

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Karyn Babcock was spraying off the dirt and bugs at BaseKamp Lodge in downtown Groton.

(Photo by Paul Kosel)

## COVID-19 reported at the pool Pool closed until Friday

One of the Groton Swimming Pool employees has tested positive for the Corona virus.

All close contact individuals have been notified and are complying with state health regulations. The person that tested positive was working Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday afternoons of last week.

Workers are taking every precaution to stop the spread and will be cleaning the facility for the next few days.

The Groton City Swimming Pool will reopen Friday, August 7th at 1pm.

## **OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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

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## STUDENT CLASS SCHEDULES 6-12

by Mrs. Kiersten Sombke  
TUESDAY, AUGUST 04, 2020

Good afternoon everyone!

Due to technology requirements for the creation of the new "Remote Learning Platform", the Parent Portal was opened earlier today. We are still working on student schedules for grades 6-12, and class schedules are not final until Friday, August 7th.

We ask that you please hold your questions and requests regarding class changes until August 10th for Dual Credit Students, and August 12th for students in grades 6-12 who are not taking Dual Credit Classes.

Dates to Know Regarding Class Schedule Changes:

August 7th: Student Class Schedules will be posted at 5:00pm

August 10th: Dual Credit Students (only Juniors and Seniors who previously registered for Dual Credit Classes) will come in to print out their registration acceptance notice, and may make adjustments to class schedules. Dual Credit Students may pick up a technology agreement form.

August 12th: Grades 6-12 Students may come in to make class changes. Students will be served one at a time, in the order of arrival. Students are asked to practice social distancing while waiting their turn to be served.

August 18th: Dual Credit Students may come in to check out a computer; students will be required to submit a completed technology agreement form before checking out a computer.

August 19th: First day of School! School begins at 8:18am for the MS/HS Building. Students will be asked to report to their first hour classes after putting their belongings in their student lockers.

August 21st: Last day of class changes for students in grades 6-12.

I want to thank you in advance for your patience and understanding while we finish preparing to welcome back our students! Have a great rest of the summer!

Mrs. Sombke

## Groton Legion to invest \$8,000 in Veteran's Circle improvements at Groton Union Cemetery

Groton Legion will be putting in six new 20' service flag poles and one new 25' American Flag pole at the cemetery. They will also be putting in new rock. All of this at the Veteran's Circle area. It will be an \$8,000 investment by the Groton American Legion Post #39. The project will be done this fall.

WEB Water is raising their rates to the city of 10 cents per 1,000 gallons and the city passed the second reading raising the rates to the same amount to cover the increase. It will go into effect October 1, the same time WEB will be implementing its rate increase.

The council authorized Clark Engineering to get a cost estimate for painting the reservoir and then apply for a grant.

Insurance last year for the Pumpkin Fest was \$300. The company will not charge any additional insurance this year.

Darrell Hillstead and Shawn Boesl came before the council to discuss an event that will be held once again at the Groton Municipal Airport north of Groton. Last year was the first event where plane rides were given and model airplanes were on display. They are planning to expand on that this year. Hillstead said they would like to establish a scholarship. A poker run will be held September 12 in Groton, Sisseton, Webster, Britton, Redfield and Clark. Then on



**Darrell Hillstead (left) and Shawn Boesl came before the Groton City Council Tuesday night to discuss their plans for the fly-in at the Groton Airport.** (Photo

lifted from GDILIVE.COM)



**Emily Kappes was sworn in as the new councilman for Ward 2, replacing Damain Bahr who has moved out of town. Mayor Scott Hanlon read the oath of office.** (Photo by

Paul Kosel)

September 13, airplane rides would be given at the Groton airport. Of course, all of that is contingent on the weather and the dates could be swapped. Hillstead said they are looking for someone to help serve the food. Councilman Karyn Babcock said she would talk with the members of the Leo Club and Lions Club to see if they would help.

Councilman Damian Bahr turned in his resignation as he will no longer be living in Groton. He was recently named as the Marshall County Sheriff. Emily Kappes was appointed to fill the vacancy and was sworn in as his replacement.

The council then went into executive session with pool managers Kami Lipp and Karla Pasteur in attendance. The pool was closed Tuesday afternoon and will reopen Friday at 1 p.m.

- Paul Kosel



## **Pet Owners Should Be Aware of Blue-Green Algae**

PIERRE, S.D. – As the “dog days” of summer roll on, South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks officials would like to warn pet owners of blue-green algae blooms that are appearing in ponds and lakes across the state.

“Blue-green algae blooms happen every year when summer really gets hot,” said regional fisheries manager, Mark Ermer. “It’s nearly impossible to tell if algae in a pond or lake is poisonous or not, so we recommend not letting dogs swim in a body of water that has a visible, thick layer of algae floating on the surface. Even one drink of water that has a blue-green algae bloom can be fatal for dogs.”

Blue-green algae are most often blue-green in color, but can also be blue, green, reddish-purple, or brown. Blue-green algae generally grow in protected areas of lakes, ponds, and slow-moving streams when the water is warm and enriched with nutrients like phosphorus or nitrogen.

“Blue-green algae blooms are caused by cyanobacteria, which grow particularly well in slow-moving or stagnant water with high phosphorus or nitrogen content,” said South Dakota Assistant State Veterinarian, Mendel Miller. “Some of these cyanobacteria may produce dangerous toxins which, if ingested, can lead to liver or nervous system damage in animals. These toxins cause serious damage quickly, so prompt medical care is critical following potential exposures. Because it is not easy to tell if an algae bloom is producing toxins, it is best to avoid all water where cyanobacteria appear to be present.”

“If you think you or your pet has come into contact with blue-green algae, contact your doctor or veterinarian immediately,” Miller said. “Symptoms of blue-green algae poisoning include, lethargy, the inability to walk, hypersalivating, weakness, vomiting, diarrhea, pale gums, shock, seizures, loss of appetite, tremors and difficulty breathing.”

Fish consumption from lakes experiencing a high algae bloom should be limited. While the toxins can be present in fish caught during a bloom, research has shown the concentrations of toxins are higher in the organs of fish than in the muscle tissue or fillets. Toxin levels decrease after an algae bloom has ended.

Anyone observing what they believe is a harmful algae bloom should contact their local GFP office or the Department of Energy and Natural Resources.

## Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The Sunday/Monday counts may have been something of a weekend fluke—what I was afraid of. New cases are still nowhere near our highs, but we're back over 50,000 with 54,300, a 1.1% increase from yesterday to 4,777,700. We're on pace to hit five million before the end of the week. This is not great news. We are showing fewer states—and for the most part, less populous ones—with increasing rates of growth in new cases; that could mean new case counts will stay below 60,000 or even drop back below 50,000. We'll see. Tonight, I have only 16 states and territories showing increasing growth over the past 14 days, whereas I have 28 holding and 10 showing declines. In another bit of good news, hospitalizations have been declining too over the past week. We can hope this trend continues, but be aware that several of those states are poised to revert to increasing growth. Much depends on what they do going forward and how much people get on board. I don't know whether there has been enough death and destruction yet to reach a tipping point where folks are persuaded to contribute to the effort. Authorities are still having to investigate far too many reports of parties and gatherings in states where these are prohibited, so I am not hopeful we're going to tamp this down even now.

Here in South Dakota, a youth camp in the Black Hills is up to 96 cases out of 328 people who chose to attend, a singularly poor decision by all accounts. Over the weekend, we also had a racing venue open its 9000 seats to fans, most of whom did not wear masks or distance. And all of this is before the big motorcycle rally at Sturgis which is expecting a quarter of a million people to flood into a small town. For the record, South Dakota is on that short-list of states showing increasing growth; but we're seeing similarly poor decision-making across the country. University of Florida epidemiologist, Dr. Cindy Prins, said, "We're at a point where there's enough spread of COVID-19 that people throughout the US are at an increased likelihood of encountering the virus and getting exposed. This is a behavioral disease right now for a lot of people."

We're back over 1000 deaths too at 1365, a 0.8% increase to 157,297. I am still showing 27 states with increasing reports of deaths. The average daily number of deaths has gone from 780 to 1056 over the past two weeks and has been over 1000 for nine days running, so that's not moving the right direction at all.

It was a slow news day, so this will be brief. All I have is one vaccine note: We have early reports on another vaccine candidate, this one from Novavax. For those who remember the discussion we had a little over a month ago about vaccine types, this is a protein subunit vaccine that includes a synthesized fragment of the viral spike protein that binds to host cells. This one is testing not only the basic vaccine, but also an adjuvant, a substance used to enhance the immune response to that protein. Immunologic responses to the vaccine were termed "promising," and adverse reactions were mostly mild and lasting two days or less. There were severe reactions in ten of the 131 participants. Neutralizing antibody titers were quite high, higher than those seen in people who were sick enough to be hospitalized. If the candidate is eventually licensed, the company is prepared to produce 100 million doses in the first quarter of next year. This one should be ready for phase 3 trials relatively soon. The more, the merrier when it comes to vaccine candidates.

The shutdown in Pinellas County, Florida, caused economic hardship, just as similar moves did across the country. For that reason, when the County issued a mask mandate in late June requiring residents to wear masks in all indoor public spaces there was great interest in making that effort successful so that further shutdowns would not be necessary. Trevor Burgess, an insurance executive, and his husband Gary Hess decided to give folks a hand to make sure everyone had access to a mask, and so they spent their own money to purchase 10,000 masks to hand out to citizens in need of them. Then they went to work to make even more masks available, raising money in the community to make another 10,000 of them available. And then, they raised money for another 10,000 after that.

The Facebook page for the effort said, "We want to make sure all who need masks have them regardless of their ability to afford them. If we mask-up St Pete for a few weeks we can and will set an example for how to beat back COVID-19." And so they did.

See what happened here? See a need; meet a need. We've talked about this again and again, and this resonated with me particularly today after my sister sent me a comic strip that perfectly illustrates this very point. I cannot embed it in this post, but I really wanted you to have the opportunity to see it, so I'll drop it into the first comment below. Have a look; it's worth a few minutes of your time.

And stay safe. I'll be back tomorrow.

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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	July 29	July 30	July 31	Aug. 01	Aug. 2	Aug. 3	Aug. 4
Minnesota	52,281	52,947	53,692	54,463	55,188	55,947	56,560
Nebraska	25,157	25,422	25,766	26,211	26,391	26,702	26,956
Montana	3,475	3,676	3,814	3,965	4,081	4,193	4,233
Colorado	45,314	45,796	46,204	46,809	47,267	47,727	47,968
Wyoming	2,136	2,172	2,217	2,259	2,297	2,333	2,364
North Dakota	6141	6227	6301	6468	6602	6660	6785
South Dakota	8492	8641*	8685	8764	8867	8955	9020
United States	4,352,304	4,427,493	4,495,224	4,566,275	4,620,502	4,667,957	4,718,249
US Deaths	149,260	150,716	152,075	153,391	154,449	154,860	155,478
Minnesota	+478	+666	+745	+771	+725	+759	+613
Nebraska	+258	+265	+344	+445	+458	+311	+254
Montana	+94	+201	+138	+151	+116	+112	+40
Colorado	+749	+482	+408	+605	+458	+460	+241
Wyoming	+64	+36	+45	+42	+38	+36	+31
North Dakota	+155	+86	+74	+167	+134	+58	+125
South Dakota	48	+149	+44	+80	+103	+88	+65
United States	+57,534	+75,189	+67,731	+71,051	+54,227	+47,455	+50,292
US Deaths	+1,204	+1,456	+1,359	+1,316	+1,058	+411	+618
	Aug. 5						
Minnesota	57,162						
Nebraska	27,178						
Montana	4,314						
Colorado	48,394						
Wyoming	2,392						
North Dakota	6933						
South Dakota	9,079						
United States	4,768,083						
US Deaths	156,753						
Minnesota	+602						
Nebraska	+222						
Montana	+81						
Colorado	+426						
Wyoming	+28						
North Dakota	+148						
South Dakota	+59						
United States	+49,834						
US Deaths	+1,275						

\* The July 29, 2020, daily update includes cases reported to the South Dakota Department between Monday, July 27 at 1 p.m. and Tuesday, July 28 at 7 p.m. due to a delay in the daily data extraction.

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## August 4th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Codington County recorded its first death with a male in the 80+ age group. North Dakota recorded two more deaths. Deuel County and McPherson County each gained a case to be dropped from the fully recovered list. Minnehaha County had 25 of the state's 59 cases. Despite that, both Minnehaha and Pennington counties had more recoveries than positive cases. Brown County had two positive and four recoveries. Spink County is now up to five positive cases with another positive one recorded. The positivity rate for South Dakota is 5.6 percent and for Brown County is 4 percent.

#### **Brown County:**

Active Cases: -2 (36)  
Recovered: +4 (373)  
Total Positive: +2 (412) 4.0%  
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (20)  
Deaths: 0 (3)  
Total Tests: 50 (5515)  
Percent Recovered: 90.5% (+0.5)

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +59 (9079 total) 5.6%  
Total Tests: 1058 (143,980 total)  
Hospitalized: +8 (846 total). 42 currently hospitalized (up 3 from yesterday)  
Deaths: +1 (136 total)  
Recovered: +69 (8008 total)  
Active Cases: -11 (935)  
Percent Recovered: 88.2 +.2  
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 46% Non-Covid, 52% Available  
ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 58% Non-Covid, 39% Available  
Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 12% Non-Covid, 83% Available

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding (50)

Fully recovered from positive cases: (Lost Deuel) Bon Homme 13-13, Day 21-21, Haakon 1-1, Hamlin 14-14, Hand 7-7, Hyde 3-3, Perkins 4-4, Stanley 14-14, Sully 1-1, Tripp 20-20.

The following is the breakdown by all counties. The number in parenthesis right after the county name represents the number of deaths in that county.

