China hardliner without public health credentials, did not respond to a request for comment.

The episode was frustrating for some in the White House because it diverted attention from positive developments, like progress on a vaccine, another official said.

Fauci discussed his predicament in a series of interviews with The Atlantic this week.

Asked about the attacks lodged against him by anonymous White House officials, Fauci said he "cannot figure out in my wildest dreams why they would want to do that. I think they realize now that that was not a prudent thing to do, because it's only reflecting negatively on them."

As for his relationship with the president, Fauci said it has changed over time. While he used to speak one-on-one with Trump, Fauci said, "I haven't done that in a while."

Still, he added that "a day does not go by that I am not in contact with Debbie Birx, with Bob Redfield, or Steve Hahn and others," referring to other members of the White House coronavirus task force. "My input to the president goes through the vice president. But clearly, the vice president — literally every day — is listening to what we have to say, there's no doubt about that."

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Indeed, in a campaign call with reporters, Vice President Mike Pence came to Fauci's defense, calling him "a valued member of the White House coronavirus task force."

"We just completed our latest meeting today and we couldn't be more grateful for his steady counsel as we continue to meet this moment with a whole-of-government approach, a whole-of-America approach," Pence said.

Sen. John Kennedy, R-La., said on Fox News that Navarro was entitled to his opinion but "I would prefer that he not write it."

"Everybody's on the same page," Kennedy added. "I know the vice president thinks the world of Dr. Fauci. Is he right 100% of the time? None of us are."

Associated Press writers Darlene Superville, Will Weissert and Amer Madhani contributed to this report.

China becomes first economy to grow since virus pandemic

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

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National Bureau of Statistics (in Chinese): www.stats.gov.cn

Biden, Gates, other Twitter accounts hacked in Bitcoin scam

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Technology Writer

Unidentified hackers broke into the Twitter accounts of technology moguls, politicians, celebrities and major companies Wednesday in an apparent Bitcoin scam.

The ruse included bogus tweets from former President Barack Obama, Democratic presidential front-runner Joe Biden, Mike Bloomberg and a number of tech billionaires including Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates and Tesla CEO Elon Musk. Celebrities Kanye West and his wife, Kim Kardashian West, were also hacked. The fake tweets offered to send \$2,000 for every \$1,000 sent to an anonymous Bitcoin address.

There is no evidence that the owners of these accounts were targeted themselves. Instead, the hacks appeared designed to lure their Twitter followers into sending money to an anonymous Bitcoin account. The Biden campaign, for instance, said that Twitter's integrity team "locked down the account within a few minutes of the breach and removed the related tweet."

Obama's office had no immediate comment. The FBI said it was aware of Twitter's security breach, but declined further comment.

The apparently fake tweets were all quickly deleted, although the Associated Press was able to capture screenshots of several before they disappeared.

In several tweets, Twitter said it believes the incident was a "coordinated social engineering attack" that targeted some of its employees with access to internal systems and tools. They were then used to take control of many high-profile and verified accounts and tweet from them.

The company said it immediately locked down the affected accounts and removed the tweets posted by the attackers. It also temporarily blocked verified users from tweeting while the company investigated the issue.

Among the political figures targeted, the hack mostly appeared to target Democrats or other figures on the left, drawing comparisons to the 2016 campaign. U.S. intelligence agencies established that Russia engaged in coordinated attempts to interfere in those U.S. elections through social media tampering and various hacks, including targeting the various campaigns and major party organizations.

The hack might also be a simple demonstration of Twitter's weak security controls as the U.S. heads into the 2020 presidential election, a contest in which the service is likely to play an influential role.

The Bitcoin account mentioned in the fake tweets appears to have been created on Wednesday. By the end of the day, it had received almost 12.9 bitcoins, an amount currently valued at slightly more than \$114,000. At some point during the day, roughly half that sum in bitcoin was withdrawn from the account.

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Bezos, Gates and Musk are among the 10 richest people in the world, with tens of millions of followers on Twitter. The three men are worth a combined \$362 billion, according to the latest calculations by Forbes magazine.

The same bogus offer cropped up a second time on Musk's account, which has a history of sometimes befuddling tweets from the eccentric billionaire. Tesla didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

Gates, who has become one of the world's leading philanthropists since stepping down as Microsoft CEO, confirmed the tweet wasn't from him. "This appears to be part of a larger issue that Twitter is facing," a spokesperson for the billionaire said in a statement.

This is hardly the first time hackers have created mischief on Twitter. Just last year, the account of Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey was broken into and used to tweet racist and vulgar comments.

The latest security breach prompted Sen. Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, to send a letter to Dorsey urging him to work with the FBI and the Justice Department on ways to improve Twitter's security.

"A successful attack on your system's servers represents a threat to all of your users' privacy and data security," Hawley wrote.

Investors also appeared to be concerned about potential fallout from the hack affecting Twitter's usage. Twitter's shares fell 3% in extended trading after news of the hack broke.

AP political reporter Bill Barrow contributed to this article from Washington. AP Technology Writers Matt O'Brien in Providence, Rhode Island, Barbara Ortutay in Oakland, California, and Zen Soo in Hong Kong also contributed.

Trump replaces campaign manager amid sinking poll numbers

By JILL COLVIN, ZEKE MILLER and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump shook up his campaign staff Wednesday amid sinking poll numbers less than four months before the election, replacing campaign manager Brad Parscale with veteran GOP operative Bill Stepien.

"I am pleased to announce that Bill Stepien has been promoted to the role of Trump Campaign Manager," Trump said on Facebook. "Brad Parscale, who has been with me for a very long time and has led our tremendous digital and data strategies, will remain in that role, while being a Senior Advisor to the campaign."

Trump and Parscale's relationship had been increasingly strained, with the president annoyed by the publicity Parscale had garnered in the role. But the final straw appeared to be a Tulsa, Oklahoma, rally last month that drew an unexpectedly low crowd of about 6,200 people after Parscale had bragged that more than a million people had requested tickets. The president was furious.

The shakeup injected familiar turmoil to Trump's 2020 campaign, which had so far largely avoided the regular staff churn that dominated the president's 2016 campaign and his White House. It comes as Trump has been struggling in his reelection campaign against presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, with the nation facing health and economic crises during a pandemic that has killed more than 135,000 Americans.

The staff change was not expected to alter the day-to-day running of the campaign. News of the shuffle was delivered to Parscale on Wednesday afternoon by White House adviser and Trump son-in-law Jared Kushner.

Parscale, a political novice, ran Trump's digital advertising in 2016 and was credited with helping bring about his surprise victory that year. Stepien has been in politics for years, working for former New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie and serving as Trump's national field director in 2016.

Parscale had been increasingly sidelined in the weeks since the Tulsa rally and as the president's public and private poll numbers have taken a hit amid the pandemic. Speculation had been rampant about who might be promoted to lead the operation, with names like former Trump strategist Steve Bannon floated.

Parscale is a close ally of Kushner, who wields ultimate control over the campaign. A Florida resident, he had not been a regular presence of late in the campaign's Arlington, Virginia, headquarters, sparking

some resentments among staffers.

Rather than parting ways completely, Parscale was retained in part because of the difficulty the campaign would have faced in rebuilding its digital advertising operation so close to the Nov. 3 general election. While the Republican National Committee owned most of the campaign's data, voter modeling and outreach tools, Parscale ran most of the microtargeted online advertising that Trump aides believed were key in 2016.

Parscale's digital advertising firm was among the campaign's most significant vendors, and some in Trump's orbit have alleged that the former campaign manager was profiting off the president's reelection. Parscale has repeatedly denied the claims.

Trump has been pressed by allies in recent months to expand his political circle and more forcefully define his run against Biden. Last month, Trump announced a promotion for Stepien and returned former communications chief Jason Miller to his campaign, taking away some of Parscale's clout and influence.

Biden also shuffled his campaign team, albeit much earlier in the cycle, amid a disastrous stretch in his primary run. For Biden, the moves marked genuine shakeups that expanded and changed how his campaign operated.

Biden elevated Anita Dunn, effectively displacing his first campaign manager, Greg Schultz, after a fourth-place Iowa finish and as he was already headed for a second embarrassing finish in New Hampshire. Dunn had joined Biden at the outset of his campaign after having served President Barack Obama as a top communications adviser.

With Dunn's urging, Biden hired his current campaign manager, Jen O'Malley Dillon, in March after Dunn and others helped resurrect Biden in Nevada and South Carolina and put him on the path to the nomination. Schultz is now at the Democratic National Committee, helping lead the joint battleground strategy among the national party, the Biden campaign and state parties.

Associated Press writer Bill Barrow in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Confirmed US virus cases rise amid new global restrictions

By ERIC TUCKER, COSTAS KANTOURIS and CODY JACKSON Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — California, Arizona, Texas and Florida together reported about 36,000 new coronavirus cases Wednesday as restrictions aimed at combating the spread of the pandemic took hold in the United States and around the world in an unsettling sign reminiscent of the dark days of April.

The soaring counts of confirmed infections and a mounting death toll led the mayor of Los Angeles to declare that the nation's second-largest city is on the verge of resorting to a shutdown of all but essential businesses. More school districts made plans to start the fall semester without on-site instruction, and the 2021 Rose Parade in California was canceled.

Other events went ahead undeterred. Thousands of auto-racing fans gathered at Bristol Motor Speedway in Tennessee for a NASCAR event. Officials allowed 30,000 at the track, and the event marked the largest sporting event since the pandemic began four months ago. Disney World moved forward with the rolling opening of its Florida theme parks.

California, Arizona, Florida and Texas reported a total of more than 450 new deaths. Alabama reported a pandemic-high one-day total of 40 deaths, and officials said the state will begin requiring face masks.

In Texas, which again set a record for confirmed new cases, with nearly 10,800, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has increasingly emphasized face coverings as the way to avoid another lockdown.

Montana Gov. Steve Bullock required masks at indoor public spaces and at larger outdoor gatherings in counties where four or more people are known to have COVID-19. The Democrat's order came as the state reported a record number of new confirmed cases.

In Ohio, Gov. Mike DeWine, who has faced criticism from fellow Republicans over business closures, gave a televised address with an emotional appeal to residents to make sacrifices to protect their neighbors. But he stopped short of mandating masks.

Among the sternest measures were in New York, where Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo added to a

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list totaling 22 states whose visitors will be required to quarantine for two weeks if they visit the tri-state region. Out-of-state travelers arriving in New York airports from those states face a \$2,000 fine and a mandatory quarantine order if they fail to fill out a tracing form.

The broad reach of the virus has brought scrutiny to governors' decisions. Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt, a first-term Republican governor who has backed one of the country's most aggressive reopening plans, became the first U.S. governor to announce that he had tested positive for COVID-19. He plans to quarantine at home.

Stitt, who has resisted a statewide mandate on masks and rarely wears one himself, attended President Donald Trump's rally in Tulsa last month, which health experts have said likely contributed to a surge in coronavirus cases there. Stitt said he's confident he didn't contract the virus at the gathering.

Florida surpassed 300,000 confirmed cases, reporting 10,181 new infections as its daily average death rate keeps rising. Major cities have required masks, but Gov. Ron DeSantis has declined to issue a statewide order, arguing that it's best decided and enforced locally.

Still, the Republican governor on Tuesday wore a mask while speaking publicly for the first time — at a roundtable news conference with Miami-Dade County mayors.

"We have broken single-day records several times this week, and there's nothing about it that says we're turning the corner or seeing light at the end of the tunnel. I don't see that in the numbers," said Dr. Nicholas Namias, chief of trauma and surgical critical care at Jackson Memorial Hospital.

He said diminishing bed capacity is creating problems at the Miami medical center.

"We're getting to the point where it's going to be full. We have gridlock, and we won't be able to take patients, and they'll just be stacked in the ERs," Namias said.

In Washington, a divided approach to the pandemic spilled into public view in extraordinary fashion, with trade adviser Peter Navarro panning Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert. Fauci called the criticism "nonsense" and "a bit bizarre." Trump stepped in to referee, saying "we're all on the same team."

Businesses instituted restrictions, too, with Walmart becoming the largest U.S. retailer to require customers to wear face coverings at all of its Sam's Club and namesake stores. In Las Vegas, some casinos began limiting smoking to keep customers from removing the masks they are required to wear.

Organizers canceled the 2021 Rose Parade in Pasadena, California, because of the pandemic's impact on long-range planning for the New Year's tradition, according to the Tournament of Roses Association. But Disney World welcomed visitors to Epcot and Hollywood Studios despite the surge of cases in the state.

Other countries, meanwhile, imposed lockdowns and implemented new health checks at their borders.

All travelers arriving in Greece from a land border with Bulgaria were required to carry negative coronavirus test results issued in the previous 72 hours. The new rules, which follow an increase in tourism-related COVID-19 cases, triggered an immediate drop in arrivals compared with recent days.

Gergana Chaprazova, 51, from Plovdiv in southern Bulgaria, planned to visit the Greek seaside town of Kavala with her husband and complained that she was being tested again.

"I have to wait for a test, but I (already) have a test from Bulgaria. I don't understand why I must have a test here," she told The Associated Press.

More than 13 million coronavirus cases were confirmed worldwide, with over 580,000 deaths, according to a tally by Johns Hopkins University. The actual numbers are thought to be far higher for a number of reasons, including limited testing.

Romania, citing the rising number of infections, announced a 30-day extension of a nationwide state of alert. And residents of Australia's second-largest city, Melbourne, were warned to comply with lockdown regulations or face tougher restrictions.

"The time for warnings, the time for cutting people slack, is over," Victoria state Premier Daniel Andrews said.

In Israel, officials warned that if infection numbers don't dwindle in the coming days, they will have no choice but to lock down the entire country again, as it did in the spring.

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South Africa is already showing signs of being overwhelmed by the pandemic — an ominous outlook for the rest of the continent of 1.3 billion people.

A ban on alcohol sales and a nightly curfew were reimposed this week to reduce the volume of trauma patients to hospitals that are struggling to cope with an influx of COVID-19 patients. One result was more economic pain in a country that already has a high unemployment rate of 30%.

Tucker reported from Washington. Kantouris reported from Promachonas, Greece. AP reporters around the world contributed to this report.