Aurora: -1 positive (1 active case)  
Beadle (9): +2 recovered (20 active cases)  
Bennett: 1 active case  
Bon Homme: Fully Recovered  
Brookings (1): +1 positive (13 active cases)  
Brown (3): +2 positive, +4 recovered (36 active cases)  
Brule: +1 recovered (2 active cases)  
Buffalo (3): 9 active cases

Butte: 4 active cases  
Campbell: 1 active case  
Charles Mix: 8 active cases  
Clark: 2 active cases  
Clay: +2 positive (16 active cases)  
Codington (1): +1 positive, 2 recovered, 1 death (17 active cases)  
Corson: 7 active cases  
Custer: 9 active cases  
Davison: +5 positive, +1 recovered (12 active cases)  
Day: Fully Recovered

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Deuel: +1 positive (1 active cases)  
 Dewey: +2 positive, +3 recovered (30 active cases)  
 Douglas: 2 active cases  
 Edmunds: 3 active cases  
 Fall River: +2 positive (3 active cases)  
 Faulk (1): 3 active cases  
 Grant: 5 active case  
 Gregory: 1 active case  
 Haakon: 1 active case  
 Hamlin: Fully Recovered  
 Hand: Fully Recovered  
 Hanson: +2 recovered (5 active cases)  
 Harding: No infections reported  
 Hughes (3): 6 active cases  
 Hutchinson: 5 active cases  
 Hyde: Fully Recovered  
 Jackson (1): 3 active case  
 Jerauld (1): 1 active case  
 Jones: 1 active case  
 Kingsbury: 4 active cases  
 Lake (2): +4 recovered (15 active cases)  
 Lawrence: 7 active cases  
 Lincoln (2): +3 positive, +10 recovered (87 active cases)  
 Lyman (2): 10 active cases  
 Marshall: 1 active case  
 McCook (1): 1 active case  
 McPherson: +1 positive (1 active case)  
 Meade (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)  
 Mellette: 4 active cases  
 Miner: 5 active cases  
 Minnehaha (64): +25 positive, +26 recovered (332 active cases)  
 Moody: +1 recovered (3 active cases)

Oglala Lakota +2 positive (26 active cases)  
 Pennington (26): +3 positive, +6 recovered (126 active cases)  
 Perkins: 1 active case  
 Potter: 1 active case  
 Roberts (1): +1 positive (8 active cases)  
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered  
 Spink: +1 positive (5 active cases)  
 Stanley: Fully Recovered  
 Sully: Fully Recovered  
 Todd (4): 4 active cases  
 Tripp: Fully Recovered  
 Turner: +4 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)  
 Union (3): +2 positive, +3 recovered (34 active cases)  
 Walworth: 1 active case  
 Yankton (2): +1 positive, +2 recovered (6 active cases)  
 Ziebach: 6 active cases

## North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 4:

- 4,904 tests (1,719)
- 6,933 positives (+149)
- 5,715 recovered (+125)
- 107 deaths (+2)
- 1,111 active cases (+21)

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	725	8%
Black, Non-Hispanic	1032	11%
Hispanic	1209	13%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	1441	16%
Other	863	10%
White, Non-Hispanic	3809	42%

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	1162	0
20-29 years	1950	1
30-39 years	1793	6
40-49 years	1383	7
50-59 years	1343	17
60-69 years	806	25
70-79 years	340	20
80+ years	302	60



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County ▲	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased
Aurora	37	36	365	0
Beadle	587	558	1825	9
Bennett	6	5	526	0
Bon Homme	13	13	729	0
Brookings	121	107	2563	1
Brown	412	373	4214	3
Brule	40	38	710	0
Buffalo	108	96	620	3
Butte	11	7	751	1
Campbell	2	1	85	0
Charles Mix	100	92	1198	0
Clark	16	14	372	0
Clay	120	104	1266	0
Codington	120	102	2672	1
Corson	29	22	442	0
Custer	23	14	761	0
Davison	93	81	2239	0
Day	21	21	600	0
Deuel	9	8	382	0
Dewey	63	33	1999	0
Douglas	16	14	383	0
Edmunds	13	10	393	0
Fall River	18	15	929	0
Faulk	26	22	179	1
Grant	23	18	675	0
Gregory	7	6	370	0
Haakon	2	1	283	0
Hamlin	14	14	602	0
Hand	7	7	272	0
Hanson	21	16	187	0
Harding	0	0	50	0
Hughes	84	75	1661	2
Hutchinson	27	22	869	0

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex ▲	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	4460	68
Male	4619	68

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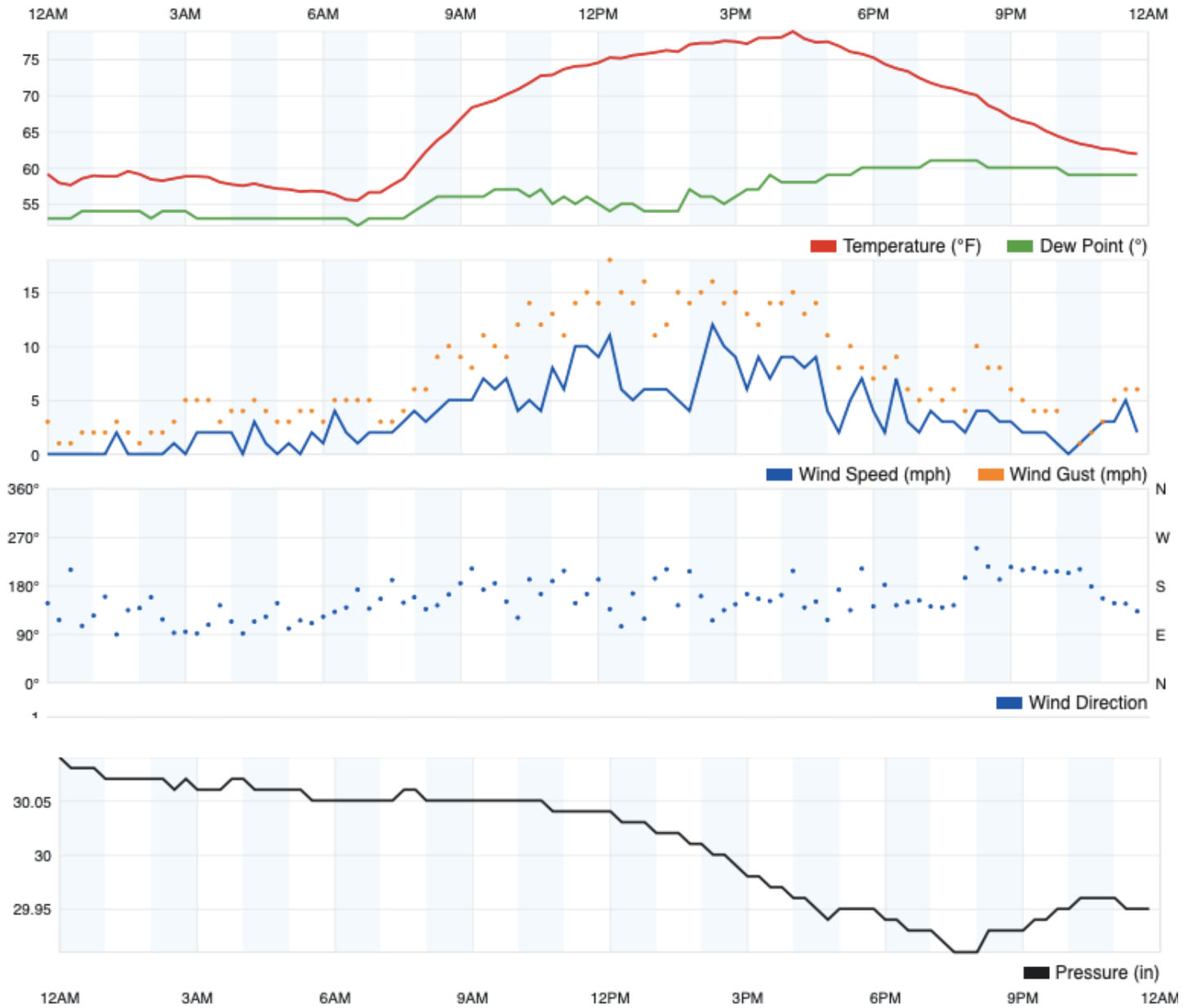
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Hyde	3	3	125	0
Jackson	10	6	424	1
Jerauld	40	38	264	1
Jones	2	1	56	0
Kingsbury	14	10	533	0
Lake	84	67	884	2
Lawrence	32	25	2015	0
Lincoln	582	493	6380	2
Lyman	88	77	910	2
Marshall	8	7	437	0
McCook	24	22	612	1
McPherson	7	6	206	0
Meade	78	61	1884	1
Mellette	24	20	369	0
Miner	15	10	246	0
Minnehaha	4258	3862	26114	64
Moody	30	27	602	0
Oglala Lakota	151	124	2873	1
Pennington	848	696	10438	29
Perkins	6	5	160	0
Potter	1	0	279	0
Roberts	71	62	1666	1
Sanborn	13	13	213	0
Spink	22	17	1112	0
Stanley	14	14	235	0
Sully	1	1	67	0
Todd	66	59	1960	4
Tripp	20	20	592	0
Turner	48	39	866	0
Union	201	164	1811	4
Walworth	18	17	664	0
Yankton	103	95	2943	2
Ziebach	8	2	285	0
Unassigned	0	0	6905	0

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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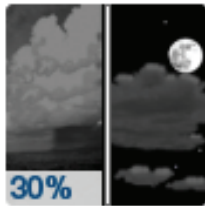
Today



Mostly Cloudy  
then Chance  
Showers

High: 79 °F

Tonight



Chance  
Showers then  
Partly Cloudy

Low: 60 °F

Thursday



Becoming  
Sunny

High: 86 °F

Thursday  
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 67 °F

Friday



Partly Sunny  
then Slight  
Chance  
T-storms

High: 90 °F

## Warming Into The Weekend!

Today

75 to 85°

Isolated to scattered  
storms possible in  
eastern SD. Chance  
for severe is low.



Thursday

80 to 90°

Dry and becoming  
humid later in the  
day, light winds.



Friday

85 to 95°

Hot and humid.  
Scattered storms  
possible later Friday  
into Saturday.



National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

[www.weather.gov/abr](http://www.weather.gov/abr)

graphic created  
8/5/2020 4:13 AM

Today sees another chance for isolated to scattered storms in eastern SD, the threat for severe is low. Thursday and Friday see a warming trend and becomes more humid, with another chance for storms Friday afternoon into Saturday.



## Today in Weather History

August 5, 1987: Six tornadoes touched down in central South Dakota. Five of these tornadoes touched down in Lyman County, including three which did damage near Kennebec within 25 minutes of each other. One of the tornadoes destroyed three farms, downing outbuildings, power lines, granaries, and killing cattle.

August 5, 2000: A wet microburst with winds estimated at 120 mph caused substantial damage in and around Mitchell. Apartments and several mobile homes were destroyed, vehicles were overturned, and other damage occurred to buildings and vehicles. Widespread tree and power line damage also occurred. Ten people were injured, although the majority of the injuries were minor. The damage path was approximately a mile and a half long and a mile wide, extending over the southwest part of Mitchell.

1843 - A spectacular cloudburst near Philadelphia turned the small creeks and streams entering the Delaware River into raging torrents. As much as sixteen inches of rain fell in just three hours. Flooding destroyed thirty-two county bridges, and caused nineteen deaths. It is believed that several small tornadoes accompanied the torrential rains, one of which upset and sank more than thirty barges on the Schuylkill River. (David Ludlum)

1875: Several tornadoes moved across northern and central Illinois. One of the stronger tornadoes touched down in Warren and Knox County where it destroyed 25 homes and killed two people. Another in a series of tornadoes touched down near Knoxville and moved east into northern Peoria County. This estimated F4 tornado injured 40 people and was described by eyewitnesses as looking like a "monstrous haystack."

1961 - The temperature at Ice Harbor Dam, WA, soared to 118 degrees to equal the state record established at Wahluke on the 24th of July in 1928. The afternoon high of 111 degrees at Havre, MT, was an all-time record for that location. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Severe thunderstorms raked eastern South Dakota. The thunderstorms spawned half a dozen tornadoes, produced softball size hail at Bowdle, and produced wind gusts to 90 mph south of Watertown. Hot weather continued in eastern Texas. Afternoon highs of 100 degrees at Houston and 106 degrees at Waco equalled records for the date. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather from Indiana and Lower Michigan to Pennsylvania and New York State during the day. Thunderstorms in Michigan produced wind gusts to 80 mph at Ashley, Hastings and Lennon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather in Oklahoma, and from Iowa to the Upper Ohio Valley, with 216 reports of large hail or damaging winds between early Saturday morning and early Sunday morning. Thunderstorms moving across Iowa around sunrise produced extremely high winds which caused ten million dollars damage to crops in Carroll and Greene Counties. Thunderstorm winds at Jefferson IA reached 102 mph. Afternoon thunderstorms produced tennis ball size hail at Bay Mills, WI. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