Arizona ban on evictions set to end as heat, infections soar

By ANITA SNOW Associated Press

PHOENIX (AP) — Housing advocacy groups in Arizona have joined lawmakers in lobbying Gov. Doug Ducey to extend his coronavirus-related moratorium on evictions, which will expire next week and allow authorities to start removing hundreds of renters in a state that's a national hot spot for both infections and scorching summer weather.

"It's so hot in Arizona, you cannot live outside if you lose your home," said Meghan Heddings, executive director of Family Housing Resources in Tucson, which is among the groups advocating for an extension. "And, of course, we're still in the middle of a pandemic."

States from Nevada to Virginia also have recently lifted or are about to end moratoriums on rent payments and foreclosures designed to get people through the pandemic and its economic fallout. Pennsylvania recently announced it will extend its moratorium until the end of August, while Boston will keep its ban on most public housing evictions until the end of the year.

Arizona's 120-day order ending July 22 was supposed to ensure people wouldn't lose their homes if they got COVID-19 or lost their jobs during pandemic restrictions. But advocates say it's too early to end the ban because most of the government money set aside to help pay rents and mortgages still hasn't been doled out.

Meanwhile, virus cases in Arizona keep rising, with 3,257 new infections and 97 more deaths reported Wednesday. Arizona leads the U.S. in new confirmed cases per capita over the past two weeks.

Patrick Ptak, a spokesman for Ducey, said Wednesday the governor is working with all parties on a policy to protect renters and keep them in their homes. Ptak said an announcement is expected later this week.

Unless the Republican governor extends or otherwise modifies his eviction moratorium, court officers can force out people temporarily allowed to stop paying rent after falling ill with COVID-19 or losing their jobs because of the pandemic. It's unknown how many people facing eviction already moved out voluntarily.

Family Housing Resources and more than a dozen other groups noted in a letter to Ducey last week that the Arizona Housing Department has a backlog of people trying to get rental assistance. About \$4 million of \$5 million allocated in March to help people struggling because of the virus has still not been distributed.

Some are still struggling to get their first unemployment checks. After July, those checks will lose the extra \$600 in federal money provided each week to help during the pandemic, dropping the average weekly check to \$240 or less.

"We have to get more time so this doesn't become a catastrophe," said Stacy Butler, director of the Innovation for Justice Program at the University of Arizona's James E. Rogers College of Law.

The Maricopa County Board of Supervisors Wednesday announced a more richly funded program, \$30 million to help renters affected by the pandemic outside Phoenix and Mesa. The county's Human Services Department will administer the program funded with federal virus relief dollars and delivered through community programs.

It is expected to help about 6,000 households with three months of rent paid directly to landlords, who say they also are hurting.

Ann Gregory of Gregory Real Estate Management sued Ducey this month, asking a court to allow the eviction of a family in a rental home in Surprise over unpaid rent, which the firm says has now reached

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\$8,000. The lawsuit says Ducey's executive order exceeds his authority and fails to compensate property owners for their losses.

Renters are still legally required to eventually pay back everything they owe from the time they started withholding payments, with some people now three or four months behind.

Data about eviction cases is hard to get because the pandemic has severely limited Arizona's justice courts. A court spokesman says the 26 justice courts in Maricopa County, where Phoenix is located, are operating but that most hearings are held virtually.

The University of Arizona's Innovation for Justice Program has been analyzing eviction figures from the nonprofit, nonpartisan think tank the Aspen Institute, which predicts 20% of U.S. renters, including 577,733 in Arizona, will be at risk for eviction by the end of September.

Program researchers also are drawing on a recent state-by-state analysis of potential future evictions by the international consulting firm Stout Risius Ross. The firm says over 42% of Arizona renters may be unable to pay their housing costs, and up to 365,000 renter households are at high risk for eviction.

State lawmakers and members of Arizona's congressional delegation also have written to Ducey.

Democratic U.S. Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick told the governor in a June 10 letter that lifting the ban on coronavirus-related evictions could be "a recipe for disaster and mass homelessness" and advocated for keeping the moratorium until year's end.

"Arizona is home to some of the hottest cities, and with over 100K COVID-19 cases, we must extend, immediately, the moratorium on rent," wrote Kirkpatrick, who represents southern Arizona, including Tucson. "We cannot create an epidemic of homelessness on top of a global health and economic crisis."

Mets' deGrom, Cubs' Rizzo dealing with back issues

By JAY COHEN AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — Opening day is next week, and there is some unease for New York Mets ace Jacob deGrom and Chicago Cubs first baseman Anthony Rizzo because of back issues. It looks as if New York Yankees star Aaron Judge is feeling much better.

The Mets sent deGrom for an MRI on Wednesday after the right-hander pitched just one inning in a summer camp appearance due to back tightness. The test showed nothing to be concerned about, according to a person familiar with the situation.

The person spoke on condition of anonymity because no immediate announcement on deGrom's medical condition was planned.

An MRI of Rizzo on Tuesday showed rib-head inflammation on his left side that is causing back spasms — a condition he has dealt with before in his career.

"Frustrating, just because how physically in shape I felt like I was coming in," Rizzo said. "Just can't control the flareups. The MRI getting kind of what we knew, just confirming it. Just kind of getting it to calm down and get back out there as fast as I can."

Judge has been hampered by a stiff neck, but the outfielder homered off James Paxton during New York's intrasquad game at Yankee Stadium. The Yankees also said Masahiro Tanaka was scheduled for a bullpen session Thursday in his first action since he was struck on the head by Giancarlo Stanton's liner on July 4.

The loss of deGrom or Rizzo for an extended period would be a huge blow for either of their teams — especially in a shortened 60-game season.

The 32-year-old deGrom won his second consecutive NL Cy Young Award in 2019, finishing with a 2.43 ERA and NL-best 255 strikeouts in 204 innings. If deGrom is unable to go on opening day against Atlanta on July 24, Marcus Stroman, Rick Porcello or Steven Matz could get the ball.

"It's a little bit too early still to make those decisions," Rojas said Wednesday afternoon.

Rizzo, who is expected to bat second in Chicago's lineup, hit .293 with 27 homers and 94 RBIs last year. Kris Bryant and Victor Caratini could fill in at first if Rizzo has to begin the season on the injured list.

"He doesn't seem worried," Cubs manager David Ross said. "I think the main thing is that we're progressing in the right direction."

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While injuries put the opening-day plans for New York and Chicago in question, the coronavirus continued to have a dramatic effect on rosters across the sport.

Twins first baseman Miguel Sanó was cleared to join the team after testing positive for the virus upon his arrival in Minnesota. Royals catcher Salvador Perez is back after his own positive test. Same for outfielder Anthony Santander in Baltimore and slugger Derek Dietrich in Cincinnati.

"It changed my way of thinking," Dietrich said. "It humbled me and motivated me. I have empathy for anyone dealing with this because it sucks. It really does. I didn't have symptoms but just knowing and thinking, 'Well, who was I around?' This isn't about you. A lot of people are dealing with this. It is real. It is very real."

Santander suited up for the first time Tuesday and went through a rigorous workout in an effort to make up for lost time. He is hoping to be part of the starting lineup when Baltimore visits Boston for opening day on July 24.

"This was something serious," Santander said. "Thank God I had only mild symptoms."

Perez was cleared with a second negative test in a 24-hour period late Tuesday, and Kansas City manager Mike Matheny said the news gave the entire club a boost — especially with Brad Keller, Ryan O'Hearn and Cam Gallagher still sidelined by the virus.

"It was the perfect timing for a shot in the arm," Matheny said.

Catchers like Perez are in a bit of a precarious position on the field, with their inability to socially distance with the umpire and batter also around the plate.

Kyle Higashioka, who became the Yankees' backup catcher following the departure of Austin Romine, is wearing another mask during intrasquad matchups and plans to during games.

"I'm kind of in an enclosed in the vicinity with a couple other people, so might as well just throw the face covering on just in case," he said. "Not sure if it will help or not."

He uses a model that's very thin.

"It's a nice, cool material, so it doesn't really hinder me," he said. "I don't like wearing it hitting because it like kind of messes with me turning my head. But for catching, it's nothing really that bugs me about it."

AP Sports Writers Mike Fitzpatrick, Ronald Blum, David Ginsburg, Joe Kay, Dave Campbell and Dave Skretta contributed to this report.

Jay Cohen can be reached at <https://twitter.com/jcohenap>

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

Mail delays likely as new postal boss pushes cost-cutting

By MATTHEW DALY Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Mail deliveries could be delayed by a day or more under cost-cutting efforts being imposed by the new postmaster general. The plan eliminates overtime for hundreds of thousands of postal workers and says employees must adopt a "different mindset" to ensure the Postal Service's survival during the coronavirus pandemic.

Late trips will no longer be authorized. If postal distribution centers are running late, "they will keep the mail for the next day," Postal Service leaders say in a document obtained by The Associated Press. "One aspect of these changes that may be difficult for employees is that — temporarily — we may see mail left behind or mail on the workroom floor or docks," another document says.

The changes come a month after Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a major donor to President Donald Trump, took over the sprawling mail service. In a memo titled "PMG Expectations and Plan," the agency said the changes are aimed at "making the USPS fundamentally solvent which we are not at this time."

The memo cites deep revenue losses from a decadelong decline in mail deliveries that has been exacerbated by the coronavirus pandemic and says an overdue "operational pivot" is needed to ensure the

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agency's health and stability.

Postal Service officials, bracing for steep losses from the nationwide shutdown caused by the virus, have warned they will run out of money by the end of September without help from Congress. The service reported a \$4.5 billion loss for the quarter ending in March, before the full effects of the shutdown sank in.

Single-piece, first-class mail volume fell 15 to 20% week to week in April and May, agency leaders told Congress. Losses will increase by more than \$22 billion over the next 18 months, they said.

Bills approved by the Democratic-controlled House would set aside \$25 billion to keep the mail flowing, but they remain stalled in the Republican-controlled Senate. Congress has approved a \$10 billion line of credit for the Postal Service, but it remains unused amid restrictions imposed by the Trump administration.

A spokesperson said Wednesday that the agency is developing a business plan to ensure it will be financially stable and continue to provide reliable, affordable and secure delivery of mail and packages. While the plan "is not yet finalized, it will certainly include new and creative ways for us to fulfill our mission, and we will focus immediately on efficiency and items that we can control," said spokesperson Dave Partenheimer.

The memo cites U.S. Steel as an example that the Postal Service is far from "untouchable." In 1975, the steel giant was "the largest company in the world," the memo states. "They are gone." In fact, U.S. Steel remains a leading steel producer, with more than 27,000 employees as of earlier this year.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put the Postal Service in a double crisis, said Mark Dimondstein, president of the American Postal Workers Union, which represents more than 200,000 postal workers and retirees.

As many as 12,000 postal workers have fallen ill, with at least 64 fatalities, and the economic contraction has caused a dramatic drop in letter and other flat mail volumes. A spike in package deliveries that has buoyed the agency during the pandemic is likely to be temporary, Dimondstein said, adding that the outbreak has sharply increased expenses for personal protective equipment, deep cleaning of facilities and temporary workers to replace postal workers who get sick.

"Postal workers are tremendously dedicated to the mission of getting the mail out," Dimondstein said, but the new policies could cause delays that will further drive down revenues.

"It's the customer who will suffer if the mail slows down," he said.

Democratic Rep. Bill Pascrell of New Jersey denounced the proposal to delay mail delivery, saying it would be a "stunning act of sabotage against our postal service."

"Trump and his cronies are openly seeking to destroy the post office during the worst public health crisis in a century," Pascrell said. With states increasingly relying on voting by mail to continue elections during the pandemic, destabilizing the Postal Service not only threatens the economy and the jobs of 600,000 workers, but is also "a direct attack on American democracy itself," Pascrell said.

Trump opposes expanding voting by mail, arguing that it will trigger fraud, even though there's no evidence that will happen. Trump, Vice President Mike Pence and other top administration officials frequently vote absentee themselves.

Trump also has called the Postal Service "a joke" and said that package shipping rates should be at least four times higher for heavy users like Amazon. But shipping and packages are actually a top revenue generator for the Postal Service, and critics say Trump is merely looking to punish Amazon founder and CEO Jeff Bezos in retaliation for unflattering coverage in The Washington Post, which Bezos owns.

For most Americans, mail deliveries to homes or post boxes are their only routine contact with the federal government. It's a service they seem to appreciate: The agency consistently earns favorability marks that top 90%.

Esther Haynes, of Philadelphia, said she and her family get clothes, jewelry, perfume, food and more delivered by mail. "If it's a day late, two days late, I'll be looking for it," she said Wednesday. "I'd be concerned."

Haynes, 53, shares a home with her sister, her son and a family friend. Haynes likes to shop — which means she's been busy ordering things online during the pandemic. "Everybody wants their mail on time," she said.

The memo outlining potential mail delays was first reported by The Washington Post.

Associated Press writer Maryclaire Dale in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

Berkeley moves toward removing police from traffic stops

By JANIE HAR Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — After hours of emotional public testimony and a middle-of-the-night vote by Berkeley leaders, the progressive California city is moving forward with a novel proposal to replace police with unarmed civilians during traffic stops in a bid to curtail racial profiling.

The City Council early Wednesday approved a police reform proposal that calls for a public committee to hash out details of a new Berkeley Police Department that would not respond to calls involving people experiencing homelessness or mental illness. The committee also would pursue creating a separate department to handle transportation planning and enforcing parking and traffic laws.

The council voted for the committee to find ways to eventually cut the Police Department's budget by half and approved an analysis of police calls and spending.

A tired but excited Berkeley Mayor Jesse Arreguin said he doesn't expect a new transportation department overnight because conversations will be hard and detailed with complicated logistics to figure out. But he said communities of color in his city feel targeted by police and that needs to change.

"There may be situations where police do need to intervene, and so we need to look at all that," he said. "We need to look at if we do move traffic enforcement out of the Police Department, what does that relationship look like and how will police officers work in coordination with unarmed traffic enforcement personnel?"

It's believed the plan to separate traffic enforcement from police is the first of its kind in the U.S. and comes as many cities seek broad public safety reforms, including reducing law enforcement budgets, following the May 25 death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police. Fans of the proposal cheered its passage even as some called for greater cuts to police.

It could take months, even years, to create a new department, but police and other law enforcement experts rebuked the idea as dangerous, not only for traffic safety but for the people tasked with pulling over drivers, who they say can be dangerous.

"I think what Berkeley is doing is nuts," said Mark Cronin, a director with the Los Angeles Police Protective League, a union for officers. "I think it's a big social experiment. I think it's going to fail and it's not going to take long for, unfortunately, traffic collisions, fatalities to increase exponentially."

Cronin, a former traffic officer, said cities can't rely on unattended traffic signals or camera lights to catch bad drivers and that people are needed to educate motorists on safe driving. But those people also need backup and the authority to arrest should they encounter a driver who is intoxicated, armed and fleeing a crime, or wanted on other charges.

"Traffic stops are one of the most unpredictable and therefore dangerous duties of law enforcement. There is no such thing as a routine traffic stop and to perform them effectively and safely takes months of police training in and outside of an academy," said Frank Merenda, a former New York City Police Department captain who is an assistant professor of criminal justice at Marist College.

Philip Stinson, a criminal justice professor at Bowling Green State University, called the idea an "overly simplistic plan that could have deadly consequences for unarmed traffic enforcement officers."

Nine U.S. police officers were killed during traffic stops so far this year, according to data compiled by the National Law Enforcement Memorial Fund. Six were shot, and three were struck by vehicles.

Numerous studies have shown Black drivers are much more likely to be stopped by police than whites for minor traffic infractions, and the results sometimes can be deadly for the driver.

Philando Castile, for example, was fatally shot after the 32-year-old was stopped for a broken tail light in 2016 in Minnesota. Sandra Bland, 28, died in a jail cell three days after being stopped for failing to signal when changing lanes in Texas in 2015.

The largely affluent and progressive San Francisco suburb of 120,000 has led the country on environ-

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mental, cultural and equity issues but still has lopsided traffic stop figures.

A 2018 report by the Center for Policing Equity, a research and advocacy group based in Los Angeles, found that Black and Latino drivers were stopped by Berkeley police at higher rates than whites.

Data analyses by the Stanford Open Policing Project at Stanford University also found that Black and Latino drivers were searched far more often than whites, but the searches turned up fewer drugs, guns and other contraband.

Berkeley police issued a statement Wednesday saying the department would work with the community "to determine how we can best evolve to accomplish our mission of safeguarding our community."

Police unions for Los Angeles, San Francisco and San Jose issued a statement opposing the proposal. The Berkeley police union did not respond to requests for comment this week.

Arreguin, the mayor, said creating a new department is a phase-two development that's at least a year away and would likely involve making changes to state law.

Traffic stops can be dangerous and require extensive training, said Chuck Wexler, executive director of the Police Executive Research Forum, a research organization that promotes best practices in policing. He also recognizes fairness and profiling are issues for law enforcement.

"At the end of the day, policymakers would have to ask themselves if this change accomplished their intended goals," he said.

87 protesters arrested at Kentucky attorney general's home

By REBECCA REYNOLDS YONKER and DYLAN LOVAN Associated Press

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Eighty-seven demonstrators who gathered at the home of Kentucky's attorney general to demand justice for Breonna Taylor have been arrested and charged with a felony for trying to "intimidate" the prosecutor, police said.

Protesters with the social justice organization Until Freedom gathered for a sit-in on the front yard of a Louisville home owned by Kentucky Attorney General Daniel Cameron on Tuesday afternoon, news outlets reported.

They were arrested after refusing to leave and — having been instructed beforehand by protest organizers not to resist — could be seen lining up to await their transfer to jail.

Among those arrested were NFL player Kenny Stills, a wide receiver for the Houston Texans, and Porsha Williams of "Real Housewives of Atlanta." Several of the protesters were released from jail on Wednesday afternoon.

Taylor, a 26-year-old Black woman, was fatally shot when police officers burst into her Louisville apartment using a no-knock warrant in the early morning hours of March 13 during a narcotics investigation. The warrant to search her home was in connection with a suspect who did not live there and no drugs were found inside.

The shooting set off weeks of protests, policy changes and a call for the officers who shot Taylor to be criminally charged. One officer has been fired, but no charges have been filed. Investigations into the shooting are continuing.

Stills posted on social media Wednesday afternoon that he was "arrested for peacefully protesting. While Breonna Taylor's murderers are still out on the street." None of the Louisville officers involved in delivering the warrant at Taylor's home have been criminally charged.

Cameron, a Republican and Kentucky's first African American state attorney general, said on Monday that he still has no timeline for when his office will conclude its investigation of the case.

"We are here to hold Daniel Cameron accountable and make sure that he does his job, because he is not doing his job," said Until Freedom co-founder Linda Sarsour.

Protesters were charged with "intimidating a participant in a legal process," a class D felony in Kentucky that is punishable from one to five years in prison upon conviction. That charge is related to Cameron's role as prosecutor of the Taylor investigation.

The protesters were charged with a felony because officers heard them "chanting that if they didn't get

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what they want, they would burn it down," Louisville police said Wednesday afternoon in an emailed statement, referring to Cameron's house. "That was deemed an attempt to intimidate, persuade or influence the attorney general's decision," the statement said.

The Jefferson County Commonwealth's Attorney's office was not consulted about the filing of the felony charges, spokesman Jeff Cooke said Wednesday. Cooke said a judge at the county's District Court level will decide if there is probable cause to move the felony charge to a grand jury. If the grand jury indicts on the charge, the commonwealth's attorney will then assume responsibility for the prosecution, he said.

The protesters were also each charged with disorderly conduct and criminal trespassing, both misdemeanors, said Louisville Metro Police spokesman Lamont Washington.

Cameron said the protest won't bring justice and "only serves to further division and tension within our community."

"From the beginning, our office has set out to do its job, to fully investigate the events surrounding the death of Ms. Breonna Taylor," the attorney general said. "We continue with a thorough and fair investigation, and today's events will not alter our pursuit of the truth."

Coronavirus data is funneled away from CDC, sparking worries

By MIKE STOBBE and BERNARD CONDON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Hospital data related to the coronavirus pandemic in the U.S. will now be collected by a private technology firm, rather than the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — a move the Trump administration says will speed up reporting but one that concerns some public health leaders.

The CDC director said Wednesday that he's fine with the change — even though some experts fear it will further sideline the agency.

The CDC has agreed to step out of the government's traditional data collection process "in order to streamline reporting," Dr. Robert Redfield said during a call with reporters set up by the agency's parent, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

HHS officials recently posted a document on the agency's website that redirected hospitals' daily reporting of a range of data meant to assess the impact of the coronavirus on them. TeleTracking Technologies, based in Pittsburgh, will now collect that information.

However, if hospitals are already directly reporting to state health departments, they can get a written release from the state to keep doing that.

The information includes bed occupancy, staffing levels, the severity level of coronavirus patients, ventilators on hand, and supplies of masks, gowns, and other personal protective equipment. The CDC will continue to collect other data, like information about cases and deaths, from state health departments.

Michael Caputo, an HHS spokesman, said the CDC has been seeing a lag of a week or more in data coming from hospitals and that only 85% of hospitals have been participating. The change is meant to result in faster and more complete reporting, he said.

It's not clear how that will happen. HHS officials on Wednesday did not answer questions about whether there would be added government incentives or mandates to get more reporting from busy hospitals.

A CDC official, who is familiar with the agency's system, disputed Caputo's figures, saying only about 60% of the nation's hospitals have been reporting to the CDC system, but most data is collected and reported out within two days. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to talk about it.

The CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network system was launched 15 years ago and is perhaps best known for its work gathering, and publicly reporting, data on hospital infections. It has helped drive a successful push to reduce certain kinds of hospital infections.

The system started doing COVID-19 data collection in March. Two other systems have been put in place since, one involving hospitals reporting directly to states and the other the TeleTracking system.

Administration officials put incentives in place to encourage hospitals to report through the other systems, the official said. For instance, the coronavirus treatment remdesivir was sometimes allocated to hospitals

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based on whether they used TeleTracking.

Some outside experts expressed suspicion and concern about the decision to drop CDC from the data-collection mix.

The data "are the foundation that guide our response to the pandemic," Dr. Thomas File, Jr., president of the Infectious Diseases Society of America, said in a statement.

Collecting and reporting public health data has always been a core function of the CDC, he added. "The administration should provide funding to support data collection and should strengthen the role of CDC to collect and report COVID-19 data," he said.

Gregory Koblentz, a biodefense expert at George Mason University, said the change appears to be consistent with administration moves in recent months that have sidelined the CDC from the role it has played in other epidemics, as the public's primary source of information.

"We know the administration has been trying to silence the CDC," he said. "Now it looks like the administration might be trying to blind the CDC as well."

The White House directed a request for comment to HHS.

Redfield, the CDC director, said the agency will retain access to all the data. He also said the change will enable it to focus on collecting other data, like information from nursing homes.

Still, his predecessor, Dr. Tom Frieden, expressed dismay at the decision.

"Rather than strengthening the CDC public health data system to improve hospital reporting, the administration has handed data to an unproven, commercial entity," said Frieden, who was the agency's director during the Obama administration.

In April, the government awarded a \$10.2 million contract to a TeleTracking Technologies, based in Pittsburgh. At the time, the company was hired to gather data on things that were already being reported to the CDC, such as available hospital beds.

TeleTracking has won 29 contracts for federal government work stretching back to 2004. None of its previous contracts paid more than \$300,000. The prior contracts were for computer systems and programming at Veteran Affairs hospitals.

The company has also gotten approval to tap a government loans program designed to help small business keep employees on their payroll during the pandemic. The forgivable loan was from the Payroll Protection Program for between \$5 million and \$10 million. TeleTracking indicated it planned to use the loan to help save the jobs of some of its 376 workers.

TeleTracking did not immediately respond to requests for comment.

The CEO of Teletracking, Michael Zamagias, also runs a real estate investment firm with several properties in Pittsburgh. One of his companies, Michael G. Zamagias Interests LTD, was approved for a Payroll Protection Program loan for between \$150,000 and \$350,000.

Nick Cannon apologizes to Jewish community for hurtful words

By LUIS ANDRES HENAO Associated Press

Nick Cannon apologized to the Jewish community late Wednesday for his "hurtful and divisive" words, a day after ViacomCBS severed ties with him for the remarks made on a podcast.

The Anti-Defamation league and some Jewish leaders had condemned what they called anti-Semitic theories expressed by Cannon and demanded the apology.

"First and foremost I extend my deepest and most sincere apologies to my Jewish sisters and brothers for the hurtful and divisive words that came out of my mouth during my interview with Richard Griffin," Cannon said on his Twitter account.

"They reinforced the worst stereotypes of a proud and magnificent people and I feel ashamed of the uninformed and naïve place that these words came from. The video of this interview has since been removed."

ViacomCBS cut ties with the TV host and producer Tuesday in response to his comments on a podcast where he discussed racial bias.

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Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the Simon Wiesenthal Center's associate dean, told The Associated Press that Cannon reached out to him Wednesday and during a 30-minute telephone conversation he apologized to the Jewish community and Cooper asked him to post it on social media.

"He started out the right way, he said the right things. Half an hour is a long time, and we'll probably meet tomorrow in the LA area," Cooper said.

"He understood that the words and references that he thought were based on fact, turned out to be hateful propaganda and stereotypical rhetoric."

The TV host and producer wrote earlier a lengthy Facebook post defending himself and criticizing his firing for what the company deemed "bigotry" and "anti-Semitism," prominent members of the U.S. Jewish community said the post fell well short and demanded an apology.

"It's not enough to say, 'I'm not a racist, I'm not a bigot,'" Cooper had told the AP earlier. "The statements he made are hurtful, and they're false."

Cooper said Cannon should read and heed the words of Martin Luther King Jr., who "dedicated his life for civil rights for all and a color-blind America." Cooper also had advised him to seek out the guidance of basketball Hall of Famer-turned-writer Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, who has condemned several sports and entertainment celebrities for anti-Semitic posts.

In the hour-plus episode of "Cannon's Class" released last month that prompted his firing, Cannon and Richard "Professor Griff" Griffin, formerly of the rap group Public Enemy, contended that Black people are the true Hebrews and Jews have usurped that identity.

Cannon then argued that lighter-skinned people — "Jewish people, white people, Europeans" — "are a little less" and have a "deficiency" that historically caused them to act out of fear and commit acts of violence to survive.

"They had to be savages," he said.

"When I first heard about the comments Mr. Cannon made, it was very, very disappointing," said Oren Segal, director of the Anti-Defamation League's Center on Extremism. "We're in a time where hatred of all kinds is very much apparent. It's in the news every day."

"Anti-Semitism in particular over the past several years has been something that we've seen in increase, as well as racism and other issues," Segal added. "So when you hear an individual who has a public profile, who has influence over people, make statements that are highly offensive to the Jewish community, the first reaction is disappointment."

Anti-Semitic violent attacks rose worldwide by 18% in 2019 compared with the previous year, according to a report published in April by Tel Aviv University's Kantor Center for the Study of Contemporary Jewry.

Segal said some members of the Black Hebrew Israelite movement see themselves as the true "chosen people," and believe that Blacks, Hispanics and Native Americans are the true descendants of the 12 Tribes of Israel. He noted that not all spew hateful rhetoric, although many adhere to an extreme set of anti-Semitic beliefs.

Bruce D. Haynes, a professor of sociology at the University of California, Davis, who has been studying Black Jews for more than two decades, agreed that the remarks echo the ideas of extreme Black Hebrew Israelites and of Minister Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader who last year referenced "Satanic Jews" in a speech denying allegations of anti-Semitism. But Haynes took a more nuanced view.

"The danger is that those groups get confused with other self-identified Israelites like (Rabbi) Capers Funnye, who has a congregation in Chicago, and who is very much involved with the Ashkenazim Jewish community. So I want to make clear that the term 'Israelites' is a tricky term," he said.

"Is it anti-Semitic to say Black people are the real Israelites or the real Jews? I'm not sure I'd call it anti-Semitism," Haynes said. "It's not a good reading of history, but I wouldn't call it anti-Semitism. On the other hand, some of those groups that call Jews impostors certainly cross the line."

Until his firing, Cannon produced "Wild 'n Out," a comedy improv series for VH1, the ViacomCBS-owned cable channel.

In an earlier Facebook post, he had said that he welcomes being held accountable and takes responsibility for his words, while also accusing the company of trying to silence an "outspoken black man" and

demanding full ownership of the "Wild 'n Out" brand.