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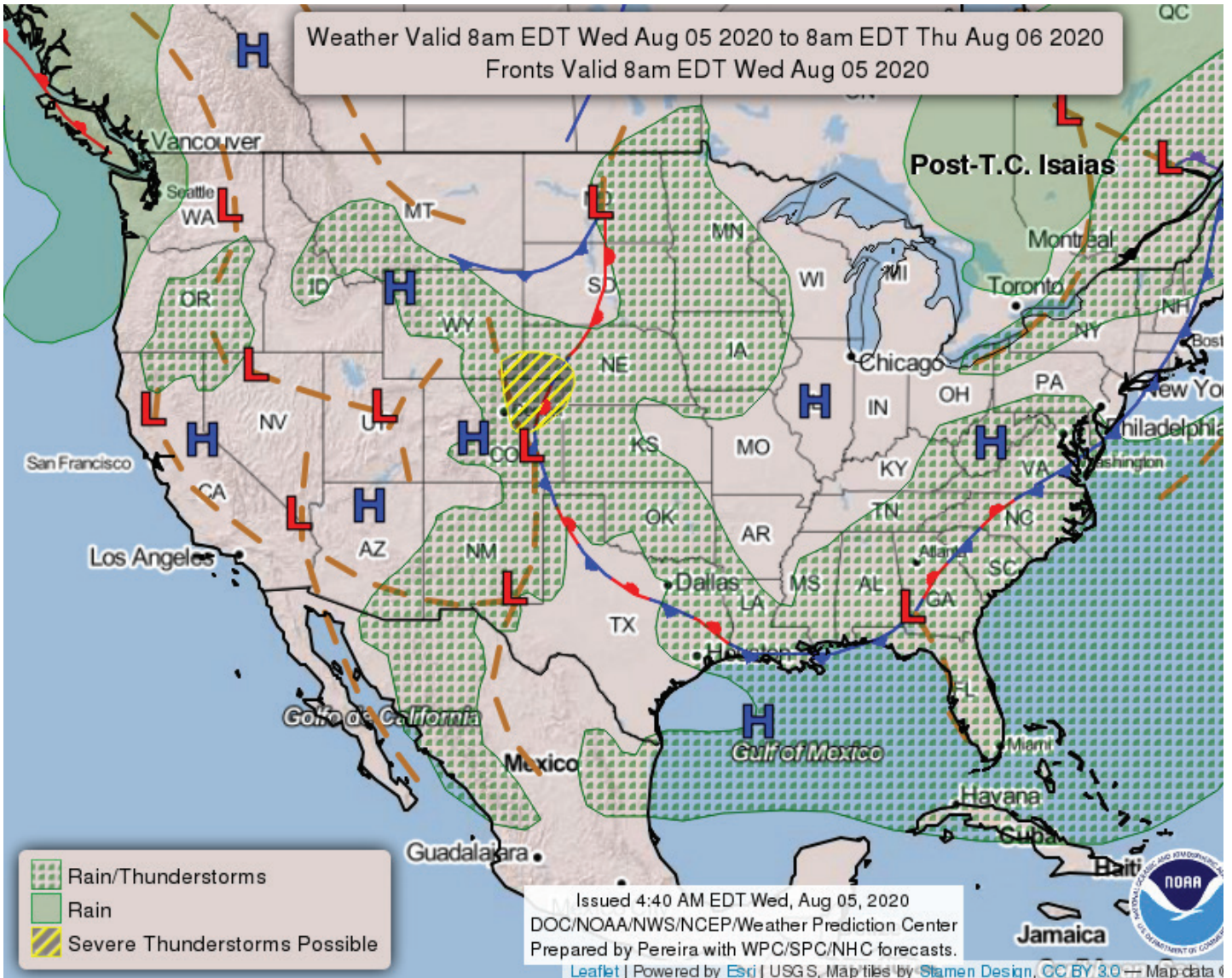
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 79 °F at 4:14 PM**  
**Low Temp: 56 °F at 6:29 AM**  
**Wind: 18 mph at 12:09 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 107° in 1941**  
**Record Low: 41° in 1994**  
**Average High: 84°F**  
**Average Low: 59°F**  
**Average Precip in Aug.: 0.31**  
**Precip to date in Aug.: 0.45**  
**Average Precip to date: 14.17**  
**Precip Year to Date: 10.96**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:55 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:24 a.m.**



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## GUARD YOUR HEART!

She was over eighty years old and went to work every day. Though old in years, she was young at heart. She made her way through life in a wheelchair and was very successful in several different business ventures. She was also well-known for being involved in doing kind things for others who were going through difficult times.

"What caused you to end up in a wheelchair?" asked a friend one day.

"Infantile paralysis," she replied.

"My goodness! How do you cope?" the friend wondered, "and why do you do so many kind things for so many people?"

"Well," she said with a gracious smile, "the paralysis never touched my head or my heart."

Our head is the door to our hearts. What we see, think, and dwell upon shapes our feelings and is expressed in what we do and the way we act.

It was the writer of Proverbs who expressed this truth so well. "Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance," he wrote, "for out of it flow the springs of life."

Our hearts, the source of our feelings of love and desire, dictates the things that we do and say. How we live and what we find time to do and enjoy all come from "the inside" – our heart. Wisely, Solomon advises us to concentrate on those things that will reflect God's love to others. We must make sure that what matters most to us leads us in the right direction and demonstrates our concern for others. We can only do this if we focus on putting God first.

Prayer: Help us, Heavenly Father, to look straight ahead and keep our eyes focused on You. Keep us from becoming sidetracked by things that would destroy us. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Keep and guard your heart with all vigilance for out of it flow the springs of life. Proverbs 4:23



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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 Tuesday:

Mega Millions

02-22-30-42-62, Mega Ball: 20, Megaplier: 3

(two, twenty-two, thirty, forty-two, sixty-two; Mega Ball: twenty; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$20 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$147 million

### Police identify homicide victim as Sioux Falls man

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have identified the victim of a homicide west of Sioux Falls as a 30-year-old Sioux Falls man.

Cody Allen Schmidt was found dead with gunshot wounds in a ditch Monday morning near Wall Lake, Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office Capt. Josh Phillips said.

Phillips said an autopsy was being conducted Tuesday morning, the Argus Leader reported.

The sheriff's office has not released any details about a potential suspect, but Phillips asked for the public's help in identifying Schmidt's recent activities over the last several days.

### 'Too many are selfish': US nears 5 million virus cases

By SUMAN NAISHADHAM, CARLA K. JOHNSON and PHILIP MARCELO Associated Press

BOSTON (AP) — Fourth of July gatherings, graduation parties, no-mask weddings, crowded bars — there are reasons the U.S. has racked up more than 155,000 coronavirus deaths, by far the most of any country, and is fast approaching an off-the-charts 5 million confirmed infections, easily the highest in the world.

Many Americans have resisted wearing masks and social distancing, calling such precautions an over-reaction or an infringement on their liberty. Public health experts say the problem has been compounded by confusing and inconsistent guidance from politicians and a patchwork quilt of approaches to containing the scourge by county, state and federal governments.

"The thing that's maddening is country after country and state after state have shown us how we can contain the virus," said Dr. Jonathan Quick of the Duke Global Health Institute. "It's not like we don't know what works. We do."

Confirmed infections in the U.S. have topped 4.7 million, with new cases running at more than 60,000 a day. While that's down from a peak of well over 70,000 in the second half of July, cases are on the rise in 26 states, many in the South and West, and deaths are climbing in 35 states.

On average, the number of COVID-19 deaths per day in the U.S. over the past two weeks has gone from about 780 to 1,056, according to an Associated Press analysis.

In Massachusetts, health officials are investigating at least a half-dozen new clusters of cases connected to such events as a lifeguard party, a high school graduation party, a prom party, an unsanctioned football camp and a packed harbor cruise trip.

One recent house party on Cape Cod attended by as many as 60 people led to more than a dozen new cases and prompted some restaurants to close or limit service at the height of tourist season.

Hot spots around the U.S. are popping up in what once seemed like ideal places to ride out the outbreak: rural, less populated and with lots of outdoor space. In South Dakota, a spike erupted at a Christian youth summer camp in the Black Hills, with cases growing to 96 among 328 people who attended.

"We're at a point where there's enough spread of COVID-19 that people throughout the U.S. are at an

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increased likelihood of encountering the virus and getting exposed," University of Florida epidemiologist Dr. Cindy Prins said.

She added: "This is a behavioral disease right now for a lot of people." Prevention means "changing our behavior, and it's so hard for humans to do. We're social creatures."

In Mississippi, Republican Gov. Tate Reeves grudgingly reversed course and announced a statewide order requiring the wearing of masks because of a resurgence of the virus. He also delayed the start of the school year for upper grades in eight hard-hit counties.

"Wearing a mask — as irritating as it can be, and I promise you I hate it more than anyone watching today — is critical," he said.

In Virginia, cases have surged so much in cities like Norfolk and Virginia Beach that Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam placed limits there last week on alcohol sales and gatherings of more than 50 people. Northam, the nation's only governor who is a doctor, cited rising infections among young people and said the problem is that "too many people are selfish."

"We all know that alcohol changes your judgment," he said. "You just don't care as much about social distancing after you've had a couple of drinks."

Dr. Demetria Lindsay, the Virginia Department of Health's district director for Virginia Beach and Norfolk, said there has been a pronounced spike among people ages 20 to 29. She said the factors behind the surge include gatherings of people not wearing masks or maintaining a safe distance.

"Father's Day, Memorial Day, graduations, birthdays, backyard barbecues, you name it," Lindsay said.

In Brandon, South Dakota, thousands of car racing fans packed the 9,000-seat Huset's Speedway over the weekend. Many did not cover their faces or stay away from others.

"We're kind of over this whole COVID thing. I won't wear a mask unless I absolutely have to," 21-year-old Veronica Fritz said. She added: "I am a very strong Christian and I know where I'm going, and I believe God will take me when I'm supposed to go. So if I get COVID and I die from COVID, it's not my decision."

Research has shown that people can spread the virus before they feel sick. Masks lower the likelihood of their respiratory droplets reaching other people.

Josie Machovec, a mother of three who is suing over a mask ordinance in Palm Beach County, Florida, said that she doesn't believe the government has the right to require people to wear medical devices, and that she hasn't seen clear evidence that masks stop transmission of the virus.

"I'm someone who has looked into this extensively and don't feel that it's the right thing for me and my kids. If we are healthy, we don't need to be wearing them," she said, "and if we're not healthy, if we're sick, then we stay home."

In Minnesota, a group of voters sued Gov. Tim Walz and other officials on Tuesday to try to block a requirement that voters wear face masks at polling places.

Nearly a quarter of Wisconsin's more than 55,000 cases had been confirmed over the past 14 days. Much of the spike has occurred in the state's densely urban southeastern corner, but the disease has also spread with amazing speed in rural and sparsely populated northern Wisconsin.

Despite the trend, health industry software provider Epic Systems is requiring its 9,000-plus employees to return to work in person at its sprawling campus outside of Madison by Sept. 21. Workers decried the order, but company CEO Judy Faulkner defended the decision, saying better work is done on campus than from home.

Zona Wick, a spokeswoman and contact tracer for the health department in Wisconsin's Iron County, attributed the dramatic rise in cases to July Fourth gatherings, birthday and graduation parties, out-of-county visitors and people crowding into bars.

"The Fourth of July was tough on us," Wick said. "People had a bit of quarantine fatigue, is what I'm calling it. People got a bit tired of staying in. People just got together like they have for years on the Fourth of July and spread it to one another."

The wedding industry likewise is seeing no-mask receptions with busy dance floors and no social distancing.

Wedding planner Lynne Goldberg has a December wedding scheduled for 200 guests at the home of

the bride's parents in upstate New York.

"They have emphatically shared that this pandemic is not going to get in the way of their wedding plans and that there will be no masks handed out and no signs promoting social distancing at their wedding," she said. "The bride has said that when she shows her children her wedding video, she doesn't want it to be a documentary of the 2020 pandemic."

Marcelo reported from Boston, Johnson from Washington state, and Naishadham from Phoenix, Arizona. AP journalists around the world contributed to this report.

## Top South Dakota GOP lawmaker drops reelection campaign

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Top South Dakota Republican lawmaker Kris Langer announced Tuesday she is dropping out of her campaign for reelection.

Langer was the Senate majority leader and worked closely with Gov. Kristi Noem. She had received a formal rebuke from fellow senators after she was found to be intoxicated during the final hours of the legislative session in March.

"Including my time spent as a City Council member in Dell Rapids, I have spent over decade in public service and now I am going to spend more time with my family," Langer said in a statement. "I especially look forward to spending more time with my aging mother and my new grandchildren."

Langer served in the Legislature since 2015, serving one term in the House and two in the Senate.

Two independent candidates are running for the senate seat occupied by Langer. The South Dakota GOP has until Aug. 11 to name a candidate to replace Langer.

## Feds open Rapid City office for missing Indigenous cases

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Federal investigators on Tuesday opened an office in Rapid City dedicated to cases of missing and murdered Native Americans, particularly women and girls.

The office will be one of seven created by President Donald Trump as part of the Operation Lady Justice Task Force. The initiative aims to develop protocols for law enforcement to respond to missing and slain Native American persons cases and to improve data and information collection.

The Rapid City office will be staffed with special agents from the Bureau of Indian Affairs and will coordinate efforts by local, federal and tribal law enforcement personnel to solve cold cases.

"Today, our shared presence, especially during these difficult times, is a demonstration of our commitment to keeping the national crisis of missing and murdered Native Americans a top priority," said Administration for Native Americans Commissioner Jeannie Hovland, who is a member of the Flandreau Santee Sioux Tribe.

Other offices will be located in Minnesota, Montana, New Mexico, Arizona, Alaska and Tennessee.

## South Dakota records 59 new COVID-19 cases, one death

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota recorded 59 new cases of COVID-19 and one death on Tuesday amid an increase in the average number of daily new cases over the last two weeks.

Most of the new cases were reported in Minnehaha County, the state's most populated area. But the state's western part has also seen outbreaks. An outbreak at a Christian summer camp in the Black Hills infected nearly one-third of the 328 people at the facility.

Camp Judson director Tracy Koskan declined Tuesday to comment about circumstances at the camp, other than to say it has been portrayed unfairly by news outlets. None of the nearly 100 people who were infected has been hospitalized, state health officials said.

The man who died was over the age of 80 and lived in Codington County. The state has tallied 136 deaths from COVID-19. It has also recorded 9,079 cases, but 88% of those have recovered. 935 people have active infections.

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## Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Madison Daily Leader, July 28

Members of Congress must support TRUST Act

Sen. Mike Rounds and other U.S. senators have introduced the TRUST Act of 2020 to be included in projected COVID-19 Relief Legislation. Members of the U.S. House have introduced a companion bill.

It's an excellent bill, intended to protect the Social Security, Medicare and Highway Trust funds, as well as other federal trust funds.

But it needs much broader support to be enacted. Fifteen of 100 senators have signed on, and it needs more members in the House and the president's signature to be passed.

The bill is intended to rescue the trust funds before they run out of money. But fiscal responsibility seems to be the last thing on the minds of members of Congress right now. In an election year, the focus of incumbents who are running for election is to give more money away to get votes, not to put more away to meet obligations next year, the year after or the decade after.

"It is irresponsible for Congress to continue ignoring this preventable crisis. If we establish a process now in which we can actually manage these trusts, we will be able to get a better handle on our debt. This effort prevents these vital programs from becoming insolvent and protects the citizens these programs are intended to benefit," said Rounds.

He's right; it's irresponsible to ignore the problem, but that's exactly what most members of Congress are doing. If it sounds like we're very skeptical about Congress fixing its own budgetary mess, you're hearing us right.

The bill isn't even that restrictive. It would require the Treasury to deliver to Congress a report of the government's major, endangered federal trust funds. Congressional leaders would appoint members to serve on "Rescue Committees" with the mandate to draft legislation that restores solvency and otherwise improves each trust fund program.

The TRUST Act of 2020 is responsible and necessary. It needs broad support, which will be tough to get. We admire the effort.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Aug. 3

YSD's mask mandate is wise decision

The Yankton School Board made the proper call last week when it decided to mandate the wearing of face masks at school when the fall semester begins in about three weeks.

According to the decision, masks will be required of students and staff, except when social distancing is possible.

The decision aligns not only the majority of comments received by the board at two public meetings in recent weeks, but also with the results of a survey of teachers which found 75% of them supported the wearing of masks.