"I do not condone hate speech nor the spread of hateful rhetoric. ... The Black and Jewish communities have both faced enormous hatred, oppression persecution and prejudice for thousands of years and in many ways have and will continue to work together to overcome these obstacles," he wrote.

Cooper had said that Cannon should reject Farrakhan's hate speech and "reduce the long statement to two sentences" — a simple apology, which he did after their conversation.

"I just had the blessed opportunity to converse with Rabbi Abraham Cooper director of global social action @SimonWiesenthal. My first words to my brother was, I apologize for the hurt I caused the Jewish Community" Cannon tweeted.

"On my podcast I used words & referenced literature I assumed to be factual to uplift my community instead turned out to be hateful propaganda and stereotypical rhetoric that pained another community For this I am deeply sorry but now together we can write a new chapter of healing."

Associated Press Television Writer Lynn Elber contributed to this report.

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NYPD chief, protesters roughed up in Brooklyn Bridge clash

By MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Several New York City police officers were attacked and injured Wednesday as pro-police and anti-police protesters clashed on the Brooklyn Bridge, police said. The confrontation happened hours before Mayor Bill de Blasio signed into law a series of police accountability measures inspired by the killings of George Floyd, Eric Garner and other Black people.

At least four officers were hurt, including Chief of Department Terence Monahan, and 37 people were arrested, police said. Information on charges was not immediately available.

It was not clear how many protesters were injured. An Associated Press photographer witnessed several people getting roughed up by police, including a woman who ended up on the pavement with an officer pulling on her hair.

Surveillance video posted on social media by the police department showed a man on the bridge's pedestrian walkway rushing toward a group of officers and reaching over a fence to smack one of them in the head with a cane.

Police photos of the aftermath showed a lieutenant with a bloodied face, a detective holding a bandage to his head, and a bicycle officer helping a fellow officer dress a head wound.

Monahan, who last month knelt in a show of solidarity with protesters, sustained injuries to his hand.

He and the other injured officers were marching with a pro-police group led by local clergy when they were met on the bridge by activists, some of whom have been camping outside City Hall in recent weeks to demand severe cuts to police funding.

Some people in the pro-police group marched with a banner that said, "We Support the NYPD." The leader of that group said they were calling for an end to a recent spate of violence, including the shooting death of a 1-year-old boy in Brooklyn.

De Blasio helped paint a Black Lives Matter mural on a Bronx street before signing the police reform measures. They include a ban on chokeholds and other restraints that could restrict a person's breathing. The NYPD has long barred chokeholds, but that hasn't stopped some officers from using them in recent years — most notably in Garner's death on Staten Island just shy of six years ago.

Other reforms include requirements for officers to have their shield numbers visible — and not obscured by things like black mourning bands; for the NYPD to create and publish to its website a schedule of officer disciplinary violations and penalties, and for the department to disclose information about its secret surveillance technology.

Another makes clear that the public has a right to record police activity.

Wednesday's demonstrations and mural painting were the latest in a wave of protest activity across the country since George Floyd was killed May 25 by Minneapolis police.

The first few nights of protests in New York City were marred by stealing, unrest and violence inflicted both by and on police officers. Since then, protests have largely been peaceful.

Follow Michael Sisak on Twitter at twitter.com/mikesisak

Congress eyes new virus aid as school, health crisis deepens

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Two months after House Democrats approved a \$3 trillion COVID-19 aid package, Senate Republicans are poised to unveil their \$1 trillion counteroffer, straining to keep spending in check as the virus outbreak spreads and societal fallout deepens.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, who is expected to roll out the GOP bill as soon as next week, said Wednesday that he conferred with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin as the White House's point man on the talks prepares to negotiate with Democrats.

But having hit "pause" in May, as McConnell put it, Republicans now face a potentially more dire situation. They had hoped the pandemic would ease and the economic fallout would reverse. Instead, coronavirus cases are spiking, states are resuming shutdowns and parents are wondering if it's safe to send children back to school.

"Regretfully, this is not over," McConnell said during a visit to a hospital in Kentucky.

"There were some that hoped this would go away sooner than it has," he said, urging residents to wear masks and social distance.

"The straight talk here that everyone needs to understand: This is not going away," McConnell said.

This would be the fifth virus rescue bill since spring, all told an unprecedented federal intervention to counter the times. Unlike any health crisis since the 1918 Spanish flu and an economic upheaval on par with the Great Depression, Congress is trying to engineer a comprehensive national strategy to bring the pandemic under control.

Polling shows Americans are increasingly uneasy over President Donald Trump's handling of the virus outbreak, and lawmakers are racing to ease the health and economic crises before they, too, face voters in November.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi's sweeping \$3 trillion coronavirus aid bill, once dismissed by McConnell and others as a liberal wish list, now seems not as far-fetched.

"How many times have we said, 'We're at a critical moment?'" Pelosi said Wednesday at the Capitol. "We really are at a critical moment now."

Both the House and Senate have similar funding priorities — to help schools reopen, provide unemployment benefits for jobless Americans and ramp up health care testing, treatments and a vaccine — but they differ broadly in size and scope.

House Democrats provide \$100 billion for school reopenings in an education stabilization fund that Senate Democrats say could swell to \$430 billion to include more money for child care, colleges and other educational needs. Senate Republicans are floating some \$50 billion to \$75 billion in education funds, but talks are still ongoing.

This week, GOP Sen. Joni Ernst of Iowa, along with Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., the chair of the Health, Education and Labor Committee, proposed child care grants to providers who safely reopen. Similar bills in the past have come with about \$25 billion in funding.

The White House this week assured more education dollars would flow as Trump pushes to reopen schools.

"We want schools to be open, and they will be open," Trump told reporters Wednesday at the White House, before departing for an event in Georgia.

Trump's advisers are split, with some pushing an even more robust education expenditure, even if it riles Republicans intent on keeping record-setting deficits down. Some conservatives want the education

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dollars tied to school reopenings or even sent directly to parents, like a school voucher.

The two sides are also divided over how much aid to send to cash-strapped states and cities pleading for money and out-of-work Americans at a time of record-setting unemployment.

Republicans want to discontinue the \$600 weekly unemployment boost that expires at the end of the month. They say it's a disincentive to returning to work and want to reduce it to a few hundred dollars a month.

In its place, Republicans are eyeing a return-to-work stipend as well as tax breaks for employers who upgrade workplaces with safety measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Democrats want to keep the \$600 jobless benefit boost, and Pelosi's bill would send nearly \$1 trillion to states and cities to shore up budgets and avoid layoffs of municipal workers.

Congress is also considering redirecting some already-approved funds. For example, the popular Paycheck Protection Program of small business loans has leftover funding that could be used for a revamped business loan program from GOP Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida.

One uncertainty is how to improve the nation's poor performance on virus testing.

Both Republicans and Democrats complain that \$25 billion in testing funds that were approved in April remain unspent even as certain parts of the country have testing shortages and widespread delays in testing results.

Pelosi's bill provides \$75 billion more for virus testing and contact tracing, with directives to the federal government to set up a national testing program. She said Wednesday that it's time for Trump to invoke the Defense Production Act to provide equipment and supplies needed for a testing protocol. Senate Democrats have chronicled the Trump administration's "chaotic" approach and proposed a 26-point testing plan.

Republicans have remained largely silent on how much testing funding will be made available in the new bill. McConnell assured Kentuckians on Wednesday, "We are pursuing testing, treatment and vaccines like the country pursued the Manhattan Project in World War II."

Fed survey says economy has picked up but outlook cloudy

By MARTIN CRUTSINGER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Federal Reserve says economic activity has picked up in most regions of the country but still remains well below pre-pandemic levels with the country facing high levels of uncertainty.

The Fed reported Wednesday that its latest survey of economic conditions around the country found improvements in consumer spending and other areas but said the gains were from very low levels seen when widespread lockdowns push the country into a deep recession.

And the report said that business contacts in the Fed's 12 regions remained wary about the future.

"Outlooks remained highly uncertain as contacts grappled with how long the COVID-19 pandemic would continue and the magnitude of its economic implications," the Fed said in its latest Beige Book.

Economists said the Fed survey underscored how uncertain the outlook was at present.

"Last month's optimism as businesses were reopening has since given way to concerns over reinforced shutdowns, announced delays in school openings and growing consumer fears," said Curt Long, chief economist of the National Association of Federally-Insured Credit Unions. "A smooth path back to normal was never likely, but it will still leave consumers and businesses more cautious until a vaccine is ready and widely available."

The information in the report will provide guidance for Fed officials at their next meeting on July 28-29. Economists expect the central bank to keep its benchmark interest rate at a record low as it tries to cushion the economy from the pandemic downturn.

The Beige Book found only modest signs of improvement in most areas, noting that consumer spending had picked up as many nonessential businesses were allowed to reopen, helping to boost retail sales in all 12 Fed districts but construction remained subdued.

Manufacturing activity moved up, the report said, 'but from a very low level.'

The economy entered a recession in February, ending a nearly 11-year long economic expansion, the

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longest in U.S. history. Millions of people were thrown out of work and while 7.3 million jobs were created in May and June that represented only about one-third of the jobs lost in March and April.

And now, in recent weeks with virus cases surging in many states, there are concerns that the fledgling recovery could be in danger of stalling out.

The Beige Book reported that employment had increased in almost all districts in the latest survey, which was based on responses received by July 6, but layoffs had continued as well.

"Contacts in nearly every district noted difficulty in bringing back workers because of health and safety concerns, child care needs and generous unemployment insurance benefits," the Fed said.

The report said that many businesses who had been able to retain workers because of the government's Paycheck Protection Program said they might still be forced to lay off staff if their businesses do not see a pickup in demand.

The Fed in March cut its benchmark interest rate to a record low of 0 to 0.25% and purchased billions of dollars of Treasury and mortgage-backed bonds to stabilize financial markets.

But Fed officials have recently expressed concerns that a resurgence of the virus in many states may require more support from the central bank and from Congress.

Fed board member Lael Brainard said in a speech Tuesday that the economy was likely to "face headwinds for some time" and that continued support from the government will remain "vital."

The Trump administration has said it plans to negotiate another support package once Congress returns from recess next week. Republicans and Democrats remain far apart on what should be in the new package with Democrats pushing for a package of around \$3 trillion while GOP lawmakers have called for smaller support of around \$1 trillion.

Congress will only have two weeks to reach a compromise before two of the most popular programs providing paycheck protection for workers and expanded unemployment benefits expire. The unemployment support provided an extra \$600 per week but many Republicans say that amount was too high and kept some people from returning to work.

Climate change makes freak Siberian heat 600 times likelier

By SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Nearly impossible without man-made global warming, this year's freak Siberian heat wave is producing climate change's most flagrant footprint of extreme weather, a new flash study says.

International scientists released a study Wednesday that found the greenhouse effect multiplied the chance of the region's prolonged heat by at least 600 times, and maybe tens of thousands of times. In the study, which has not yet gone through peer review, the team looked at Siberia from January to June, including a day that hit 100 degrees (38 degrees Celsius) for a new Arctic record.

Scientists from the United Kingdom, Russia, France, Netherlands, Germany and Switzerland used 70 climate models running thousands of complex simulations comparing current conditions to a world without man-made warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas. They found that without climate change the type of prolonged heat that hit Siberia would happen once in 80,000 years, "effectively impossible without human influence," said study lead author Andrew Ciavarella, a scientist at the UK Met Office.

This study, coordinated by World Weather Attribution, was done in two weeks and hasn't yet been put through the microscope of peer review and published in a major scientific journal. But the researchers who specialize in these real-time studies to search for fingerprints of climate change in extreme events usually do get their work later published in a peer-reviewed journal and use methods that outside scientists say are standard and proven. World Weather Attribution's past work has found some weather extremes were not triggered by climate change.

But 2020's Siberian heat wave stood out among the many studied, said attribution team co-lead Friederike Otto, acting director of Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute.

"Definitely from everything we have done it's the strongest signal that we have seen," Otto said.

The team looked at both the average temperature in Siberia over the first six months of the year when

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temperatures averaged 9 degrees (5 degrees Celsius) above normal and the heat spike of 100 degrees occurred in the Russian town of Verkhoyansk in June. Both just really couldn't happen in a world without the additional heat-trapping gases from burning fossil fuel, Ciavarella said.

The scientists said the heat added to problems with widespread wildfires, pest outbreaks and the thawing of permafrost which led to a massive pipeline oil spill. Thawing permafrost also has the potential to release huge amounts of greenhouse gases trapped under the frozen ground, which could then worsen the warming, scientists said.

"This event is really worrying," said study co-author Olga Zolina, a climate scientist at the P.P. Shirshov Institute of Oceanology in Moscow.

At least 10 outside scientists contacted by The Associated Press said this study was scientifically sound, using established and proper techniques.

"They have, in an impressively short time, marshaled a lot of different datasets together which really give credence to their results," said Danish Meteorological Institute climate scientist Ruth Mottram, who wasn't part of the research.

These types of studies allow people and world leaders to "connect the dots" between extreme weather events and climate change and prepare for them, said French climate scientist Valerie Masson-Delmotte, who wasn't part of the research.

"The climate of the future is very different as this paper shows," said Pennsylvania State University meteorology professor David Titley, who wasn't part of the research. "We can either adapt or suffer."

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

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @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.

Lawyers: Trump might claim harassment in tax return quest

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A week after losing a Supreme Court ruling, President Donald Trump's lawyers said Wednesday they're considering challenging a subpoena for his tax records by criminal prosecutors on grounds that it's a fishing expedition or a form of harassment or retaliation against him.

The plans were outlined in a letter to a Manhattan federal judge overseeing legal squabbles related to Manhattan District Attorney Cyrus Vance Jr.'s request to Trump's longtime accountant for eight years of the president's personal and corporate tax records in a criminal probe.

The judge, Victor Marrero, scheduled a hearing for Thursday.

Vance is seeking the records in part for a probe of payments that Trump's then-personal lawyer, Michael Cohen, arranged during the 2016 presidential race to keep the porn actress Stormy Daniels and model Karen McDougal from airing their claims of extramarital affairs with Trump. Trump has denied the affairs.

Cohen was sentenced to three years in prison after pleading guilty to charges related to campaign finance and lying to Congress, among other crimes.

In its ruling last week, the Supreme Court rejected arguments by Trump's lawyers and the Justice Department that the president cannot be investigated while he holds office or that a prosecutor must show a greater need than normal to obtain the tax records.

The top court returned the fight over the subpoena to Marrero, saying Trump's lawyers may still challenge it in the same manner as anyone served with a subpoena.

Lawyers for the Republican president noted that the Supreme Court in its ruling said they can raise arguments that the subpoenas seek too much information, or are designed to impede Trump's constitutional duties or harass, manipulate or retaliate against him.

"The President intends to raise some or all of these arguments," the lawyers wrote.

Lawyers for the prosecutor wrote in the jointly submitted letter that Trump's lawyers are asking for more than they are allowed. They said Trump's lawyers are basing their plans on a concurring opinion that conflicts with the Supreme Court's majority opinion in the case, and that the lower-court judge already rejected the same arguments Trump's lawyers are suggesting they might make.

Last September, Trump's lawyers argued to Marrero that the subpoena requests by Vance were a "bad faith effort to harass" Trump. The judge rejected the argument.

"This Court has already found that there was no demonstrated bad faith, harassment, or any other unusual circumstance," Vance's lawyers wrote. "And this Court has rejected the President's claim that there was any evidence of a 'secondary motive' that goes beyond good faith enforcement of the criminal laws."

Lawyers for Vance, a Democrat, also objected to a request from Trump's lawyers that they be entitled to gather new evidence before the subpoenas are enforced and that nothing occur until the Supreme Court issues a mandate.

In Wednesday's letter, they also expressed confidence after the Supreme Court victory, saying they could enforce the subpoena immediately but were holding off, "provided the appropriate schedule moves on an expedited basis."

Vance's attorney, Carey Dunne, also asked the Supreme Court Wednesday to formally issue a certified copy of its decision last week to the lower court so Trump's lawyers cannot argue that everyone must wait another three weeks before proceeding.

Dunne said issues could arise in the "near future" concerning the applicable statutes of limitations if proceedings are delayed, potentially giving Trump "the absolutely temporary immunity" that the Supreme Court rejected. He also said further delay could result in the fading of memories by witnesses and the loss or disappearance of documents.

Associated Press Writer Mark Sherman contributed to this report from Washington.

Profile of a killer: Unraveling the deadly new coronavirus

By ADAM GELLER and MALCOLM RITTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — What is this enemy?

Seven months after the first patients were hospitalized in China battling an infection doctors had never seen before, the world's scientists and citizens have reached an unsettling crossroads.

Countless hours of treatment and research, trial and error now make it possible to take much closer measure of the new coronavirus and the lethal disease it has unleashed. But to take advantage of that intelligence, we must confront our persistent vulnerability: The virus leaves no choice.

"It's like we're in a battle with something that we can't see, that we don't know, and we don't know where it's coming from," said Vivian Castro, a nurse supervisor at St. Joseph's Medical Center in Yonkers, just north of New York City, which struggled with its caseload this spring.

Castro had treated scores of infected patients before she, too, was hospitalized for the virus in April, then spent two weeks in home quarantine. As soon as she returned to the emergency room for her first shift, she rushed to comfort yet another casualty -- a man swallowing the few words he could muster between gasps for air.

"It just came back, that fear," she said. "I just wanted to tell him not to give up."

The coronavirus is invisible, but seemingly everywhere. It requires close contact to spread, but it has reached around the globe faster than any pandemic in history.

COVID-19 was not even on the world's radar in November. But it has caused economic upheaval echoing the Great Depression, while claiming more than 580,000 lives. In the U.S. alone, the virus has already killed more Americans than died fighting in World War I.

Even those figures don't capture the pandemic's full sweep. Nine of every 10 students worldwide shut out of their schools at one point. More than 7 million flights grounded. Countless moments of celebration

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and sorrow -- weddings and graduations, baby showers and funerals -- put off, reconfigured or abandoned because of worries about safety.

In short, the coronavirus has rescripted nearly every moment of daily life. And fighting it -- whether by searching for a vaccine or seeking to protect family -- takes knowing the enemy. It's the essential first step in what could be an extended quest for some version of normalcy.

"There's light at the end of tunnel, but it's a very, very long tunnel," said Dr. Irwin Redlener, director of the National Center for Disaster Preparedness at Columbia University.

"There's a lot we don't know. But I think it's absolutely certain we're going to be adapting to a new way of life. That's the reality."

The new coronavirus is roughly 1,000 times narrower than a human hair. But scrutinized through an electron scope, it is clear this enemy is well-armed.

Coronaviruses, including the newest one, are named for the spikes that cover their outer surface like a crown, or corona in Latin. Using those club-shaped spikes, the virus latches on to the outer wall of a human cell, invades it and replicates, creating viruses to hijack more cells.

Find a way to block or bind the spikes and you can stop the virus.

Once inside a human cell, the virus' RNA, or genetic code, commandeers its machinery, providing instructions to make thousands of virus copies.

But the coronavirus has a weakness: an outer membrane that can be destroyed by ordinary soap. That neutralizes the virus, which is why health experts emphasize the need to wash hands.

Like organisms, viruses evolve, searching for traits that will ensure survival, said Charles Marshall, a professor of paleontology at the University of California and self-described "deep time evolutionary biologist."

"Coronaviruses fit into the standard evolutionary paradigm extremely well, which is if you've had some innovation, you get into some new environment ... you get into a human and you do well, you're going to proliferate," Marshall said.

There are hundreds of coronaviruses, but just seven known to infect people. Four are responsible for some common colds. But in 2002, a virus called SARS, for severe acute respiratory syndrome, spread from China to sicken about 8,000 people worldwide, killing more than 700. Another coronavirus called Middle Eastern respiratory syndrome, or MERS — identified in 2012 — spread to humans through camels.

The new coronavirus, though, has captivated scientists' attention unlike any in decades.

When researcher Thomas Friedrich logged on to his computer at the University of Wisconsin-Madison after a meeting in January, he found colleagues had been frantically posting messages to one another about the new virus.

"People were getting increasingly excited and beginning to brainstorm ideas," said Friedrich, who has spent years studying other infectious diseases.

Now much of Friedrich's lab is focused on the coronavirus, studying its spread in Wisconsin, and collaborating with scientists around the world examining the disease's behavior in monkeys.

Even early on it was clear this virus posed a major threat, he said. Human immune systems had never encountered it. And unlike Zika, whose spread can be controlled by targeting mosquitoes, or AIDS, which most often requires sexual contact, the new virus is readily transmitted through droplets in the air.

"It had all the hallmarks, to me, of a potential pandemic," Friedrich said. "Basically, everyone in the world is susceptible."

The new virus has breached borders and claimed victims with stealth and speed that make it difficult to track.

Scientists are fairly certain the disease originated in bats, which harbor many coronaviruses. To get to humans, it may have been passed through another animal, possibly consumed for meat. By late January, when Chinese authorities walled off the city of Wuhan, where the disease was first diagnosed, it was too late to stop the spread.

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The most severe pandemic in recent history, the "Spanish flu" of 1918, was spread by infected soldiers dispatched to fight World War I. But aboard ships, it took weeks for the troops and the disease to cross oceans.

Now, with more than 100,000 commercial flights a day ferrying tourists, business travelers and students around the globe, the new virus spread rapidly and virtually invisibly, said medical historian Mark Honigsbaum, author of "The Pandemic Century: One Hundred Years of Panic, Hysteria and Hubris."

"By the time we woke up to the outbreak in Italy, it had been there for weeks if not months," he said.

Soon after the first case in Wuhan, Chinese tourists with the virus traveled to France. But doctors there reported recently that a fishmonger contracted the disease even earlier than that, from an unknown source. On January 21, the first confirmed U.S. case was reported in Washington state, in a man who had traveled to Asia.

"It's one person coming in from China and we have it under control. It's going to be just fine," President Donald Trump said at the time. Ten days later, he blocked entry to most travelers from China.

But genetic analysis of samples taken from New York patients showed most of the virus present arrived from Europe instead, and took root in February -- well before anyone thought about quarantining after a trip to Madrid, London or Paris.

Since February, when Dr. Daniel Griffin began treating patients suspected of having COVID-19, he's cared for more than 1,000 people with the disease, first noted for attacking the lungs. But the infection certainly does not stop there.

"I am actually shocked," said Griffin, a specialist in infectious diseases at New York's Columbia University Medical Center. "This virus seems to leave nothing untouched."

Scientists are getting a handle on the many ways the disease affects the body, but it's a scramble.

The lungs are, indeed, ground zero. Many patients find themselves gasping for breath, unable to say more than a word or two.

Even after five days in the hospital, Vivian Castro, the nurse who became infected, said she returned home struggling for air.

"I climbed two flights of stairs to my room and I felt like I was going to die," she said.

The reason why becomes clear in autopsies of those who have died, some with lungs that weigh far more than usual. Under a microscope, evidence of the virus' destruction is even more striking.

When Dr. Sanjay Mukhopadhyay examined autopsy samples from a 77-year-old Oklahoma man, he noted changes to the microscopic sacs in the patient's lungs. In a healthy lung, oxygen passes through the thin walls of those sacs into the bloodstream. But in the Oklahoma patient, the virus had turned the sac walls so thick with debris that oxygen was blocked.

The thickened walls "were everywhere," preventing the lungs from sustaining the rest of the body, said Mukhopadhyay, of Ohio's Cleveland Clinic.

Autopsies reveal "what the virus is actually doing" inside patient's bodies, said Dr. Desiree Marshall, a pathologist at the University of Washington who recently examined the heart of a Seattle man who died from disease.

"Each autopsy has the chance to tell us something new," she said. And those insights from the bodies of the dead could lead to more effective treatment of the living.

The coronavirus, though, keeps raising fresh questions. It left the hearts of two men in their 40s, recently treated by Griffin, flaccid and unable to pump enough blood. Some younger people have arrived in emergency rooms suffering strokes caused by blood clotting, another calling card.

Kidneys and livers fail in some patients and blood clots put limbs at risk of amputation. Some patients hallucinate or have trouble maintaining balance. Some get a treatable paralysis in arms or legs. Many have diarrhea, but often don't mention it until Griffin asks.

Their explanation? "That's the least of my problems when I can't breathe."

Initially, doctors often put patients on ventilators if their blood oxygen levels dropped. But death rates were so high they now try other strategies first, like turning patients on their stomachs, which can help

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them breathe. The truth is that hospital workers are learning as they go, sometimes painfully.

"Every patient that I see, I think that could've been me," said Dr. Stuart Moser, a cardiologist hospitalized in New York in March after he was infected. He recalls fearing that he might be put on a ventilator and wondering if he'd ever see his family again. Now, back at work, he said much of what he and his colleagues have learned about the virus' myriad effects enables them only to treat patients' symptoms.

"It's difficult because they have so many problems and there are so many patients," Moser said, "and you just want to do the right thing -- give people the best chance to get better."

In recent weeks, researchers have recruited 3,000 patients from around the world in a bid to solve a puzzling anomaly. Why does the coronavirus ravage some previously healthy patients, while leaving others relatively unscathed?

The project, called the COVID Human Genetic Effort, focuses on each person's unique genetic makeup to seek explanations for why some got sick while others stay healthy. It's one of several projects looking for genetic causes of susceptibility, including recent work by other labs suggesting a link between blood type and risk of serious illness.

"Step one is understanding and step two is fixing. There is no other way," said one of the project's leaders, Jean-Laurent Casanova, of The Rockefeller University in New York. He is paid by the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, which also helps fund The Associated Press Health and Science Department.

His project focuses on people 50 or younger who had no health problems before the coronavirus put them in intensive care. But the question of why the disease affects people so differently has broader implications.

It's not clear, for example, why the disease has had such a limited impact on children, compared to other age groups. People older than 65 are well over 100 times more likely to be hospitalized for the virus than people under 18. But so far, there's no explanation why.

Do children resist infection for some reason? Or is it that, even when infected, they are less likely to develop symptoms? If so, what does that mean about their chances for passing the infection along to others, like their grandparents?

These aren't just academic questions. Answers will help in assessing the risks of reopening schools. And they could eventually lead to ways to help make older people resistant to the disease.

In largely sparing children, the pandemic virus echoes the bugs that caused SARS and MERS, said Dr. Sonja Rasmussen, a professor of pediatrics and epidemiology at the University of Florida.

Scientists wonder if children might have some key difference in their cells, such as fewer of the specialized proteins that the coronavirus latch onto. Or maybe their immune systems react differently than in adults.

While the virus has mostly bypassed children, researchers have recently been troubled by a serious, albeit uncommon, condition in some young patients, that can cause inflammation in hearts, kidneys, lungs and other organs. Most patients recovered, but the potential for long-term damage remains uncertain.

"This is what happens with a new virus," Rasmussen said. "There's a lot we don't know about it. We're on that steep learning curve."

With states and countries reopening in the face of an ongoing pandemic, it's even more crucial to find solutions. At least the last few months have spotlighted the most critical questions.

Can people who have been infected with the disease get it again?

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the U.S. government's top infectious disease expert, has said that having the disease once should confer some degree of immunity. But it's not clear how much or for how long, or what levels or types of antibodies people must have to protect them against future illness.

If some people harbor the virus without symptoms, how can we block transmission?

The reality is that many infected people will never feel symptoms or get sick. That means temperature checks and other strategies based on symptoms won't be enough to stop it. Instead, many experts believe, widespread testing is needed to find silent carriers, isolate them until they are no longer contagious, and track down those they may have infected. Masks and distancing can help prevent infection and slow the

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spread of the virus.

Will researchers find medicines that can be used to treat the disease?

Hundreds of studies are under way, testing existing medicines and experimental ones. So far, only one -- a common steroid called dexamethasone -- has been shown to increase survival. An antiviral medicine, remdesivir, has been shown to shorten recovery time. Two others -- the malaria drugs chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine -- have not proven safe or effective for treating COVID-19 in large-scale trials, but some studies are still testing them to see if they might help prevent infection or illness.

How long will it take to find a vaccine?

Scientists in more than 150 labs around the world are pursuing a vaccine and nearly two dozen candidates are in various stages of testing. But there's no guarantee any will pan out. Finding out if any offer true protection will require testing thousands of people in places where the virus is spreading widely. Some huge studies are expected to begin this month.