Face masks, while not providing a 100% guarantee of protection, can help cut down on the spread of the coronavirus; it offers more protection for others than for the wearer, although some recent studies suggest the defensive value for the wearers may be greater than first believed. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has said that masks should be worn when possible, stating, "There is increasing evidence that cloth face coverings help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others."

Critics of masks point to some studies that question the value of masks, as school board member Frani Kiefer pointed out last week.

"I went and pulled up actual trials and read those in," she said. "Everything is comparing N95 to surgical masks or surgical masks to cloth masks," she said. "There's no concrete data out there that I can find that says (not wearing) masks is better than (wearing) masks."

The mask mandate is important because this state is about to open its schools and thus create gather-



ing points that will have to be monitored carefully. Masks are just one tool in this fight, but they can offer some value.

The school board's decision was not easily arrived at, nor will it likely be easily implemented.

For instance, the youngest students may struggle with the responsibility of wearing masks (not to mention social distancing). This will require some behavioral adjustments on their part.

There is also the question of enforcement. Will teachers and administrators be reduced to acting as "mask police" to make the mandate work?

Meanwhile, there are also the signals being received from Pierre.

On the same day the Yankton School Board made its decision, South Dakota Gov. Kristi Noem dismissed the idea of requiring students to wear masks in classrooms. She pointed to "very mixed research and the science has not proven what's effective and what isn't" — despite what the CDC has found.

On Friday, several media outlets reported that the Noem campaign (which does function even though she is not running this election cycle) sent out a fundraising email lauding the fact that Noem "is encouraging families to send their children back to school — without masks." (The last two words were italicized in the email to add either emphasis or defiance, possibly both.) The email also noted that, because kids constantly "fidget with masks, touch their faces, drop masks on the floor and put them back on — and possibly even trade with each other, (w)e believe that when it comes to children, masks have the potential to do more harm than good."

However, a subsequent email from Noem's office Friday night said the governor is opposed only to mask mandates, and if "people want to wear masks, that's absolutely their prerogative — she has never discouraged wearing them." But she is "encouraging schools to allow each family and child to make their own decisions about masking."

Taken together, these items arguably send out a mixed message about local control (which has been a staple of the state's response to the pandemic), and it wouldn't be surprising if some parents challenge school mask mandates, either here or elsewhere, because of it. (Yankton officials said if parents and/or children insist on not wearing masks, the students will probably be shifted to distance learning.)

Frankly, we put more faith in whatever protection masks can offer students — and adults — than on other scenarios which require lowering defenses altogether.

It's not an easy or ideal situation, but taking the best course of action for everyone involved requires difficult choices. Mandating masks in most school situations is one such decision, and it's the wisest one.

## Districts go round and round on school bus reopening plans

By MARK SCOLFORO Associated Press

HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP) — School districts nationwide puzzling over how to safely educate children during a pandemic have a more immediate challenge — getting 26 million bus-riding students there in the first place.

Few challenges are proving to be more daunting than figuring out how to maintain social distance on school buses. A wide array of strategies have emerged to reduce the health risks but nobody has found a silver bullet.

Should students with COVID-19 symptoms be isolated at the front of the school bus? Should bus seats be assigned? Should buses be loaded from the back? Should buses only carry a few students at a time?

"The transportation professionals are left with the issue of, OK, you've got little Billy at the bus stop. Mom's not there and he's got a temperature. That's a dilemma," said Steve Simmons, a bus safety expert who used to head pupil transportation for Columbus, Ohio, public schools. "We can't answer those kinds of questions. I don't think anybody can."

Simmons, president of the National Association for Pupil Transportation, was part of team of industry and school officials who produced a 70-page report on ways to lower the risk of COVID-19 transmission.

Many schools have been surveying parents to determine how many students will take the bus and how many will be privately driven to school. Others are making decisions about bus capacity that involve a

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trade-off between safety and affordability.

The task force report warned that a 6-foot (2-meter) social distancing regulation "is not financially nor operationally feasible," and that "current thinking" is that a 72-student capacity bus can accommodate 24 students, or more if family members sit together.

Some large districts will nonetheless "jam 'em in" the school bus, Simmons said, while other districts plan to stagger school start times or teach half the students in the morning and the rest in the afternoon, with two sets of bus runs.

School transportation plans are "just one of the many ways we're seeing inequities playing out in this pandemic," said Deborah Gordon Klehr, executive director of the Education Law Center in Philadelphia.

"Some districts are saying that they will cut back on the number of students offered transportation, or expect more parents to drive their students to school," she said. "Students and families with fewer resources are going to be the ones hurt by this."

Kim Blodgett quit her job as a fourth-grade teacher this year in order to drive her 5-year-old son to the Oklahoma School for the Deaf, concerned the twice-daily, 45-minute bus ride from their home in Norman was too risky.

"So many parents feel like they have no control over any of this that's happened," Blodgett said. "They have to work, they have to send their kids to school. They have to put their kids on that bus. It's a horrible situation all the way around."

Simmons said most bus drivers are old enough to put them at heightened risk for severe illness if they catch the virus. They will have to decide whether to continue driving — a job that typically does not pay much — or to stay home and prioritize their own safety, which could worsen a yearslong national school bus driver shortage.

Schools will have to decide what cleaning standards they want to set and whether to add sneeze guards or similar barriers among students and between students and bus drivers.

In Pennsylvania, the Transportation Department shot down a proposal to install plastic barriers around bus drivers, telling a school bus contractor there is not evidence it would make students or drivers safer. In New York, hand sanitizer isn't even allowed on buses "due to its combustible composition and potential liability to the carrier or district," according to guidance from the state's school reopening task force.

The task force report said a survey of bus contractors found they were unanimously opposed to taking students' temperatures, as some districts have considered. The contractors said drivers and bus monitors do not want to have to interpret health data, among other objections.

Getting on and off the bus is considered a time of heightened risk. Pennsylvania districts are considering assigned bus seating, making students fill empty buses from the back and emptying them from the front.

A suburban Philadelphia school district's reopening plan states that students with symptoms should be placed in the front seat of the bus and brought to the school nurse. Another mandates that no students with symptoms will be sent on a bus or brought to school. Districts are designating rooms where sick or potentially sick children can be isolated until their parents can retrieve them.

Pottstown, Pennsylvania, schools have proposed keeping windows on its few buses open, a plan that will be difficult to carry out in winter. New York's statewide recommendation is for windows to remain cracked if the outside temperature is at least 45 degrees Fahrenheit.

Public schools in Providence, Rhode Island, had considered making all students attend the schools that are located closest to their homes as a way to limit ridership, but officials withdrew that proposal after parents objected.

The Kentucky Education Department suggests schools institute "walking school buses," a system used in at least two other states in which adults chaperone groups of students walking to and from school together, with designated bus stops and pickup times. Kentucky Education Department spokesperson Toni Konz Tatman said there has been no word yet of any districts giving the walking school buses a try.

Bus plans are expected to be tweaked over the first weeks and months of school, but if a major outbreak is linked to bus transportation, parents will have to decide whether to vote with their feet and go another route.

## Lebanese confront devastation after massive Beirut explosion

By BASSEM MROUE and ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Residents of Beirut confronted a scene of utter devastation on Wednesday, a day after a massive explosion at the port rippled across the Lebanese capital, killing at least 100 people, wounding thousands and leaving entire city blocks flooded with glass and rubble.

Smoke was still rising from the port, where a towering building of silos was half destroyed, spilling out mounds of grain. Hangars around it were completely toppled. Much of the downtown area was littered with damaged vehicles and debris that had rained down from the shattered facades of buildings.

An official with the Lebanese Red Cross said at least 100 people were killed and more than 4,000 were wounded. George Kettaneh said the toll could rise further.

It was unclear what caused the blast, which appeared to have been triggered by a fire and struck with the force of an earthquake. It was the most powerful explosion ever seen in the city, which was split in half by the 1975-1990 civil war and has endured conflicts with neighboring Israel and periodic bombings and terror attacks.

Scores of people were missing, with relatives pleading on social media for help locating loved ones. An Instagram page called "Locating Victims Beirut" sprang up with photos of missing people, and radio presenters read the names of missing or wounded people throughout the night. Many residents moved in with friends or relatives after their apartments were damaged and treated their own injuries because hospitals were overwhelmed.

Lebanon was already on the brink of collapse amid a severe economic crisis that has ignited mass protests in recent months. Its health system is confronting a coronavirus surge, and there were concerns the virus could spread further as people flooded into hospitals.

There was no evidence the explosion was an attack. Instead, many Lebanese blamed it on decades of corruption and poor governance by the entrenched political class that has ruled the tiny Mediterranean country since the civil war.

Saint George University Hospital, one of the major private hospitals in Beirut which had been receiving COVID-19 patients, was out of commission Wednesday after suffering major damage. A physician who identified himself as Dr. Emile said 16 staff and patients, including four nurses, died in the blast. He declined to give his last name out of privacy concerns.

The blast also wounded a number of U.N. peacekeepers stationed in the area. Bangladesh said 21 members of its Navy were wounded, one critically. Italy, one of the top contributors to the UNIFIL mission, said one of its soldiers was wounded.

Interior Minister Mohammed Fahmi told a local TV station that it appeared the blast was caused by the detonation of more than 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been stored in a warehouse ever since it was confiscated from a cargo ship impounded in 2013.

Explosives experts and video footage suggested the ammonium nitrate may have been ignited by a fire at what appeared to be a nearby warehouse containing fireworks.

Ammonium nitrate is a common ingredient in fertilizer as well as explosives. It was used in the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995, when a truck bomb containing 2,180 kilograms (4,800 pounds) of fertilizer and fuel oil ripped through a federal building, killing 168 people and wounding hundreds more.

Security forces cordoned off the port area on Wednesday as a bulldozer entered to help clear away debris. A young man begged troops to allow him to enter and search for his father, who has been missing since the blast occurred. He was directed to a port official who wrote down his details.

In Beirut's hard-hit Achrafieh district, civil defense workers and soldiers were working on locating missing people and clearing the rubble. At least one man was still pinned under stones from an old building that had collapsed. Volunteers hooked him up to an oxygen tank to help him breathe while others tried to free his leg.

The blast severely damaged numerous apartment buildings, potentially leaving large numbers of people

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homeless at a time when many Lebanese have lost their jobs and seen their savings evaporate because of a currency crisis. The explosion also raises concerns about how Lebanon will continue to import nearly all of its vital goods with its main port devastated.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab, in a short televised speech, appealed for international aid, saying: "We are witnessing a real catastrophe." He reiterated his pledge that those responsible for the disaster will pay the price, without commenting on the cause.

There is also the issue of food security in Lebanon, a tiny country already hosting over 1 million Syrians displaced by that country's nearly decade-long civil war.

Drone footage shot Wednesday by The Associated Press showed that the blast tore open a cluster of towering grain silos, dumping their contents into the debris and earth thrown up by the blast. Some 80% of Lebanon's wheat supply is imported, according to the U.S. Agriculture Department.

Estimates suggest some 85% of the country's grain was stored at the now-destroyed silos.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency quoted Raoul Nehme, the minister of economy and trade, as saying that all the wheat stored at the facility had been "contaminated" and couldn't be used. But he insisted Lebanon had enough wheat for its immediate needs and would import more.

Several countries have pledged aid in the aftermath of the blast, with even Israel offering humanitarian assistance. The two countries have been in conflict for decades, and Israel fought a 2006 war with the Hezbollah militant group.

Lebanon's economic crisis is rooted in decades of systemic corruption by political factions that exploit public institutions for the benefit of their supporters. Decades after the civil war, residents endure frequent power outages and poor public services.

Lebanese have held mass protests calling for sweeping political change since last autumn but few of their demands have been met as the economic situation has steadily worsened.

Beirut's port and the customs authority are notoriously corrupt. Like nearly all public institutions, they are controlled by Lebanon's political factions, including Hezbollah.

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Associated Press writers Sarah El Deeb and Hassan Ammar in Beirut, Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, and Joseph Krauss in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

## Progress slow as urgency grows on virus relief legislation

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Frustrated Senate Republicans re-upped their complaints that Democratic negotiators are taking too hard a line in talks on a sweeping coronavirus relief bill, but an afternoon negotiating session brought at least modest concessions from both sides, even as an agreement appears far off.

Top Democrats emerged from a 90-minute meeting Tuesday with Trump administration officials to declare more progress. The Trump team agreed with that assessment and highlighted its offer to extend a moratorium on evictions from federally subsidized housing through the end of the year.

"We really went down, issue by issue by issue slogging through this. They made some concessions which we appreciated. We made some concessions that they appreciated," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "We're still far away on a lot of the important issues but we're continuing to go back."

White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said Tuesday's session was "probably the most productive meeting we've had to date." Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the two sides set a goal of reaching an agreement by the end of the week to permit a vote next week.

"I would characterize concessions made by Secretary Mnuchin and the administration as being far more substantial than the concessions that had been made by the Democrat negotiators," Meadows said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., issued a pointed reminder that she and Schumer are "legislators with long experience" and a track record of working complicated deals — a rejoinder to critics complaining that they are being too tough and that the talks are taking too long.

"We agree that we want to have an agreement," Pelosi said. "Let's engineer back from there as to what



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we have to do to get that done.”

Another glimmer of hope emerged as a key Senate Republican telegraphed that the party may yield to Democrats on an increase in the food stamp benefit as part of the huge rescue measure, which promises to far exceed a \$1 trillion target set by the GOP.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Pat Roberts, R-Kan., said Tuesday that “you can make an argument that we need some kind of an increase” in food stamps and that he’s raised the topic with Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. He added that an agreement on that issue could lead to further overall progress on the legislation, which remains stalled despite days of Capitol negotiations.

“They are taking a look at it and I think we can get a positive result,” Roberts told The Associated Press. “If we can get a breakthrough on that, it could lead to some other stuff.”

The food stamp issue — left out of earlier relief bills — is a top priority for Pelosi, among other powerful Democrats, who have passed a 15% increase in the food stamp benefit as part of their \$3.5 trillion coronavirus relief bill.

The overall talks are grinding ahead slowly, though urgency is growing among Senate Republicans, several of whom face tough election races and are eager to deliver a bill before heading home to campaign this month.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said Monday that the chamber should not go on recess without passing the huge relief measure, and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., offered a jobless benefit proposal that’s more generous than a pending GOP alternative. Both are facing closer-than-hoped reelection bids in states that should be easy holds for Republicans.

Multiple obstacles remain, including an impasse on extending the \$600-per-week pandemic jobless benefit aid to the renters facing eviction. The benefit has helped sustain consumer demand over recent months as the coronavirus has wrought havoc. Pelosi wants to extend it through January at a \$400 billion-plus cost, while Republicans are proposing an immediate cut to \$200 and then replacing the benefit with a cumbersome system that would attempt to provide 70% of a worker’s “replacement wage.”

They are also pressing for funding for the Postal Service. Schumer and Pelosi summoned Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to the Capitol on Wednesday to discuss the agency’s worsening performance and need for emergency funding.

“We’ve seen the delay of mail, and we’re very worried about that affect on the election,” Schumer said.

On the Senate floor, McConnell, R-Ky., continued to protest that Democrats are taking too tough a line. But he signaled he’s far more flexible now than he was weeks ago.

“The American people in the end need help,” McConnell told reporters. “And wherever this thing settles between the president ... and the Democrats is something I am prepared to support even if I have some problems with certain parts of it.”

Most members of the Democratic-controlled House have left Washington and won’t return until there is an agreement to vote on, but the GOP-held Senate is trapped in the capital.

Areas of agreement already include another round of \$1,200 direct payments and changes to the Pay-check Protection Program to permit especially hard-hit businesses to obtain another loan under generous forgiveness terms.

The House passed a \$3.5 trillion measure in May, but Republicans controlling the Senate have demanded a slower approach, saying it was necessary to take a “pause” before passing additional legislation. Since they announced that strategy, however, coronavirus caseloads have spiked and the economy has absorbed an enormous blow.

The Senate GOP draft measure carries a \$1.1 trillion price tag, according to an estimate by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. Republicans have not released any estimates of their own.

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Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

## 5 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. **LEBANESE CONFRONT DEVASTATION** Beirut's streets were littered with debris and damaged vehicles, building facades blown out and scores missing as the death toll from a massive explosion at the port rises to at least 100.
2. **'WE ARE NO LESS AMERICAN'** The U.S. failure to contain the pandemic has been laid bare in the Rio Grande Valley in South Texas as Hidalgo County reported more than 600 deaths in July alone.
3. **ISAIAS WHIPS UP EASTERN US** At least six people were killed as the tropical storm spawned tornadoes, toppled trees, caused flooding and cut power to millions along the U.S. East Coast.
4. **ONETIME HOMELESS WOMAN WINS IN MISSOURI** Cori Bush, who led protests after the police shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson in 2014, ousted longtime Rep. William Lacy Clay in the state's Democratic primary.
5. **RAFA WON'T DEFEND US OPEN TITLE** Rafael Nadal will skip the major because of the coronavirus pandemic, putting on hold his bid to equal Roger Federer's men's record for Grand Slam titles.

## Fireworks, ammonium nitrate likely fueled Beirut explosion

By JON GAMBRELL and JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

Fireworks and ammonium nitrate appear to have been the fuel that ignited a massive explosion that rocked the Lebanese capital of Beirut, experts and videos of the blast suggest.

The scale of the damage — from the epicenter of the explosion at the port of Beirut to the windows blown out kilometers (miles) away — resembles other blasts involving the chemical compound commonly used as an agricultural fertilizer.

But the compound itself typically doesn't detonate on its own and requires another ignition source. That likely came from a fire that engulfed what initially appeared to be fireworks that were stored at the port.

Online videos of the disaster's initial moments show sparks and lights inside the smoke rising from the blaze, just prior to the massive blast. That likely indicates that fireworks were involved, said Boaz Hayoun, owner of the Tamar Group, an Israeli firm that works closely with the Israeli government on safety and certification issues involving explosives.

"Before the big explosion, you can see in the center of the fire, you can see sparks, you can hear sounds like popcorn and you can hear whistles," Hayoun told The Associated Press. "This is very specific behavior of fireworks, the visuals, the sounds and the transformation from a slow burn to a massive explosion."

Jeffrey Lewis, a missile expert at the Middlebury Institute of International Studies in Monterey, California, offered a similar assessment.

"It looks like an accident," Lewis told the AP. "First, there was a fire preceding the explosion, which is not an attack. And some of the videos show munitions what I could call popcorning, exploding like 'pop, pop, pop, pop.'"

He added that "it's very common to see fires detonate explosives."

"If you have a fire raging next to something explosive, and you don't put it out, it blows up," he said.

The white cloud that accompanied the massive blast appeared to be a condensation cloud, often common in massive explosions in humid conditions that can follow the shock waves of an explosion, Lewis said.

Orange clouds also followed the blast, likely from toxic nitrogen dioxide gas that's released after an explosion involving nitrates.

Experts typically determine the power of the blast by measuring the crater left behind, which appeared massive in aerial footage shot on Wednesday morning by the AP.

The Beirut blast, based on the crater and glass windows being blown out a distance away, exploded with the force equivalent to detonating at least 2.2 kilotons of TNT, said Sim Tack, an analyst and weapons expert at the Texas-based private intelligence firm Stratfor.

What initially started the fire at the port remains unclear. Beirut was sunny before Tuesday's explosion,

with a daily high of 30 degrees Celsius (86 degrees Fahrenheit).

Lebanese Interior Minister Mohammed Fahmi, in comments to a local TV station, made no mention of ignited fireworks but said it appeared the blast was caused by the detonation of more than 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been stored in a warehouse at the dock ever since it was confiscated from a cargo ship in 2014. That amount could cause the explosive force seen in the blast Tuesday, Tack said.

Based on the timeline and the size of the cargo, that ship could be the MV Rhosus. The ship was initially seized in Beirut in 2013 when it entered the port due to technical problems, according to lawyers involved in the case. It came from the nation of Georgia, and had been bound for Mozambique.

"Owing to the risks associated with retaining the ammonium nitrate on board the vessel, the port authorities discharged the cargo onto the port's warehouses," the lawyers wrote in a 2015 article published by shiparrested.com. "The vessel and cargo remain to date in port awaiting auctioning and/or proper disposal."

It remains unclear what conditions the ammonium nitrate had been stored in — or why tons of an explosive chemical compound had been left there for years. Lebanon already was on the brink of collapse amid a severe economic crisis that has ignited mass protests in recent months.

The devastation surrounding the port resembled other ammonium nitrate explosions, such as the 1995 Oklahoma City bombing and a 1947 ship explosion that struck Texas City, Texas.

It also is unclear what conditions a possible shipment of fireworks at the port had been stored in. Fireworks are very common in Lebanon, used to celebrate religious occasions and weddings.

While military explosives are generally safe to transport, common "cheap pyrotechnics" made in China are often of very low quality and can ignite very easily, especially in hot weather, said Hayoun, the Israeli explosives expert.

The "end result," he added is that "hundreds of tons of energetic materials" were detonated to create an explosion of this magnitude.

"It started definitely with fireworks," he said.

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Follow Jon Gambrell and Josef Federman on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP](https://www.twitter.com/jongambrellAP) and [www.twitter.com/joseffederman](https://www.twitter.com/joseffederman).

## Chasm grows between Trump and government coronavirus experts

By AAMER MADHANI, RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR, and JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In the early days of the coronavirus crisis, President Donald Trump was flanked in the White House briefing room by a team of public health experts in a seeming portrait of unity to confront the disease that was ravaging the globe.

But as the crisis has spread to all reaches of the country, with escalating deaths and little sense of end-game, a chasm has widened between the Republican president and the experts. The result: daily delivery of a mixed message to the public at a moment when coherence is most needed.

Trump and his political advisers insist that the United States has no rival in its response to the pandemic. They point to the fact that the U.S. has administered more virus tests than any other nation and that the percentage of deaths among those infected is among the lowest.

"Right now, I think it's under control," Trump said during an interview with Axios. He added, "We have done a great job."

But the surge in infections, hospitalizations and deaths tells a different story. And it suggests that the president is increasingly out of step with the federal government's own medical and public health experts.

The U.S. death toll, which stands at more than 156,000, is expected to accelerate. The latest composite forecast from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention projects an average of nearly 1,000 deaths per day through Aug. 22.

Dr. Deborah Birx, White House coronavirus task force coordinator, warned this week that the virus has become "extraordinarily widespread."

Trump didn't like that. He dismissed her comment as "pathetic" and charged she was capitulating to

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criticism from House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who had earlier criticized Birx.

Adm. Brett Giroir, the assistant secretary of Health and Human Services, who has avoided contradicting the president throughout the crisis, said on Sunday it was time to "move on" from the debate over hydroxychloroquine, a drug Trump continues to promote as a COVID-19 treatment even though there is no clear evidence it is effective.

Dr. Robert Redfield, head of the CDC, last week acknowledged during an ABC News interview that the initial federal government response to the virus too slow.

"It's not a separation from the president, it's a cavernous gap," said Lawrence Gostin, a public health expert at Georgetown University. "What we're seeing is that scientists will no longer be cowed by the White House."

Until recently, the medical experts on the White House coronavirus task force have walked a tightrope. They have been pressing to deliver the best science to the public while trying to avoid appearing to directly contradict Trump — in hopes of maintaining influence in the decision-making process.

The effort has played out, at moments, as an awkward dance.

For months now, the West Wing has controlled the media schedule of Dr. Anthony Fauci, who drew the ire of the president and his advisers in the early days of the pandemic because of the outsized media attention he received and his perceived willingness to contradict the president, according to three White House officials and Republicans close to the West Wing not authorized to speak publicly about private conversations.

Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, has struck a far more cautious tone than Trump or any other member of the task force about the nation's move to "reopen," provoking the frustration of a president who sees a resurgent economy as key to winning another four years in office.

Birx, until recently, had largely stayed on the president's good side, though her rosy depictions of the pandemic fight drew recent skepticism from Democrats and other public health officials. But Trump also shredded Birx privately as well as in his public comments this week for not striking a more optimistic tone about states that are doing well and for saying she had "tremendous respect" for Trump's rival Pelosi, the officials said.

Throughout the pandemic, some government public health officials have privately expressed worry to West Wing staffers that they are fearful of contradicting the president even as they try to focus on the data and the science behind the administration's response to the virus, officials said. But publicly, there has been a concerted effort to appear that the team and the Oval Office are speaking with one voice.

Redfield disputed on Monday that the health officials were looking to distance themselves from the president.

"I don't think that's an accurate characterization," Redfield said in an interview. He added, "I think we communicate freely and directly as we see the outbreak as members of the task force."

On Monday, Trump seemed to walk back from his criticism that Birx was "taking the bait" from Pelosi and said that he had great respect for the doctor.

He suggested his frustration was spurred by his administration not receiving proper credit for testing so many people or for pushing to replenish the stockpile of ventilators early in the crisis. On Tuesday, he boasted that the U.S. has increased testing capacity by 32,000% since March 12 and has "far and away the most testing capacity in the world." Trump in early March declared "anybody that needs a test gets a test." Yet, in many parts of the country, it can still take a week or longer for patients to receive test results.

His positive self-evaluation gives short shrift to the fact that the U.S. has the world's fourth highest per capita virus death rate, according to Johns Hopkins University's coronavirus resource center.

In the Axios interview, Trump insisted that the appropriate statistic to judge the virus response is the ratio of deaths to cases. By that metric, the U.S. ranks 14th among the 20 countries most affected by COVID-19. Chile, India, Argentina, Russia, South Africa and Bangladesh all have lower rates of deaths to infections, according to the Johns Hopkins-compiled data.

"It's not a bragging right that over 3% in your country that's infected is dying," Georgetown University's



Gostin said.

Trump's undercutting of his health advisers makes it all but impossible for the federal government to speak with a single, authoritative voice at a time of national crisis, critics say.

"It's a very dangerous place for the country to be," said Kathleen Sebelius, health and human services secretary under President Barack Obama. "The reason I say it is very dangerous, is that we continue to have a White House that has made a public health crisis in this country into a debate about whether people like Donald Trump or not. We have never seen a situation like this before, and we are paying the price."

Associated Press writer Mike Stobbe in New York contributed to this report.

## City streets drain of life in Australia's toughest lockdown

By ASANKA BRENDON RATNAYAKE and ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP) — Melbourne's usually vibrant downtown streets were draining of signs of life on Wednesday on the eve of Australia's toughest-ever pandemic restrictions coming into force.

Many of the stylish boutiques and eateries in a city dubbed Australia's Hipster Capital that prides itself on superior coffee had already closed their doors ahead of a ban on non-essential businesses that will throw 250,000 people out of work from Thursday.

Defense personnel in camouflage fatigues and police officers patrolled the streets enforcing pandemic rules that include mandatory masks, which the few pedestrians were abiding by.

The closing down of Australia's second-largest city, which usually accounts for a quarter of the nation's economic activity, also coincided with frenetic preparation.

Hairdresser Niki Fiocca said she had been solidly booked by customers in recent days before her salon must close for at least six weeks.

"I just hope that this all works out for us," said Fiocca, revealing she felt "a little bit under stress."

"If everyone did the right thing, maybe this wouldn't have happened," she added, referring to Melbourne's growing COVID-19 infections.

Victoria set a new daily record of 725 cases on Wednesday. Elsewhere in Australia, only 14 new infections were found.

A Victoria state government website crashed on Wednesday when it was overwhelmed by employees in essential services applying for permits that would allow them to leave home for work from Thursday.

Melbourne café owner Maria Iatrou's business has been classified as essential so she can continue selling takeaway coffee and home deliveries on Thursday while many businesses will be closed.

She's tiring of the seemingly ever-changing restrictions.

When pandemic restrictions were imposed by Melbourne zip codes last month, she found herself across the street from competitors that didn't have to endure the same.

The playing field was leveled when the rules were spread citywide.

Now she must adapt to the new lockdown that will put the non-essential workforce, and many of her customers, out of work.

"It's not only that there is that many people out of a job, they're also telling everybody to stay home and only got out for one hour a day to go shopping or whatever -- I don't understand why we have been told to stay open," Iatrou said.

She questions why a liquor store is classified as an essential business but a hairdresser was not.

"There have been some half-hearted attempts at things and if you're going to shut things down, shut them down. Now it's, You can stay open and you can stay open, but you can't," Iatrou said.

Many Melbourne businesses in this city of 5 million are not expected to survive the second and harshest lockdown.

Australia's Deputy Chief Medical Officer Michael Kidd urged Australians who live outside Victoria to support family and friends in Melbourne.

"The surprise phone call, an email, a video catch-up, even a card or a letter with positive messages

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of love or support can make a big difference to our family members and our friends in Victoria who find themselves living under the restrictions," Kidd said in a nationally televised news conference.