"It's almost the Manhattan Project of today, where an enormous amount of resources are being devoted to this," said Rene Najera, an epidemiologist at Johns Hopkins University and the editor of a vaccine history website run by The College of Physicians of Philadelphia.

In the U.S., the goal is to have 300 million doses of potential vaccines by January. But any that fail tests will have to be thrown out. The World Health Organization has called for equitable sharing of any eventual vaccine between rich and poor countries, but how that will happen is far from clear.

It's also uncertain how useful any vaccine will be if a sizable number of people, their skepticism fed by misinformation, refuse to be inoculated.

Even an effective vaccine will not address the likelihood that, given the large number of coronaviruses and increasing contact between people and the animals harboring them, the world is very likely to face other pandemics, said Honigsbaum, the medical historian.

That means uncertainty will linger as a hallmark of the new normal.

The knowledge gained about the coronavirus could prove invaluable in defusing that doubt and, eventually, in defeating the enemy. The real uncertainty, Redlener said, is whether people will use the lessons learned to protect themselves from the virus -- or downplay the threat at their peril.

Associated Press reporters Carla K. Johnson, Marilyn Marchione, Sam McNeil and Lauran Neergaard contributed to this story.

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Without waiter jobs, what happens to creative New York?

By DEEPTI HAJELA Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — It's been the story for many a starry-eyed creative type looking for a big break in the Big Apple — wait tables to pay the bills while auditioning, performing, singing, painting, dancing, writing, whatever it takes to make the dreams of success come true.

But there's been a plot twist, thanks to the coronavirus putting food servers out of work in recent months as restaurants were forced to shut down their dine-in services. And much uncertainty remains over what restaurant dining will look like even as New York City reopens.

Questions of whether there will be enough business for establishments to stay open and even have waiter jobs to fill are causing concern about what that's going to mean for the city's creative class if the jobs that helped them be able to live here and add to the city's artistic culture are no longer readily available.

"It really is a part of the artist's life in New York, so I don't know what that's going to look like if it's just suddenly not an option anymore," said Travis McClung, 28, who has spent close to nine years waiting tables while doing theater, singing and more recently, trying to build his career in video editing and post-production.

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The virus has been devastating for the city's restaurant workers. According to the state Department of Labor, restaurants and other eateries employed just over 273,000 people in February, before the city shut down in mid-March due to the pandemic. In April, during the peak of virus cases, that number had fallen to under 78,000. As the city reopened in May, it rose slightly to close to 100,000, still vastly below where it had been.

And while outdoor dining has been allowed in recent weeks, with around 6,600 restaurants in the five boroughs applying for permits to feed people on sidewalks and streets, the return of indoor dining has been put off indefinitely over fears that confined quarters would make virus cases spike.

For McClung, who came to New York City in 2009 from a Dallas, Texas, suburb to study theater in college and started waiting tables here, a restaurant job has been a safety net, of sorts. Pre-pandemic, New York City's vibrant restaurant scene was busy enough that he always felt he had a fallback.

"It was a sense of security, it let me stay in New York City, pay the rent here," he said.

That's what led to his last pre-virus waiter job, a position at a casual dining place on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

"I had a big gig editing and it canceled and I panicked and then my friend posted he was leaving that job," McClung said. "I messaged him for a referral and then I got hired the next day."

Rachel Berry, who moved to New York City in 2004, tried her hand at a bunch of different jobs like dog walking and nannying before moving to bartending and some waiting tables in 2016.

The Laurel, Maryland, native even spent some time at a 9-to-5 gig in her early 20s, but found the structure too rigid to give her enough time to work on her creative pursuits, which have included photography, painting, performing and most recently, interior design work.

"There's just something about the food service industry," the 36-year-old said. "It affords me a life that I can get by in New York."

She worries now about what will still be available in restaurants, as social distancing restrictions will require lower capacities in food and drink establishments for the foreseeable future, and whether she would have to work even more in other fields like retail to make what she has been able to in food service.

"Am I going to have the same opportunities afforded to me financially, or, you know, am I going to be stuck in this, I need two to three jobs to get by," Berry asked.

And that's of course assuming people don't leave, or hesitate to come to New York City now in the first place, said Jen Lyon, owner of MeanRed Productions, a company that puts on arts and music events.

That's a concern to her, as someone who looks to work with up-and-comers, in a city where it was already expensive and difficult for artists to sustain themselves.

As someone who spent years bartending, she has an appreciation for food service jobs and what they offer creative types.

They're "the best jobs to have when you needed to focus on your art, especially in New York," she said.

But now, if those jobs largely disappear, "What happens in my world is suddenly I don't have young artists to work with because they can't afford New York," she said. "You don't have people creating art in New York anymore."

The pandemic "has scattered a lot of the potential artists," she said. "We're going to lose a decade of possible talent until people figure out how to stay."

Losing its creatives is also a "huge threat" to the city's fabric overall, said Eli Dvorkin, editorial and policy director at the Center for an Urban Future, which advocates for policies that make New York City more equitable.

"That's a huge problem for New York which has been so dependent on its role as a cultural capital of the world," he said.

"As a city we can't afford to lose our creative edge. It's been one of the key drivers of the city's economic growth over the past decades," Dvorkin added. "It's one of the reasons why I think New York maintains its status as a beacon for creative, innovative people from all over the world."

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Hajela has covered New York for The Associated Press for more than 20 years. Follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/dhajela>.

2021 Rose Parade canceled due to coronavirus pandemic

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — The 2021 Rose Parade has been canceled because of the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on planning for the New Year's Day tradition and the risk of spreading infections among its huge audience and participants, organizers said Wednesday.

The Pasadena, California, Tournament of Roses Association said the decision was put off until organizers were certain that safety restrictions would prevent staging of the 132nd parade.

Planning for the Rose Bowl college football game that traditionally follows the parade is continuing, the association said.

The parade is held every Jan. 1 except when New Year's Day falls on a Sunday and the event is pushed to Jan. 2.

Since its inception in 1891, the parade has only not occurred during the wartime years of 1942, 1943 and 1945, the association said.

"The health and well-being of our parade participants and guests, as well as that of our volunteer members, professional staff and partners, is our number one priority," Bob Miller, the 2021 president of the association, said in a statement.

The event is people-intensive, starting with hundreds of members of the association.

Thousands of spectators normally jam the 5-mile (8-kilometer) parade route through Pasadena, some camping out overnight on sidewalks to ensure a good view.

For days ahead of time, volunteers work to decorate the flower-laden floats that are the trademark of the parade.

There are also marching bands from across the nation and around the world and equestrian units that not only take part in the parade but in other events.

The association said a feasibility report by public health experts from the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine found that even with intensive efforts to ensure social distancing and use of face coverings the event would be a high-risk environment for spread of the virus.

It noted that many attendees would be in high-risk groups such as older people and that national and international travel could cause two-way transmission of infections.

Preparation for each parade normally begins during the preceding February.

"In addition to the advance planning required by our band and equestrian units, the construction of our floats takes many months and typically requires thousands of volunteers to gather in ways that aren't in compliance with safety recommendations and won't be safe in the coming months," said David Eads, the executive director and CEO.

The association said it was working with broadcast partners and sponsors on an alternative celebration and promised details in the coming weeks.

The Jan. 1 Rose Bowl football game would be a college football playoff semifinal.

"While the safety and well-being of the student athletes, university personnel and fans is our top priority, we remain hopeful that the Granddaddy of Them All will take place on New Year's Day," Eads said.

'Magic School Bus' author Joanna Cole dies at age 75

NEW YORK (AP) — Author Joanna Cole, whose "Magic School Bus" books transported millions of young people on extraordinary and educational adventures, has died at age 75.

Scholastic announced that Cole, a resident of Sioux City, Iowa, died Sunday. The cause was idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis.

"Joanna Cole had the perfect touch for blending science and story," Scholastic Chairman and CEO Dick Robinson said in a statement Wednesday. "Joanna's books, packed with equal parts humor and informa-

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tion, made science both easy to understand and fun for the hundreds of millions of children around the world who read her books and watched the award-winning television series."

The idea for "The Magic School Bus" came in the mid-1980s. Scholastic senior editorial director Craig Walker was receiving frequent requests from teachers for books about science and thought a combination of storytelling and science would catch on. He brought in Cole, whose humorous work such as the children's book "Cockroaches" he had admired, and illustrator Bruce Degen. With the ever maddening but inspired Ms. Frizzle leading her students on journeys that explored everything from the solar system to underwater, "Magic School Bus" books have sold tens of millions of copies and were the basis for a popular animated TV series and a Netflix series. Plans for a live-action movie, with Elizabeth Banks as Ms. Frizzle, were announced last month. Ms. Frizzle was based in part on a fifth-grade teacher of Cole's.

"I think for Joanna the excitement was always in the idea. What? Why? How?" Degen said in a statement. "And with "The Magic School Bus" it was how to explain it so that it is accurate and in a form that a kid can understand and use. And you can actually joke around while you are learning. She had a rare sense of what could be humorous."

Cole and Degen recently completed "The Magic School Bus Explores Human Evolution," scheduled to come out next spring.

A lifelong fan of science, Cole was a native of Newark, New Jersey, and a graduate of the City College of New York who worked as a children's librarian and magazine editor before "The Magic School Bus."

She is survived by her husband Phil; daughter Rachel Cole and her husband, John Helms; grandchildren, Annabelle and William, and her sister Virginia McBride.

Ivanka Trump defends Goya post that watchdogs call unethical

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Ivanka Trump on Wednesday defended tweeting a photo of herself holding up a can of Goya beans to buck up a Hispanic-owned business that she says has been unfairly treated, arguing that she has "every right" to publicly express her support.

Government watchdogs countered that President Donald Trump's daughter and senior adviser doesn't have the right to violate ethics rules that bar government officials from using their public office to endorse specific products or groups.

These groups contend Ivanka Trump's action also highlights broader concerns about how the president and those around him often blur the line between politics and governing. The White House would be responsible for disciplining Ivanka Trump for any ethics violation but chose not to in a similar case involving White House counselor Kellyanne Conway in 2017.

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows told reporters accompanying the president to Atlanta on Wednesday that he doubted Ivanka Trump would face any repercussions.

Goya became the target of a consumer boycott after CEO Robert Unanue praised the president at a Hispanic event at the White House last Thursday.

Trump tweeted the next day about his "love" for Goya, and his daughter followed up late Tuesday by tweeting the photo of herself holding a can of Goya black beans with a caption that read, "If it's Goya, it has to be good," in English and Spanish.

Almost immediately, government watchdogs and social media commentators accused Ivanka Trump of violating ethics rules — an issue that was not addressed in a White House response statement that blamed the news media and the culture of boycotting certain views.

"Only the media and the cancel culture movement would criticize Ivanka for showing her personal support for a company that has been unfairly mocked, boycotted and ridiculed for supporting this administration — one that has consistently fought for and delivered for the Hispanic community," White House spokesperson Carolina Hurley said in an emailed statement.

"Ivanka is proud of this strong, Hispanic-owned business with deep roots in the U.S. and has every right to express her personal support," Hurley said.

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Ivanka Trump sent the tweet from a personal Twitter account that does double duty chronicling her work on various White House initiatives.

Trump himself appeared to back up his daughter Wednesday by posting a photo on his Instagram account showing him in the Oval Office in front of various Goya products arrayed on his desk. As president, Trump is exempt from many of the rules that federal workers must follow.

Walter Shaub, former director of the Office of Government Ethics, said on Twitter that the tweets and photos amounted to "an official campaign by the Trump administration to support Goya, making it all the more clear that Ivanka's tweet was a violation of the misuse of position regulations."

Shaub left government in 2017 after clashing with the Trump administration over ethics rules.

Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington said the rules are clear.

"The ethics rules for executive branch employees say that you can't use your official position to promote a private business," said Noah Bookbinder, executive director of CREW. "It's pretty clear that the context in which this came out is that Goya had been supportive of the Trump administration and the Trump administration was being supportive of Goya."

Craig Holman, the Capitol Hill lobbyist for Public Citizen, said the episode was reminiscent of a 2017 incident when, during a nationally broadcast cable TV interview, Conway urged Trump supporters to buy Ivanka Trump's clothing and accessories after Nordstrom dropped the fashion line. The White House later said Conway had been "counseled" about her comments.

Holman argued that Ivanka Trump's action was less of a mistake given the Conway incident.

"They decided to violate federal law thinking that it will benefit them politically," he said. Trump is looking to improve his standing with Latino voters before November's election. He won the votes of about 3 in 10 Latino voters in 2016.

Meadows defended Ivanka Trump. "I don't know from my standpoint I see this as a huge promotion of Goya Foods as much as it is expressing appreciation for someone who is willing to show great political courage," the White House chief of staff said.

The president often blurs the lines between politics and governing.

Trump used a speech Wednesday at a UPS facility in Atlanta on environmental permitting to rail against allowing mail-in voting for the November election and against Democratic rival Joe Biden. He also used a Tuesday news conference in the White House Rose Garden, where presidents traditionally have refrained from politics, to lash out at Biden.

Last year, Trump floated the idea of hosting a 2020 summit of world leaders at his private, for-profit golf club near Miami, but backed down after a bipartisan outcry over the conflict of interest.

Separately Wednesday, CREW filed a complaint with the Office of Special Counsel, an independent federal investigative and prosecutorial agency, against Meadows. The group alleges that Meadows violated the Hatch Act during recent television interviews in which he advocated for Trump and against Biden. The Hatch Act prohibits government officials from using their positions to influence political campaigns.

The Office of Special Counsel said it could not comment beyond acknowledging receipt of the complaint. The White House did not respond to a request for comment.

Follow Darlene Superville on Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/dsupervilleap>

Court: Absentee ballots that come after election won't count

By DAVID EGGERT Associated Press

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — The Michigan appeals court denied a request to require the counting of absentee ballots received after the time polls close on Election Day, ruling that the battleground state's deadline remains intact despite voters' approval of a constitutional amendment that expanded mail-in voting.

The court, in a 2-1 decision released Wednesday, said it is up to lawmakers to change the deadline that has been in place for at least 91 years. The League of Women Voters of Michigan and three voters sued in May, seeking a declaration that absentee ballots be counted as long as they are mailed on or before

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Election Day and are received within six days of the election.