Iatrou did not know if her café would survive the second lockdown.

"It's really, really hard to say at the moment, because it hasn't officially kicked off yet," she said. "But as usual, there's a lot more hoops to jump through and a lot more paper work."

"I had to organize (work) permits for my employees today which was so much fun when the site had already crashed in the morning," she added.

Melbourne residents were evenly split between those who resented the new impositions and those who wholeheartedly supported them, she said.

Authorities are concerned that many Melbourne residents were ignoring orders to stay home, even when they were infected with the coronavirus.

A 38-year-old Melbourne woman has been charged with repeatedly bashing a 26-year-old police woman's head against a concrete sidewalk this week. The officer had been attacked for asking the woman why she wasn't wearing a mask, police allege.

Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews has acknowledge that his government was asking a lot of residents with the new level of restrictions which would cause hardship.

Andrews has tweeted extraordinary photographs of Melbourne's usually busy thoroughfares now eerily empty with a two-word caption: Thank you.

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McGuirk reported from Canberra, Australia. Associated Press writer Nick Perry in Wellington, New Zealand, contributed to this report.

## Hiroshima survivors worry that world will forget

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

HIROSHIMA, Japan (AP) — The atomic bomb that exploded over Hiroshima 75 years ago didn't just kill and maim.

The survivors have also lived for decades with lingering shame, anger and fear. Many in Japan believed radiation sickness is infectious or hereditary.

Some hid their status as survivors. Some harbored thoughts of revenge in their hearts. Some watched as loved ones died, one by one, because of radiation from the bombing, and wondered — Am I next?

As they grow old — their average age now exceeds 83 — many now feel an extreme urgency. They are desperate to rid the world of nuclear bombs and share with the young the first-hand horror they witnessed on Aug. 6, 1945.

Here are some of the stories of survivors interviewed by The Associated Press.

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KOKO KONDO, 75

Koko Kondo had a secret mission as a girl: Revenge.

She was determined to find the person who dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, the person that caused the suffering and the terrible burns she saw on the faces of girls at her father's church — and then square off and give them a punch.

She got her chance in 1955.

Ten-year-old Kondo appeared on an American TV show called "This is Your Life" that was featuring her father, Rev. Kiyoshi Tanimoto, one of six survivors profiled in John Hersey's book "Hiroshima."

Kondo stared in hatred at another guest: Capt. Robert Lewis, co-pilot of the B-29 bomber Enola Gay that dropped the bomb.

While Kondo, who survived the bombing as an infant, was wondering if she would act on her fantasy and punch him, the host asked Lewis how he felt after dropping the bomb.

"Looking down from thousands of feet over Hiroshima, all I could think of was, 'God, what have we done?'" he said.

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Kondo saw tears well in Lewis' eyes, and her hatred melted away.

"He was not a monster; he was just another human being. ... I knew that I should hate the war, not him," Kondo told The Associated Press. She said she was grateful she met Lewis because it helped the hate go away.

Still, she suffered years of humiliation and prejudice that she had to overcome as she grew up. One day as an adolescent she was told to undress except for her underwear at a medical conference in an auditorium. Her fiance rejected her because she was an atomic bomb survivor.

On the eve of Thursday's memorial at the cenotaph of Hiroshima Peace Park, Kondo held a moment of silence and prayed for the victims, and for Lewis. That meeting changed her way of thinking and helped her overcome the difficulties later in her life, she said.

Now, Kondo is following in her father's footsteps, busy telling her stories to younger people.

Hiroshima has become a beautiful place, but atomic bombs still exist, she says, and another nuclear attack would destroy the world.

"It's time we human beings get together and abolish nuclear weapons," she said. "We have hope."

LEE JONG-KEUN, 92

Lee kept his secret as an atomic bombing survivor for nearly 70 years, not even telling his wife, always fearing people might notice the burn marks on the face.

But today Lee, a second-generation Korean born in Japan, is training young people to tell survivors' stories. He also wants them to learn about the difficulty that Koreans have faced in Japan.

"Survivors won't be here 20 years from now, but our stories must be," said Lee, who will meet Prime Minister Shinzo Abe after Thursday's memorial to demand Japan do more to ban nuclear weapons.

Some 20,000 ethnic Korean residents of Hiroshima are believed to have died in the nuclear attack. The city had a large number of Korean workers, including those forced to work without pay at mines and factories under Japan's 1910-1945 colonization of the Korean Peninsula.

At a memorial Wednesday for Korean victims, Lee laid flowers and prayed for those who perished. "I ask younger people to never forget us and to understand the tragedy, absurdity and cruelty of the war so that nuclear weapons will be eliminated from the world as soon as possible."

On the morning of Aug. 6, 1945, 16-year-old Lee watched the blue summer sky turned yellowish orange. He suffered burns on his face and neck that took four months to heal.

When he returned to work, co-workers stayed away, saying he had "A-bomb disease." He decided not to tell anyone about the atomic bombing. That would only "double" his suffering when he was trying hard to hide his Korean identity.

His parents talked in Korean and wanted him to learn the language, but he didn't like going outside with them, fearing people would notice their Korean accent.

So Lee lived under a Japanese name, Masaichi Egawa, until eight years ago when he began speaking out.

"To tell my story, I had to explain why Koreans are in Japan," he said. "Now I have nothing to hide."

KEIKO OGURA, 84

Remembering the atomic bombing and how she survived is painful, but Keiko Ogura is determined to keep telling her stories as she organizes English guided tours for foreign visitors at Hiroshima's Peace Memorial Park.

Ogura established Hiroshima Interpreters for Peace in 1984 to translate survivors' stories, including her own.

"In the beginning, it was really painful to remember those days," she said at a recent online briefing. "But I wanted young Americans to know what their country had done. I have no intention to blame them, but just want them to know the facts, and think."

It was 40 years after the war before she felt comfortable telling her stories.

"What we suffered the most was a sense of guilt as we kept wondering why we could not save the many

people who died before our eyes.”

But now she has also found solace by telling her story.

Visitors are scarce this year because of the coronavirus pandemic. Still, she will organize a live virtual tour of the peace memorial on the anniversary of the bombing Thursday.

MICHIKO KODAMA, 82

The external scars from the atomic bombing have faded, but Michiko Kodama says her heart hasn't healed. (asterisk)For me the war isn't over," Kodama said in an interview. "Even 75 years later, we continue to suffer because of radiation. ... And nuclear weapons still exist."

On Aug. 6, 75 years ago, the 7-year-old Kodama saw a flash in the sky from her elementary school classroom. Shards of broken glasses rained down on her. On the way home, her left shoulder bleeding as her father carried her on his back, she saw a girl, badly injured, looking up at her. Even today she is pained by the girl's face.

She lost her favorite cousins within weeks of the bombing, then her parents, brothers and even her daughter. All died of cancer or from the radiation exposure. Kodama has lived in fear that she would be next.

There were also years of discrimination and humiliation.

One day, when she went to a clinic and showed her medical certificate, a receptionist noted her status as a bombing survivor out loud, and another patient sitting next to Kodama moved away. "I still feel hurt from the discrimination; that is what sits the heaviest in my heart" she said.

Follow Mari Yamaguchi on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/mariyamaguchi>

## The Latest: 44 test positive on Norwegian cruise ship

By The Associated Press undefined

COPENHAGEN, Denmark — The number of people on a Norwegian cruise ship who have tested positive for the coronavirus has reached 44, authorities said.

Following the outbreak on the MS Roald Amundsen, the ship's owner halted all cruises on Monday and Norway closed its ports to cruise ships for two weeks.

The Norwegian Institute of Public Health said late Tuesday that 35 crew members and nine passengers had tested positive. All passengers were registered as living in Norway. They were not identified.

The cruise line often acts like a local ferry, traveling from port to port along Norway's west coast. Some passengers disembarked along the route and authorities fear they may have spread the virus to local communities.

In the Arctic harbor of Bodo, neither crew nor passengers were allowed to get off the cruise ship Seadream 1 after a person from Denmark tested positive on Tuesday upon returning home. The vessel arrived early Wednesday, and tests will be carried out on the pier, the Norwegian news agency NTB said.

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

- Lives Lost: Parents hoped baby Kobe would play basketball
- Chasm grows between Trump and government coronavirus experts
- 'Too many are selfish': US nears 5 million virus cases
- Progress slow as urgency grows on virus relief legislation
- California's often-forgotten Imperial County is an example of how the coronavirus has been especially damaging to lower-income and Latino households. The county is heavily Hispanic and poor, and has some of California's highest infection rates.
- Education officials in Alabama say more than 4,000 new laptop computers bound for a school district are being held by customs due to human rights concerns.

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



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standingtheOutbreak

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

WELLINGTON, New Zealand — New Zealand's unemployment rate showed a surprising improvement to 4% during the midst of the nation's virus lockdown, although the headline number doesn't tell the full story and joblessness is likely to increase in the months ahead.

Still, the figure was far better than most people expected and came as welcome news to the government led by Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern ahead of a general election next month.

The figures from Statistics New Zealand showed the unemployment rate in the quarter ending June fell from 4.2% in the previous quarter. But the number of hours worked also fell a record 10% and the number of people not in the labor force rose.

Because people who aren't actively seeking work are not counted as unemployed, the figures didn't reflect many job losses because most people couldn't search for jobs during the lockdown. And many workers have been protected by a government-funded wage subsidy scheme during the pandemic which is due to expire next month.

TOKYO — A governor in Japan is drawing skeptical criticism after he touted a gargling product as effective against the coronavirus, an assertion that, despite its dubiousness, emptied some store shelves of the medicine.

Shares of Shionogi & Co. and Meiji Holdings Co., which make Isojin, soared in Tokyo Tuesday trading after Osaka Gov. Hirofumi Yoshimura made the comments.

Yoshimura referred to a study carried out by the Osaka regional government on a sample of just 41 people. Experts said such a study is inconclusive.

Shionogi and Meiji shares were already coming down Wednesday, as subsequent Japanese media reports debunked Yoshimura's claim.

Daily confirmed cases of the coronavirus have been shooting up in Japan, to more than 1,000 people.

MELBOURNE, Australia — Australia's hot spot Victoria state announced a new record 725 COVID-19 cases and 15 deaths on Wednesday, while businesses in Melbourne city prepared to draw down their shutters as new pandemic restrictions were enforced.

The new 24-hour record was marginally higher than 723 cases and 13 deaths reported on Thursday last week.

From late Wednesday, many non-essential businesses including most detail retailers, hair-dressers and gyms in Australia's second-largest city will be closed for six weeks. People employed in essential jobs will have to carry passes under Australia's toughest-ever lockdown restrictions.

Like Melbourne hospitals, Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews announced that non-emergency surgeries will be restricted in hospitals in regional Victoria, where infections rates are lower.

"It will be very challenging, but it is necessary to drive these numbers down," Andrews said of the new restrictions.

MEXICO CITY -- Mexico posted a near-record one-day total of 857 newly confirmed COVID-19 deaths Tuesday, bringing the country's confirmed death toll to 48,869, the third-highest number in the world.

The Health Department reported that just over 1 million coronavirus tests have been performed, with almost 450,000 people testing positive to date.

Mexico's has had a positive rate of about 45% to 50% since the early weeks of the pandemic, largely because most people were tested only after exhibiting considerable symptoms.

HONG KONG — Hong Kong has reported 80 new cases of COVID-19 and four additional deaths, while new cases in mainland China fell to just 27.

Hong Kong saw cases spike in a new wave of infections, but new daily cases have now fallen back into

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the double digits.

Authorities in the semi-autonomous Chinese city have ordered masks be worn in all public places, slapped restrictions on indoor dining, banned many activities and increased testing for coronavirus. Hong Kong has recorded a total of 3,669 cases and 42 deaths from COVID-19.

Of mainland China's cases, 22 were in the northwestern region of Xinjiang, whose capital and largest city Urumqi has been the center of China's latest outbreak. China has reported 4,634 deaths among 84,491 cases since the virus was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

China said Tuesday it was working with the World Health Organization on an investigation into the origins of the novel coronavirus, but gave no word on when that would get underway.

**LAS VEGAS** -- Nevada health officials say 95% of the 980 new coronavirus cases reported statewide during the last day were in the Las Vegas area.

State coronavirus response officials said Tuesday that Clark County residents accounted for 931 of the positive COVID-19 tests reported. Confirmed cases statewide topped 52,000, and 15 more deaths brought Nevada's total to at least 862.

Separately, the governor's office issued a report tallying \$16.7 billion in federal coronavirus funding to Nevada since Congress approved a \$2.2 trillion emergency aid bill in March.

The report says nearly \$2.2 billion went toward \$600-per-week payments to idled workers statewide.

**WASHINGTON** — President Donald Trump says more Americans will be lost to COVID-19.

Trump was asked in a Fox Business Network interview Tuesday about prospects for relations with China going forward.

Trump said the relationship has been "very badly hurt" by the spread of the coronavirus and he repeated his belief that China should have contained it.

The president noted the American death toll, saying somewhat prematurely that 160,000 had died from the disease caused by the virus. He told host Lou Dobbs: "We're going to lose more."

Trump added that millions would have been lost had he not intervened and "just let it ride."

The U.S. death toll from COVID-19 stood at more than 156,000 on Tuesday evening.

**LOS ANGELES** -- A technical problem has caused a lag in California's tally of coronavirus test results, casting doubt on the accuracy of recent data showing improvements in the infection rate and hindering efforts to track the spread.

State Health and Human Services Secretary Dr. Mark Ghaly said Tuesday that in recent days California has not been receiving a full count through electronic lab reports because of the unresolved issue.

The state's data page now carries a disclaimer saying the numbers represent an underreporting of actual positive cases per day.

The latest daily tally posted Tuesday showed 4,526 new confirmed positives, the lowest in more than six weeks.

## French president traveling to Lebanon after deadly explosion

**PARIS (AP)** — As Lebanon reeled in shock a day after the massive blast in Beirut and counted the dead, nations around the world promised it would not be alone.

French President Emmanuel Macron announced he would fly to the shattered Lebanese capital, and two planeloads of French rescue workers and aid were expected to touch down on Wednesday afternoon.

Other countries were sending search teams, stunned by the explosion that killed at least 100 people, injured thousands and left smoking rubble strewn for blocks around Beirut's port.

But the pledges of aid raised new questions for a country whose economic and political crisis has made donors wary in recent years.