The plaintiffs, who will appeal to the state Supreme Court, pointed to voters' new constitutional rights to cast an absentee ballot without giving a reason 40 days before an election and to do it in person or by mail. They also noted fears of visiting polling places during the coronavirus pandemic.

"We follow the view that courts should typically defer to the Legislature in making policy decisions," Judge David Sawyer wrote, adding that organizers of the ballot drive did not include a deadline in the initiative.

Judge Michael Riordan agreed with the ruling, while Judge Elizabeth Gleicher dissented.

"This case should be easy," she said. "Because voters have a right to vote by mail if they mail their ballots to the clerk during the 40 days before an election, they have right to have their votes counted when those votes arrive in the clerk's office. This interpretation squares with the historical and legal meaning of voting. It corresponds with the voters' intent."

The Republican-controlled Legislature appears unlikely to revise the deadline.

The judges unanimously rejected a request to compel Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson to direct local clerks to provide paid postage on return envelopes.

The suit said inherent variations in mail delivery schedules could result in one person having the ballot counted and another not, even if they send them back on the same day. It also said the deadline especially burdens undecided and late-deciding voters and said at least 11 states count ballots sent by Election Day.

About 1.75% of ballots were not counted in the recent May local elections because they came in too late.

Sharon Dolente, voting rights strategist for the American Civil Liberties Union of Michigan — which assisted in suing the state — said the deadline "could lead to tens of thousands of voters being disenfranchised this year. We must ensure voters have the full timeline to submit their ballots from home by mail and give Michigan clerks and staff more time to process ballots."

Donald Trump won Michigan by slightly more than 10,700 votes in 2016.

A similar suit — funded by Priorities USA, a powerful super PAC in Democratic politics — is pending in the state Court of Claims. Arguments were heard last week.

Follow David Eggert: <https://twitter.com/DavidEggert00>

Microsoft cuts MSN news staffers in move toward AI editors

SEATTLE (AP) — Microsoft cut dozens of full-time staffers from its MSN news service, continuing an initiative to move away from human editors in favor of artificial intelligence.

The change comes six weeks after the technology giant told about 50 news production contractors their tenures at MSN would not last beyond June 30.

A Microsoft spokesperson told The Seattle Times the company eliminated "a small number" of roles Monday across various departments, including MSN, but would not provide specific numbers.

Since 2014, MSN has whittled down its original news-gathering operation, instead partnering with other news sites and paying them to redistribute their content.

The Guardian reported that the company's AI software in early June confused two mixed-race singers from the British band Little Mix. MSN mistakenly used a photograph of Leigh-Anne Pinnoch for a story about fellow band-member Jade Thirlwall and her personal reflections on racism.

Thirlwall quickly voiced her displeasure on Instagram. "@MSN If you're going to copy and paste articles from other accurate media outlets, you might want to make sure you're using an image of the correct mixed race member of the group," she wrote, adding: "It offends me that you couldn't differentiate the two women of colour out of four members of a group ... DO BETTER!"

Judge denies media request to unseal files on Saints owner

By JIM MUSTIAN Associated Press

A judge has denied a request by news organizations including The Associated Press to unseal court

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records involving the mental competency of billionaire Tom Benson when he rewrote his will to give his third wife ownership of the New Orleans Saints and Pelicans sports franchises.

The news outlets argued public interest in the 2015 case had been heightened by revelations this year that Saints executives engaged in a behind-the-scenes public relations campaign to help the Archdiocese of New Orleans contain the fallout from a clergy abuse crisis.

"Legitimate questions are being raised about the connection between the team and the local Roman Catholic Church," attorneys for the news organizations wrote in a court filing.

But Orleans Parish Civil District Judge Kern Reese said Benson's right to privacy remains sacred even after his 2018 death, and that freedom of the press must be balanced against those considerations.

"I don't think we have the right as a society to go picking through his medical history," Reese said.

The news organizations, which also included CNN, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal, agreed that Benson's medical information should remain shielded but asked that other testimony from the eight-day proceeding be made public.

James Gulotta, an attorney for Benson, said that could result in a "misleading view of what took place" in the case.

"I think the news media is barking up the wrong tree," he said.

It was not immediately clear whether the news organizations intended to appeal the ruling.

Reese had closed his courtroom throughout the 2015 trial, known in Louisiana as an interdiction, saying secrecy was needed to protect Benson's medical privacy rights and confidential information about the business operations of the NFL and NBA clubs.

The case involved explosive claims brought by Benson's heirs that the billionaire's third wife, Gayle, manipulated Benson into rewriting his will and isolated him from his friends and family.

Reese dismissed the lawsuit following eight days of testimony, ruling Benson was mentally sound when he ousted his estranged daughter and grandchildren from ownership positions with his teams.

Gayle Benson, a devout Catholic with close ties to Archbishop Gregory Aymond, inherited Benson's business empire and has defended the Saint's public relations work on behalf of the cash-strapped archdiocese, which recently filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection.

Aymond served as a witness to the signing of the will that cut out Benson's estranged heirs.

The Saints acknowledged giving church leaders advice on how to handle media attention surrounding the 2018 release of a list naming more than 50 clergy members "credibly accused" of sexual abuse. The team and church leaders have opposed a request by the AP to release thousands of internal emails documenting the public relations work.

Gayle Benson testified during the 2015 interdiction proceedings, but attorneys for Benson argued the trial had "nothing to do with the Archdiocese."

But the news organizations argued that "there has been a continuing public interest in the ownership of the Saints" that increased "because of the actions of Saints personnel under Mrs. Benson's ownership in assisting the Archdiocese of New Orleans."

Cost of ensuring school safety complicates reopening plans

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

As school districts across the country decide how and when they can bring students back to campus safely, a major sticking point is emerging: the money to make it happen.

Keeping public schools for 50 million students and more than 7 million staff safe from the coronavirus could require more teachers and substitutes, nurses and custodians. School districts will need to find more buses to allow for more space between children and buy more computers for distance learning. They'll need to buy sanitizer, masks and other protective equipment. Some are putting up plastic dividers in offices and classrooms.

While public health concerns are getting most of the attention, especially with the nation's infections and hospitalizations rising, costs have become a major consideration. Many districts are hoping Congress

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will step in.

The Council of Chief State School Officers says safely reopening public schools could cost between \$158 billion and \$245 billion, while the American Federation of Teachers put the figure at \$116.5 billion. The Association of School Business Officials International estimates that reopening will require additional spending equivalent to about 3.5% of districts' normal budgets.

"If you don't have this money, how are you going to afford PPE? How are you going to have cleaning every day?" asked Randi Weingarten, president of the American Federation of Teachers, a major union. "That's why you're going to see more and more districts, even when they don't have surges, staying with remote learning."

School officials in Los Angeles and San Diego, the two largest districts in California, said this week their year will begin with online classes only. Many others, including New York City, are planning to have each student attend class in person only some days while doing work online the rest of the time.

The school district in Columbus, Ohio, expects to bring back younger students in shifts while having high schoolers take all their classes online. But district spokesman Scott Wortman said those plans are not certain, and the ability to pay for measures needed to safely reopen will play a role in the final decision.

The district estimates its reopening costs at \$100 million — nearly four times the previously approved federal funding that it expects to get.

Virginia Department of Education spokesman Charles B. Pyle said school districts there will need more than the \$282 million the state received in the previous congressional relief bill to safely reopen "and respond to the spikes that will inevitably occur during the year."

In Georgia's Bibb County School District, based in Macon, chief of staff Keith Simmons said cleaning materials, temperature-taking kiosks, masks and other materials could cost \$750,000 to \$1 million. But that does not include everything the district probably needs to do, he said.

"We've calculated the cost based on what we think we can afford, not based on what we need," he said.

The district has pushed back its opening day from Aug. 10 to Sept. 10 to make adjustments in a state where cases have been rising. Up to 45% of students are choosing to start the school year by taking classes only remotely, according to Simmons. That should leave enough room for the remaining students to return to classrooms, he said.

Coronavirus aid will be the highest-profile item on the agenda when Congress returns next week, including how much money to make available for school districts.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky, has scoffed at the \$3 trillion overall aid package Democrats are calling for, but he has said funding education will be a priority.

President Donald Trump has said in recent weeks that schools that don't reopen for full, in-person classes could see federal money reduced.

Congress has already approved more than \$3 trillion in aid to address the coronavirus outbreak and economic fallout. That includes \$150 billion for states, territories, large local governments and Native American tribes, plus more than \$13 billion directed specifically to education.

On conference calls with governors and in a briefing this month, Vice President Mike Pence has been critical of states because only a small portion of the \$13 billion — 1.5% as of last week — had been paid out. Chip Slaven, the chief advocacy officer for the National School Boards Association, said slow spending of that money should not keep Congress from providing more money to make schools safe for reopening. Districts are still trying to figure out how they can spend the money in accordance with guidelines set by U.S. Department of Education, he said.

Slaven said the federal government should send at least \$200 billion to state education departments and school districts. That's in line with what the Council of Chief State School Officers has called for.

"The whole point of the federal government is — when there's a national emergency like this — is to step up to the plate with a plan, with resources and with help," he said.

For schools in many states, high reopening costs are only one side of the coin. State tax collections plunged when much of the economy was shut in the spring. That had a trickle-down effect on school

funding, typically the largest part of a state budget.

The Sioux Falls School District, the largest in South Dakota, estimates it will need \$7.8 million for protective equipment, cleaning supplies, putting high-powered filters on ventilation systems and other items to make it safer to reopen school buildings

The district plans on using \$4.1 million from earlier federal funding but is applying for other grants to make up the rest.

At the same time, the district has slashed \$1.3 million from its regular budget to prepare for possible funding cuts from the state. District business manager Todd Vik said administrators canceled plans for building expansions and hiring 15 teachers and reduced planned salary increases.

"While we're looking at cutting on one hand," he said, "we're looking at responding to the coronavirus and increasing spending in other areas."

Follow Mulvihill at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill>

Associated Press reporters Kantele Franko in Columbus, Ohio, and Stephen Groves in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, contributed to this report.

Lebanon looks to China as US, Arabs refuse to help in crisis

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Facing a worsening economic crisis and with little chance of Western or oil-rich Arab countries providing assistance without substantial reforms, Lebanon's cash-strapped government is looking east, hoping to secure investments from China that could bring relief.

But help from Beijing risks alienating the United States, which has suggested such a move could come at the cost of Lebanese-U.S. ties.

A tiny nation of 5 million on a strategic Mediterranean crossroads between Asia and Europe, Lebanon has long been a site where rivalries between Iran and Saudi Arabia have played out. Now, it's becoming a focus of escalating tensions between China and the West.

In recent months, the Lebanese pound has lost around 80% of its value against the dollar, prices have soared uncontrollably, and much of its middle class has been plunged into poverty. Talks with the International Monetary Fund for a bailout have faltered, and international donors have refused to unlock \$11 billion pledged in 2018, pending major economic reforms and anti-corruption measures.

Left with few choices, Prime Minister Hassan Diab's government — supported by the Iran-backed Hezbollah and its allies — is seeking help from China, an approach that the Shiite militant group strongly supports.

Diab is walking a tightrope.

"Our move toward China is very serious but we are not turning our back to the West," a ministerial official told The Associated Press, speaking on condition of anonymity because he is not authorized to talk to the media. "We are passing through extraordinary circumstances and we welcome whoever is going to assist us."

He said China has offered to help end Lebanon's decades-long electrical power crisis through its state companies, an offer the government is considering.

In addition, Beijing has offered to build power stations, a tunnel that cuts through the mountains to shorten the trip between Beirut and the eastern Bekaa Valley, and a railway along Lebanon's coast, according to the official and an economist.

The U.S., which has historic relations with Lebanon and is a strong backer of its army, said such a move could come at the expense of Beirut's relations with Washington.

The China overtures come at a time when Hezbollah and its allies are increasingly portraying the crisis in Lebanon, which stems from decades of corruption and mismanagement, as one fomented by the U.S. administration. They accuse the U.S. of imposing an informal "financial siege" on Lebanon, partly to put pressure on Hezbollah which Washington and its Gulf Arab allies consider a terrorist organization.

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"We know well that there is a big decision to besiege the country. They are preventing any assistance to Lebanon," Diab told a July 2 government meeting, according to his office.

Diab said, without naming any country, that "they are preventing transfers to the country and blocking credit lines to import fuel, diesel, medicine and flour to cut the electricity, starve the Lebanese and make them die without medicine."

"Trying to blame Lebanon's economic crisis on U.S. sanctions is misguided and false," U.S. State Department spokeswoman Morgan Ortagus said in response to the accusations.

Earlier this month, Diab received China's ambassador to Lebanon, Wang Kejian, after which Lebanon's industry minister was asked to follow up on possibilities of cooperation. Kejian declined to comment.

Hezbollah has advocated for a bigger role for China and other allies in Lebanon. The group had opposed an IMF program to get Lebanon out of its crisis, fearing it would come with political conditions. But it begrudgingly accepted that Lebanon engage in the negotiations as long as the IMF didn't dictate policy.

Seventeen rounds of talks between the government and the IMF since mid-May have failed to make any progress.

A person familiar with the discussions said it was not an "either-or" choice between China and the IMF, adding that the talks with the IMF are about covering the immediate fiscal deficit, injecting dollars and developing a framework for structural reform, while the discussions with Beijing are about infrastructure projects. The person spoke on condition of anonymity in order to describe the negotiations.

Lebanon defaulted on its sovereign debt in March, and economist Hasan Moukalled said most Western companies will be reluctant to invest there as long as the country does not reach a deal with the IMF. This is what makes Chinese companies different, he said.

Moukalled, who visited China several times in 2018 and 2019, said the projects that China has offered to work on are worth \$12.5 billion.

The investments can be mutually beneficial. China can gain from close relations with Lebanon, with the country serving as a launch pad for the reconstruction of neighboring Syria, another Beijing ally.

Lebanon's northern port of Tripoli has been expanded in recent years and could be a terminal in China's trillion-dollar "Silk Road" project that's carving a trade route from east Asia to Europe.

Iran has also offered to sell Lebanon oil for Lebanese pounds, but officials in Beirut have been concerned about deals with Tehran because of Western sanctions. The government is in talks with Iraq's government, which is offering to give fuel to Lebanon in return for agricultural products.

"We understand Lebanon is in desperate need for an infusion of cash. They need investors," U.S. Ambassador to Lebanon Dorothy Shea told Saudi-owned TV station Al-Hadath. After Lebanon's default in March, "investors are not lining up at the door."

Some people have talked about Lebanon turning east "as if that's the answer to all of Lebanon's economic woes," she said, warning that Chinese investments might come "at the expense of the country's prosperity, stability or fiscal viability, or, of course, on the long-standing relations with the United States."

Russian Ambassador Alexander Zasytkin told the daily al-Joumhouria that Russia, China, Syria, Iran and Iraq can help Lebanon. He added that when the West refused, "the alternative to look east became more persistent."

During a visit to Lebanon last week, Gen. Kenneth McKenzie, head of the U.S. Central Command, was asked about Lebanon and other regional countries looking to China for resources and financing.

"You get what you pay for. That's all I have to say," McKenzie said.

In virus era, back-to-school plans stress working parents

By TRAVIS LOLLER Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — For generations, school has been an opportunity for American children to learn and make friends. For many parents today, though, it's something that's elemental in a very different way: a safe place that cares for their children while they are at work — or a necessity for them to be able to work at all.

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The outbreak of the coronavirus this year, and the upending of society it has produced, have caused these views of school in American life to collide in ways that have thrown millions of parental lives into disarray. Now, President Donald Trump is demanding that schools reopen in the fall. But with the virus resurging widely, many working parents see no good options.

"I don't have the benefit of a husband or other family members to care for my son," says Michelle Brinson, who works full time for a Nashville nonprofit while raising her 11-year-old alone.

At 50, and with underlying health conditions, Brinson says she is "terrified" of contracting COVID-19. She is worried that if her son goes back to school, he could bring the virus home to her. "If I'm dead or on a ventilator," she says, "what good am I to him?"

This isn't the first time American schools have closed — or talked about it — because of an epidemic. It happened in 1918 with the so-called Spanish Flu and in the 1930s and 1950s with polio outbreaks.

But the nature of school has changed fundamentally since the 1950s, education historian Jonathan Zimmerman says. School used to teach basic skills and citizenship, but extensive schooling wasn't necessary for many jobs.

"The whole structure of the economy changed postwar, and formal education became a prerequisite for self-sufficiency in a way it never had before," he said. Schools have also become de facto social service agencies, providing necessities like free meals and mental health services.

That's where the conflict lies. To ask a parent — particularly one trying to parent alone — to work full time while supervising education and daytime meals is a formula for stress and unreasonable expectations.

Rebecca Witte can attest to that. For Witte, the experience of working from home while also helping her two children wrap up kindergarten and second-grade from home is not one she wants to repeat.

As a spokeswoman for the Kansas Department of Corrections during a coronavirus outbreak that infected more than 900 inmates, she recalls her kids coming in screaming one day while she was being interviewed. Her husband, a school principal, shared the schooling responsibilities but was also busy helping teachers at his school shift to virtual learning.

"Trying to work, it was hard," Witte said. "It will be interesting to see what the plan is in the fall. ... I am hopeful they won't be home full time with me trying to teach and work."

Before the virus, Brinson says, she "went into work every single day, and my son went to school and he had aftercare with the YMCA." Brinson was totally unprepared when schools closed in March. She ended up taking several days off until she received permission to work from home. Now her employer is pressuring her to come back in.

Brinson acknowledges that online schooling was a disaster and they eventually gave up. A visit to an attorney's office to draw up a will marks one of the only times she has left home since mid-March.

In many ways, Brinson and Witte are lucky. Their jobs offer some flexibility.

Taryn Walker, a single mother, has been relying on her two teenagers to care for her 5-year-old while she works as an administrative assistant. Her job never shut down, and she can't work from home.

Her youngest daughter didn't go outside for three months as the virus tore through their New York City neighborhood. She knows the girl misses her friends; her birthday party got canceled, too. The situation has also strained Walker financially as her grocery bill rises. "Because they are home all day, I'm paying two or three times the amount I did before," she says.

But Walker also doesn't feel safe sending the kids back to school. "I feel like I have been managing to work through this entire pandemic by being very careful," she says.

Elizabeth Ananat, an economics professor at Barnard College and a former Obama economic adviser, has been surveying a group of 1,000 hourly service workers since fall. "What we've found," she says, "is that working families with young children ... are particularly harmed by this crisis."

Parents need to work to put food on the table but also need to care for their children. And they can't afford to get sick. Those strains existed before, but the lack of school and other child care programs and the deadly nature of the virus are compounding the pressures.

"The whole thing is obviously a mess. It's a disaster," she says.

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Federal stimulus money for businesses and the unemployed has helped, although not everyone who was eligible was able to get it, Ananat says. But now much of that is running out.

"Employers haven't gotten more money. They're pressuring people to come back to work. But school systems don't have a plan to make that happen," Ananat says. With the virus on the upswing, "even if schools do open, it's not clear how many will feel safe sending their children back," she says.

In Florida and Texas, both states with spiking case numbers, officials are requiring school districts to offer in-person schooling to those who want it. Texas' guidance for schools includes a recommendation to space desks 6 feet (2 meters) apart and, if that's impossible, "plan for more frequent hand washing and/or hand sanitizing" and "consider whether increased airflow from the outdoors is possible."

That's not good enough for Vicky Li Yip, whose children are 5, 8 and 10. She works from her Houston home, and says online schooling has been exhausting, even with her husband helping out. But with her city becoming a national hot spot, she has been considering what it would mean for her children to face possible exposure every day.

"It brings tears to my eyes just to say it," Li Yip said. "To think that I would have to tell the kids, when they see their grandparents: 'You can't hug them.'"

Associated Press reporters Heather Hollingsworth in Mission, Kansas, and Acacia Coronado in Austin, Texas, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to reflect that Brinson took several days off to stay with her son when schools closed.

Apple wins big EU court case over \$15 billion in taxes

By RAF CASERT Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — A European Union court on Wednesday delivered a hammer blow to the bloc's attempts to rein in multinationals' ability to strike special tax deals with individual EU countries when it ruled that Apple does not have to pay 13 billion euros (\$15 billion) in back taxes to Ireland.

The EU Commission had claimed in 2016 that Apple had struck an illegal tax deal with Irish authorities that allowed it to pay extremely low rates. But the EU's General Court said Wednesday that "the Commission did not succeed in showing to the requisite legal standard that there was an advantage."

"The Commission was wrong to declare" that Apple "had been granted a selective economic advantage and, by extension, state aid," said the Luxembourg-based court, which is the second-highest in the EU.

The EU Commission had ordered Apple to pay for gross underpayment of tax on profits across the European bloc from 2003 to 2014. The commission said Apple used two shell companies in Ireland to report its Europe-wide profits at effective rates well under 1%.

In many cases, multinationals can pay taxes on the bulk of their revenue across the EU's 27 countries in the one EU country where they have their regional headquarters. For Apple and many other big tech companies, that is Ireland. For small EU countries like Ireland, that helps attract international business and even a small amount of tax revenue is helpful for them. The net result, however, is that the companies often end up paying very low tax.

The ruling can only be appealed on points of law and the Commission Vice President Margrethe Vestager said she will "reflect on possible next steps."

The Irish government welcomed the ruling, saying "there was no special treatment provided" to the U.S. company. Apple likewise said it was pleased by the decision, arguing that the case is not about how much tax it pays, but in what country. Apple CEO Tim Cook had earlier called the EU demand for back taxes "total political crap."

The ruling is an especially stinging defeat for Vestager, who has campaigned for years to root out special tax deals and better regulate the power of the big U.S. tech companies, including Google, Amazon and Facebook. Trump has referred to her as the "tax lady" who "really hates the U.S."

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Despite the setback, she vowed to carry on the fight. "The Commission will continue to look at aggressive tax planning measures under EU state aid rules to assess whether they result in illegal state aid," she said.

Besides the tax case, Vestager has recently opened two antitrust investigations into Apple's mobile app store and its payments operations. Under her leadership, the EU has also investigated and fined tech giants like Google for billions of dollars for abusing their dominant market position. Some EU countries are looking to impose a tax on major digital businesses.

The European Network on Debt and Development, a group that seeks to make the financial system fairer, said that Wednesday's court ruling showed how tough any tax policy remains. "If we had a proper corporate tax system, we wouldn't need long court cases to find out whether it is legal for multinational corporations to pay less than 1% in taxes," said Tove Maria Ryding, a policy manager at the group.

Even though taxation remains under the authority of its member countries, the EU is seeking to create a level playing field among the 27 nations by making sure special deals - including ultra-low tax rates with multinationals - are weeded out.

Wednesday's ruling will hurt that.

EU Greens legislator Sven Giegold said the verdict "is a huge setback in the fight against tax dumping in Europe." He said EU rules "are clearly totally insufficient to tackle the problem. This must be a wakeup call."

The ruling comes at a time when tax income for EU nations is taking a hit because of the recession triggered by the coronavirus pandemic. With households under financial pressure, the EU wants to make sure multinationals making profits on the continent pay their fair share, too.

"In times like these, when we are passing multibillion-euro economic stimulus packages, we cannot afford to waste a single cent in tax revenue," said EU legislator Markus Ferber of the Christian Democrat EPP Group.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, July 16, the 198th day of 2020. There are 168 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On July 16, 1945, the United States exploded its first experimental atomic bomb in the desert of Alamogordo (ahl-ah-moh-GOHR-doh), New Mexico; the same day, the heavy cruiser USS Indianapolis left Mare (mar-AY') Island Naval Shipyard in California on a secret mission to deliver atomic bomb components to Tinian Island in the Marianas.

On this date:

In 1557, Anne of Cleves, who was briefly the fourth wife of England's King Henry VIII, died in London at age 41.

In 1790, a site along the Potomac River was designated the permanent seat of the United States government; the area became Washington, D.C.

In 1862, Flag Officer David G. Farragut became the first rear admiral in the United States Navy.

In 1964, as he accepted the Republican presidential nomination in San Francisco, Barry M. Goldwater declared that "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice" and that "moderation in the pursuit of justice is no virtue."

In 1969, Apollo 11 blasted off from Cape Kennedy on the first manned mission to the surface of the moon.

In 1973, during the Senate Watergate hearings, former White House aide Alexander P. Butterfield publicly revealed the existence of President Richard Nixon's secret taping system.

In 1980, former California Gov. Ronald Reagan won the Republican presidential nomination at the party's convention in Detroit.

In 1994, the first of 21 pieces of comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 smashed into Jupiter, to the joy of astronomers awaiting the celestial fireworks.

In 1999, John F. Kennedy Jr., his wife, Carolyn, and her sister, Lauren Bessette (bih-SEHT'), died when

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their single-engine plane, piloted by Kennedy, plunged into the Atlantic Ocean near Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts.

In 2002, the Irish Republican Army issued an unprecedented apology for the deaths of "noncombatants" over 30 years of violence in Northern Ireland.

In 2004, Martha Stewart was sentenced to five months in prison and five months of home confinement by a federal judge in New York for lying about a stock sale.

In 2008, Florida resident Casey Anthony, whose 2-year-old daughter, Caylee, had been missing a month, was arrested on charges of child neglect, making false official statements and obstructing a criminal investigation. (Casey Anthony was later acquitted at trial of murdering Caylee, whose skeletal remains were found in December 2008; she was convicted of lying to police.)

Ten years ago: Retired intelligence analyst Kendall Myers, the 73-year-old great grandson of Alexander Graham Bell, was sentenced to life in prison without parole for quietly spying for Cuba for nearly a third of a century from inside the State Department; his wife, Gwendolyn, was sentenced to 5 1/2 years. American sprinters who'd been stripped of their 2000 Olympics relay medals because teammate Marion Jones was doping won an appeal to have them restored.

Five years ago: A gunman unleashed a barrage of fire at a recruiting center and another U.S. military site a few miles apart in Chattanooga, Tennessee, killing four Marines and a sailor before he was shot to death by police; authorities identified the gunman as Kuwaiti-born Muhammad Youssef Abdulazeez of Tennessee. A jury in Centennial, Colorado, convicted James Holmes of 165 counts of murder, attempted murder and other charges in the 2012 Aurora movie theater rampage that left 12 people dead.

One year ago: Retired Supreme Court Justice John Paul Stevens, who had unexpectedly emerged as the court's leading liberal, died in Fort Lauderdale, Florida at the age of 99 after suffering a stroke. The House voted to condemn what it called "racist comments" by President Donald Trump aimed at four congresswomen of color, despite Trump's insistence that he didn't have "a racist bone in my body." After years of silence on the case, federal prosecutors said they would not be bringing charges against a white New York City police officer in the 2014 chokehold death of a Black man, Eric Garner. A federal judge ordered singer R. Kelly to be held without bond, after a prosecutor warned that the singer accused of having sex with minors would pose an extreme danger to young girls if he were to be set free. HBO's "Game of Thrones" picked up a record-setting 32 Emmy nominations for its eighth and final season. South African musician Johnny Clegg, who had performed in defiance of apartheid, died at the age of 66.

Today's Birthdays: Former U.S. Attorney General Dick Thornburgh is 88. Soul singer William Bell is 81. International Tennis Hall of Famer Margaret Court is 78. College Football Hall of Famer and football coach Jimmy Johnson is 77. Violinist Pinchas Zukerman is 72. Actor-singer Ruben Blades is 72. Rock composer-musician Stewart Copeland is 68. Playwright Tony Kushner is 64. Actress Faye Grant is 63. Dancer Michael Flatley is 62. Actress Phoebe Cates is 57. Actor Paul Hipp is 57. Actor Daryl "Chill" Mitchell is 55. Actor-comedian Will Ferrell is 53. Actor Jonathan Adams is 53. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Barry Sanders is 52. Actress Rain Pryor is 51. Actor Corey Feldman is 49. Rock musician Ed Kowalczyk (koh-WAHL'-chek) (Live) is 49. Rock singer Ryan McCombs (Drowning Pool) is 46. Actress Jayma Mays is 41. Actress AnnaLynne McCord is 33. Actor-singer James Maslow is 30. Actor Mark Indelicato is 26. Pop singer-musician Luke Hemmings (5 Seconds to Summer) is 24.