It was unclear what caused the blast, which appeared to have been triggered by a fire and struck with

the force of an earthquake. It was the most powerful explosion ever seen in the city.

Macron's office told The Associated Press that the French leader will meet with Lebanese political leaders but provided no further details. Lebanon is a former French protectorate and the countries retain close political and economic ties.

Several other countries across the Middle East and Europe are sending aid. The European Union is activating its civil protection system to round up emergency workers and equipment from across the 27-nation bloc.

The EU commission said the plan is to urgently dispatch over 100 firefighters with vehicles, sniffer dogs and equipment designed to find people trapped in urban areas.

The Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Poland and the Netherlands are taking part in the effort and other countries are expected to join.

The EU's satellite mapping system will be used to help Lebanese authorities to establish the extent of the damage.

The French emergency workers traveling to Lebanon include members of a special unit with chemical and other technological expertise trained to intervene in damaged industrial sites. Among their tasks will be to identify specific risks for products stored in the area and other risks resulting from the explosion, said national civil security spokesman Michael Bernier.

Others have experience in dealing with the aftermath of earthquakes, forest fires and other international disasters.

In Paris, a special vigil will be held Wednesday for blast victims in the Notre Dame Maronite Church, and the Eiffel Tower will go dark at midnight to mourn them.

Sylvie Corbet in Paris and Lorne Cook in Brussels contributed.

## Protest leader Bush ousts 20-year US Rep. Clay in Missouri

By SUMMER BALLENTINE Associated Press

Cori Bush, a onetime homeless woman who led protests following a white police officer's fatal shooting of a Black 18-year-old in Ferguson, ousted longtime Rep. William Lacy Clay Tuesday in Missouri's Democratic primary, ending a political dynasty that has spanned more than a half-century.

Bush's victory came in a rematch of 2018, when she failed to capitalize on a national Democratic wave that favored political newcomers such as Bush's friend, Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

But this time around, Bush's supporters said protests over the death of George Floyd in police custody in Minneapolis and outrage over racial injustice finally pushed her over the edge.

An emotional Bush, speaking to supporters while wearing a mask, said few people expected her to win. "They counted us out," she said. "They called me — I'm just the protester, I'm just the activist with no name, no title and no real money. That's all they said that I was. But St. Louis showed up today."

Bush's campaign spokeswoman, Keenan Korth, said voters in the district were "galvanized."

"They're ready to turn the page on decades of failed leadership," Korth said.

Bush, 44, also had backing from political action committee Justice Democrats and Fight Corporate Monopolies this election. She campaigned for Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders during his presidential bid.

Bush's primary win essentially guarantees her a seat in Congress representing the heavily Democratic St. Louis area. Missouri's 1st Congressional District has been represented by Clay or his father for a half-century. Bill Clay served 32 years before retiring in 2000. William Lacy Clay, 64, was elected that year.

Clay didn't face a serious challenger until Bush. This year, he ran on his decades-long record in Congress.

"This election is a simple choice," Clay said in a Monday statement. "Cori Bush's Empty Rhetoric, or my record of real results and real reforms for the people."

Both Clay and Bush are Black, and Black residents slightly outnumber whites in the district that includes St. Louis and north St. Louis County.

Bush became ill while pregnant with her second child in 2001 and had to quit her job at a preschool. When

she and her then-husband were evicted from a rental home, the couple, their newborn and 14-month-old son lived out of a Ford Explorer for several months.

Eventually, the couple divorced. Bush earned a nursing degree. She also became a pastor.

Michael Brown's death in 2014 in Ferguson vaulted her into another role: activist. She became a leader of some of the many protests that followed the fatal police shooting of the Black, unarmed 18-year-old. She was back on the streets in 2017 after a white St. Louis officer was acquitted in the shooting death of a Black suspect.

She continues to lead protests.

"She's being buoyed by this movement, and the movement's origin is in Ferguson," Justice Democrats spokesman Waleed Shahid said.

Associated Press writer Sara Burnett contributed to this report from Chicago. Reporter Jim Salter contributed from O'Fallon, Mo.

## Lives Lost: Parents hoped baby Kobe would play basketball

By KIKO ROSARIO and JOEAL CALUPITAN Associated Press

TANAUAN, Philippines (AP) — He was heralded in the Philippines as the country's youngest COVID-19 survivor, a baby who'd become infected with and conquered the coronavirus during his first 16 days of life.

To Ronnel Manjares and Trisha May Noche, he was Kobe Christ, their second child.

Noche wanted her son to grow up playing basketball, just like his father. The couple named him after American basketball legend Kobe Bryant, who died in a helicopter crash early this year.

"I added Christ after he was born on Easter Sunday," Manjares said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people from around the world who have died during the coronavirus pandemic.

The young parents prepared for Kobe's arrival during a challenging time.

Manjares, 26, lost his job as a daily wage construction worker in metropolitan Manila because of the nationwide coronavirus lockdown imposed in mid-March. They wanted Noche, 19, to give birth in their home province, but the lockdown prevented any travel.

The couple also was advised that it would be safer to have the baby at home instead of a hospital to prevent exposure to the virus. With the help of a traditional birth attendant, Kobe was born on April 12 in the shack near a construction area that his parents already shared with their baby daughter.

Manjares said the delivery went smoothly and that his newborn son "looked healthy and fit." Noche was happy 15-month-old Crystal now had a brother.

"I want to take care of him, make him grow old properly, so my other child will have a playmate," Noche recalled thinking.

The family spent Kobe's first few days together at home. Then, the parents noticed his swollen belly. Their son also was constipated and running a fever. His father took Kobe to the main children's hospital, where a virus test of the infant came back positive.

Neither Manjares nor the doctors could trace how or where the newborn contracted the coronavirus. Manjares, Noche, Crystal and the birth attendant all tested negative.

But Kobe got better; he was declared virus-free based on another test when he was just over 2-weeks-old. His constipation and enlarged abdomen also cleared up.

The baby's discharge from the National Children's Hospital on April 28 made news. Video footage recorded that day shows Kobe in his father's arms and surrounded by cheering health workers, some carrying signs reading "COVID-19 survivor" and "I Beat COVID-19."

The two would need to spend 14 days in quarantine at another hospital, but a relieved Manjares already looked beyond the confinement period.



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"I was very happy then because we were going home. My family will finally see my son, my youngest," he recalled.

The family's joy turned out to be short-lived. Three days later, Kobe was back at National Children's Hospital with a swollen belly. His mother accompanied him this time so she could continue breastfeeding. Still quarantined himself, Manjares borrowed a neighbor's cellphone for video calls with his son and partner during the month they remained at the hospital.

A biopsy showed that Kobe suffered from Hirschsprung disease, a rare birth defect that prevents stool from moving through the large intestine. It is usually treated with surgery, but the blockage can lead to a dangerous bacterial infection.

That's what happened with Kobe. His doctors were working to manage the infection so the baby would be stable enough for surgery when Kobe's condition rapidly deteriorated. The baby died on June 4, less than two months after he was born.

The director of the National Children's Hospital told a local broadcaster the cause of death was sepsis, the overactive immune system response to an infection that can cause fatal tissue and organ damage.

It's unclear if COVID-19 exacerbated the progression of the Hirschsprung disease or the complications the baby experienced. Data provided by the Philippines Department of Health showed that as of July 23, there have been 272 COVID-19 cases among infants, 12 of whom have died.

Lockdown restrictions prevented Manjares from going to the hospital to see his son's body and comfort Kobe's mother. Local officials allowed the couple to hold a two-day wake at their home with neighbors since Kobe's death wasn't attributed to COVID-19.

The baby died before he could be baptized, but a priest who came to celebrate Mass blessed the tiny remains in a white coffin.

A family friend who owns a farm in their home province south of Manila allowed them, as well as his father and siblings, to stay on his property because the Manjares home in nearby Talisay town was heavily damaged during the eruption of Taal volcano in January.

There, Manjares remembers the time he spent with Kobe by viewing some photos of the baby he keeps on his phone. One is a selfie he took with a sleeping Kobe. Another grabbed from a video call shows his son filling the main screen, Manjares smiling from a small second one in the corner.

"I can't forget his face," he said.

Because of her Catholic faith, Noche believes that Kobe is in a better place. The pain of losing a child stays with his mother, who also treasures a few images to keep him in her memory.

"Life would have been happier if baby Kobe was still alive," she said. "How I wished for him to be with us for a bit longer."

Rosario reported from Bangkok, Thailand.

## 'We are no less American': Deaths pile up on Texas border

By PAUL J. WEBER Associated Press

RIO GRANDE CITY, Texas (AP) — When labor pains signaled that Clarissa Muñoz was at last going to be a mom, she jumped in a car and headed two hours down the Texas border into one of the nation's most dire coronavirus hot spots.

She went first to a hospital so desperate for help that nurses recently made 49 phone calls to find a bed 700 miles away to airlift a dying man with the virus. From there, she was taken to a bigger hospital by ambulance. Along the way, she passed a funeral home that typically handles 10 services a month but is up to nine a week. And when she finally arrived to give birth, she was blindsided by another complication: A test revealed that she too was infected.

Hours later, Muñoz was granted just a few seconds to lay eyes, but no hands, on her first born, who was quickly whisked away.

On America's southern doorstep, the Rio Grande Valley, the U.S. failure to contain the pandemic has

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been laid bare. For nearly a month, this borderland of 2 million people in South Texas pleaded for a field hospital, but not until Tuesday was one ready and accepting patients. In July alone, Hidalgo County reported more than 600 deaths — more than the Houston area, which is five times larger.

At DHR Health, one of the largest hospitals on the border, nearly 200 of the 500 beds belong to coronavirus patients isolated in two units. A third unit is in the works. That doesn't even include the COVID-19 maternity ward, where mothers and newborns are separated immediately.

Doctors and nurses rushed Muñoz's baby out of the delivery room and down a hallway sealed by a zippered tarp to restrict contaminated air. Seven hours later, she still did not know his weight. Across the street, alarms blared constantly in a coronavirus intensive-care unit, summoning nurses to roll patients onto their stomachs to force more air into their lungs.

"It's a really, really ugly feeling," Muñoz said of watching her son being taken away.

Texas reopened quicker than most of the U.S., only to backtrack in the face of massive outbreaks. Health officials say the worst of a summer resurgence appears to be behind the state as a whole, but the border is a bleak exception. Doctors fear another punishing wave is around the corner.

This predominately Hispanic region is cruelly vulnerable to COVID-19. The prevalence of diabetes here is roughly three times the national average, and households have among the lowest incomes in America, adding to the difficulty of thwarting the virus.

Even the weather has added to burden. The first hurricane of the season barreled over the border two weeks ago. At first, local officials hoped that the storm named Hanna would wash out family gatherings and bar crawls, slowing the spread. In reality, the system knocked out power to thousands of homes for days, driving families into closer contact with relatives whose lights remained on.

Now, said Maritza Padilla, DHR Health's assistant chief nursing officer, there's "no chance" of flattening the region's infection curve.

At the hospital, a television monitor displays the struggle in real time: Teal rectangles represent occupied hospital beds, and green rectangles are open beds. The grid is nearly all teal. On a whiteboard, "body bags" is scrawled on a list of needed items.

A Christian relief charity that opened a coronavirus field hospital in New York's Central Park visited the border in mid-July with an eye toward building another facility. That never panned out, and neither did another idea to send patients to hotels. Last week, Republican Gov. Greg Abbott announced that a Hidalgo County convention center would become a hospital.

Local authorities remain frustrated.

"We need the help. Our house is on fire," Rio Grande City Mayor Joel Villarreal said. "We are no less American than other people in other parts of the country."

Martha Torres, a nurse at Starr County Memorial Hospital, knows about searching in vain for help. She has spent entire shifts calling other ICUs in Texas to accept helicopter transfers out of her 29-bed unit. Some patients are sent as far away as Oklahoma City, and few survive after the long flight — leaving families with the burden of getting the bodies back home.

One entrance to the hospital's COVID-19 ward resembles an off-the-shelf patio door, the kind sold at big-box hardware stores. Last week, Alex Garcia, 26, visited his father by peering through the outside window of his room. Both men are pipeline workers.

That same night, Emily Lopez was preparing for her mother's funeral only weeks after her aunt died of the virus. The two had been playing bingo together before becoming ill, and two other family members were also hospitalized. "In this area, it's not a joke. It's life or death," she said.

The COVID-19 maternity ward at DHR Health is a place of relative calm but with its own problems. Among them is the challenge of squaring best practices with the realities of South Texas, including guidelines that recommend the mother stay isolated at home and the baby be placed in the hands of another caregiver.

"This is great in Hartford, Connecticut, because everybody has a 4,000-square-foot home, the average income is \$180,000 and all that. Down here, it's very different," said Dr. Efraim Vela, the hospital's chief executive physician of women's health. "We're having problems with that."

Nearly 15,000 pregnant women in the U.S. have tested positive for the coronavirus, and at least 35 have

died, according to the Centers for Disease Control. Although it is possible for a pregnant woman to spread the coronavirus to her fetus, it seems to be relatively rare.

Muñoz, 25, didn't know she had the virus when she left her home in the border town of Falcon last week for her son's birth. While she went into labor alone, her husband sat all night in the parking lot, barred from coming inside.

First thing in the morning, he plunked down \$100 for a rapid COVID test at a clinic that told him he needed an appointment. "I told them it was an emergency. They weren't going to let me get my son out of the hospital unless I was negative," said her husband, Nicolas Garcia.

After the birth, her son was a phone app away: The hospital lets COVID-positive mothers call the nursery over a video chat. Nurse Ashley Vaughan makes a point to position the camera so mothers can see hands and toes on the call. "This mom will stay on the video chat until the mom falls asleep," Vaughan said, pointing to another bassinet.

She went back to the other baby. "He's doing good, right?" Muñoz asked through the video. Vaughan assured the new mother that he was fine, and the conversation shifted to when the family might go home.

"Are you done? Or do you want to stay on?" Vaughan asked.

Muñoz said she would go for now. She took a last look before hanging up.

"I love you," she said. "Bye."

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Associated Press video journalist John L. Mone contributed to this report.

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

## Minneapolis commission takes up proposal to disband police

By AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — A Minneapolis commission is expected to take up a proposed amendment Wednesday that would dismantle the city's Police Department in the wake of George Floyd's death and replace it with a new public safety department.

A majority of the City Council backs the idea, with supporters saying it would do away with a troubled department that has resisted change, and replace it with a more "holistic" and public health-oriented approach to public safety.

If it advances to the November ballot, voters would get the final say.

The 15-member volunteer commission could approve the proposal; reject it; propose a substitute or ask for more time to review it. Rejection wouldn't be fatal, because the City Council isn't bound by the commission's decision. But a delay would be, by making it impossible to get the idea onto November's ballot.

The City Council's proposal would eliminate the Police Department from the city charter, and replace it with a "Department of Community Safety and Violence Prevention." The new department would prioritize public health, with a director who has "non-law enforcement experience in community safety services." It would still allow for armed police officers, but they would answer to the new director.

Some members of the commission have worried that the process — which has included two public hearings and online comments — is moving too quickly. The process has also unfolded during a violent summer in Minneapolis after Floyd's death, with shootings dramatically higher than last year, and many residents have worried about a proposal to "abolish" police officers.

Some City Council members have promised a robust process to get public input on how a new department would look and work.

Council member Steve Fletcher, one of the authors of the proposal, said that even if the commission decides it needs more time, the city will continue moving ahead with the community engagement process to "build a collective vision of what we really want the future of public safety to look like."

He said having the issue on the ballot in November would give city leaders flexibility to implement options

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that come out of the engagement process. If the issue is not on this November's ballot, he said, leaders might have to wait until November 2021 to vote on structural changes.

While he conceded voters could reject the idea, which would hamper flexibility as well, he said having it on the 2020 ballot after a few months of public input would give the city a nice "check in" on how people are feeling.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey told The Associated Press on Tuesday that he remains opposed to eliminating the department.

"We should not go down the route of simply abolishing the Police Department," Frey said. "What we need to see within this department, and within many departments throughout the country, is a full-on culture shift."

Floyd, a Black man who was handcuffed, died May 25 after Derek Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes, as Floyd said he couldn't breathe. Chauvin was charged with second-degree murder and other counts, and three other officers at the scene were charged with aiding and abetting. All four officers were fired, and Floyd's death sparked protests in Minneapolis and around the world.

The mayor and Chief Medaria Arradondo have moved ahead with their own changes since Floyd's death, including requiring officers to document attempts to de-escalate situations whether or not force is used. They also have expanded requirements for reporting use-of-force incidents, ordering officers to provide more detail.

Arradondo also pulled the department out of negotiations for a union contract, saying he wanted a review designed to change the grievance and arbitration process, which he said makes it hard to get rid of problem officers.

According to draft language of the amendment posted online, the new department proposed by the City Council "will have responsibility for public safety services prioritizing a holistic, public health-oriented approach." The director of the new agency would have "non-law-enforcement experience in community safety services, including but not limited to public health and/or restorative justice approaches."

## Kansas GOP picks Rep. Marshall for Senate seat over Kobach

By JOHN HANNA AP Political Writer

TOPEKA, Kan. (AP) — Kansas Republicans on Tuesday nominated Rep. Roger Marshall for the Senate over polarizing conservative Kris Kobach, heeding the party establishment's advice as it tries to keep a normally safe seat out of play in what could be a difficult year for the GOP.

Marshall prevailed comfortably in a crowded primary field with the backing of major farm, business and anti-abortion groups but without a pre-election endorsement from President Donald Trump sought by Senate Majority Mitch McConnell and others for the two-term congressman for western and central Kansas. Marshall overcame Kobach's reputation as a conservative firebrand and informal adviser to Trump.

Marshall will face Democratic state Sen. Barbara Bollier, a former lifelong moderate Republican who received national attention at the end of 2018 by switching parties. GOP leaders have worried for months about Bollier's ability so far to raise more in contributions than the top GOP candidates combined.

Kobach, the former Kansas secretary of state, is nationally known for advocating restrictive immigration policies and alienated independent and moderate GOP voters in losing the Kansas governor's race in 2018. Marshall and his allies made that loss a key issue as he and Kobach battled atop the GOP field.

Bob and Debbie Rosenberger said Kobach's loss in 2018 was on their minds as they cast their Republican primary ballots for Marshall at a southwest Topeka church. The retired 62-year-old postal worker and his wife, a retired, 63-year-old nursing home supervisor, said they are Trump supporters and believe Marshall will help him in the Senate.

As for Kobach, Bob Rosenberger said, "Bottom line, I just don't trust him as much as Roger Marshall."

The race for retiring four-term Republican Sen. Pat Roberts' seat had national implications even though the GOP hasn't lost a Senate contest in Kansas since 1932. Republicans are trying to keep their 53-47 Senate majority with competitive races in other states, including Arizona, Colorado and Maine.



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Marshall immediately called for party unity at a watch party at a winery southwest of his central Kansas hometown of Great Bend. He told his supporters that the GOP's Senate majority is at stake in his race and said he was strengthened by the contentious primary.

"I've always believed in this iron sharpening iron," Marshall said in his livestreamed remarks. "After this primary, our swords are sharp and our shields are thick."

Kobach said in his concession speech that he had faced a "very steep, uphill struggle" after telling reporters earlier in the day that the GOP establishment had a recent history of crushing conservatives like him. But he urged Republicans to get behind Marshall.

"We will hold this seat, and I will do everything I can to make sure that happens for the Republican Party," Kobach said, speaking from Leavenworth, where he kicked off his campaign more than a year ago.

Even with Marshall as the nominee, the GOP faces a potentially competitive Senate race. Bollier had raised more than \$8 million through July — and her campaign said Tuesday night that the total is now \$9 million — a big sum in a low-cost media state like Kansas, with donations flooding in from outside the state.

Bollier said in an online primary victory speech each of the Republican candidates demonstrated that he would be a "yes man" for the party, calling it "the last thing we need right now." Bollier has positioned herself as a "commonsense" political moderate, but the GOP is likely to try to paint her as too liberal for the state.

Bollier is a retired Kansas City-area anesthesiologist, while Marshall is an obstetrician.

Marshall raised about \$2.9 million and Kobach, a little more than \$1 million. Bob Hamilton, the founder of a Kansas City-area plumbing company, largely self-funded a campaign heavy on television ads with \$3.5 million in personal loans. Those figures were all dwarfed by PAC spending in the primary, which totaled about \$11 million.

Hamilton had a strong showing in running behind Kobach and Marshall in early returns.

Marshall, Kobach and Hamilton and eight other candidates made the field the largest for the GOP since the state began holding Senate primaries more than 100 years ago. Kansas has no runoff elections, so Marshall could win the nomination with 40% or less of the vote.

Dean Crenshaw, a 53-year-old welder from Belle Plaine in south-central Kansas, voted for Kobach for his conservative views despite believing that Democrats preferred to have Bollier face Kobach.

He said he was torn between voting for Kobach and Marshall but didn't know much about Marshall and he "just voted for the guy I knew the most about."

McConnell's first choice in the race was U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, a former Wichita-area congressman, but while Pompeo made multiple visits to Kansas suggesting interest, he definitely declared himself out in January.

Kobach argued that the issues he's often emphasized — particularly immigration — would play better in a fall Senate campaign and said he'd benefit from a flood of pro-Trump voters going to the polls in November after skipping voting in the 2018 mid-terms.

But many Republicans didn't buy those arguments.

Roberts declared his support for Marshall after the congressman had picked up endorsements from the U.S Chamber of Commerce, the Kansas Farm Bureau, the National Right to Life Committee and Kansans for Life, the state's most influential anti-abortion group. Marshall also had the backing of 97-year-old political icon Bob Dole, the former U.S. Senate majority leader and 1996 GOP presidential nominee.

Follow John Hanna on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/apjdhanna>

## Massive Beirut blast kills more than 70, injures thousands

By BASSEM MROUE and ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — A massive explosion rocked Beirut on Tuesday, flattening much of the city's port, damaging buildings across the capital and sending a giant mushroom cloud into the sky. More than 70 people were killed and 3,000 injured, with bodies buried in the rubble, officials said.

It was not clear what caused the blast, which struck with the force of a 3.5 magnitude earthquake, ac-

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According to Germany's geosciences center GFZ, and was heard and felt as far away as Cyprus more than 200 kilometers (180 miles) across the Mediterranean. Lebanon's interior minister said it appeared that a large cache of ammonium nitrate in the port had detonated.

The sudden devastation overwhelmed a country already struggling with both the coronavirus pandemic and a severe economic and financial crisis.

For hours after the explosion, the most destructive in all of Lebanon's troubled history, ambulances rushed in from around the country to carry away the wounded. Hospitals quickly filled beyond capacity, pleading for blood supplies, and generators to keep their lights on.

For blocks around the port, bloodied residents staggered through streets lined with overturned cars and littered with rubble from shattered buildings. Windows and doors were blown out kilometers (miles) away, including at the city's only international airport. Army helicopters helped battle fires raging at the port.

Interior Minister Mohammed Fahmi told a local TV station that it appeared the blast was caused by the detonation of more than 2,700 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been stored in a warehouse at the dock ever since it was confiscated from a cargo ship in 2014. Witnesses reported seeing an orange cloud like that which appears when toxic nitrogen dioxide gas is released after an explosion involving nitrates.

Videos showed what appeared to be a fire erupting nearby just before, and local TV stations reported that a fireworks warehouse was involved. The fire appeared to spread to a nearby building, triggering the more massive explosion, sending up a mushroom cloud and generating a shock wave.

Charbel Haj, who works at the port, said the blast started as small explosions like firecrackers. Then, he said, he was thrown off his feet.

The explosion came amid ongoing tensions between Israel and the Hezbollah military group on Lebanon's southern border. Many residents reported hearing planes overhead just before the blast, fueling rumors of an attack, though Israeli military overflights are common.

An Israeli government official said Israel "had nothing to do" with the blast. He spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to discuss the matter with the news media. Israeli officials usually do not comment on "foreign reports." The Israeli government offered emergency assistance through international intermediaries.

President Donald Trump said the U.S. "stands ready to assist Lebanon," and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo extended his "deepest condolences."

"Our team in Beirut has reported to me the extensive damage to a city and a people that I hold dear, an additional challenge in a time of already deep crisis," Pompeo said in a written statement.

The blast was stunning even for a city that has seen a 15-year civil war, suicide bombings, bombardment by Israel and political assassinations.

"It was a real horror show. I haven't seen anything like that since the days of the (civil) war," said Marwan Ramadan, who was about 500 meters (yards) from the port and was knocked off his feet by the force of the explosion.

Health Minister Hassan Hamad said the preliminary toll was more than 70 dead and more than 3,000 wounded. He added that hospitals were barely coping and offers of aid were pouring in from Arab states and friends of Lebanon.

Beirut's governor, Marwan Abboud, broke into tears as he toured the site, exclaiming, "Beirut is a devastated city." Prime Minister Hassan Diab vowed that "those responsible will pay."

At the start of a White House news conference on the coronavirus, Trump said the explosion "looks like a terrible attack." When asked by a reporter if he was confident that it was an attack, Trump said: "I met with some of our great generals and they just seem to feel that it was."

But one of Israel's top bomb experts, Boaz Hayoun, said fireworks could have been a factor setting off the bigger blast. "Before the big explosion ... in the center of the fire, you can see sparks, you can hear sounds like popcorn and you can hear whistles," said Hayoun, owner of the Tamar Group, which works closely with the Israeli government on safety and certification issues involving explosives. "This is very specific behavior of fireworks."

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Some of those injured lay on the ground at the port, Associated Press staff at the scene said. A civil defense official said there were still bodies inside the port, many under debris.

Several of Beirut's hospitals were damaged in the blast. Outside the St. George University Hospital in Beirut's Achrafieh neighborhood, people with various injuries arrived in ambulances, in cars and on foot. The explosion had caused major damage inside the building and knocked out the electricity. Dozens of injured were being treated on the spot on the street outside, on stretchers and wheelchairs.

Outside one hospital, Omar Kinno sat on the pavement, holding back tears. Kinno, a Syrian, said one of his sisters was killed when the blast rocked their apartment near the port, and another sister's neck was broken. His injured mother and father were taken to a hospital but he didn't know which, and he was making calls trying to track them down.

"I have no idea what happened to my parents. I am totally lost," he said.

The U.N. peacekeeping mission in Lebanon, UNIFIL, said one of its ships in the port was damaged and a number of its peacekeepers were injured, some seriously.

Confusion reigned across the city, as people cleared out of damaged homes or tried to locate family. Motorcyclists picked their way through traffic, carrying the injured.

One woman covered in blood from the waist up walked down a trashed street while talking furiously on her phone. On another street, a woman with a bloodied face looked distraught, staggering through traffic with two friends at her side.

"This country is cursed," a young man passing by muttered.

The blast came at a time when Lebanon's economy is facing collapse from the financial crisis and the coronavirus restrictions. Many have lost jobs, while the worth of their savings has evaporated as the currency has plunged in value against the dollar. The result has thrown many into poverty and has put thousands out of their homes.

The explosion also raises concerns about how Lebanon will continue to import nearly all of its vital goods with its main port devastated.

The explosion — reminiscent of the massive blasts that often erupted during Lebanon's civil war — happened only three days before a U.N.-backed tribunal was set to give its verdict in the killing of former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri in a truck bombing more than 15 years ago. That explosion, with a ton of explosives, was felt kilometers (miles) away, just as Tuesday's was.

French President Emmanuel Macron said in a tweet that his country was sending aid. Iran, Hezbollah's patron, also said it was ready to help. "Stay strong, Lebanon," its foreign minister, Javad Zarif, said in a tweet.

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Associated Press reporters Sarah El Deeb in Beirut; Josef Federman in Jerusalem; and Jon Gambrell in Dubai contributed to this report.

## Progress slow as urgency grows on virus relief legislation

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Frustrated Senate Republicans re-upped their complaints Tuesday that Democratic negotiators are taking too hard a line in talks on a sweeping coronavirus relief bill, but an afternoon negotiating session brought at least modest concessions from both sides, even as an agreement appears far off.

Top Democrats emerged from a 90-minute meeting with Trump administration officials to declare more progress. The Trump team agreed with that assessment and highlighted its offer to extend a moratorium on evictions from federally subsidized housing through the end of the year.

"We really went down, issue by issue by issue slogging through this. They made some concessions which we appreciated. We made some concessions that they appreciated," said Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, D-N.Y. "We're still far away on a lot of the important issues but we're continuing to go back."

White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows said Tuesday's session was "probably the most productive meeting we've had to date." Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said the two sides set a goal of reaching

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an agreement by the end of the week to permit a vote next week.

"I would characterize concessions made by Secretary Mnuchin and the administration as being far more substantial than the concessions that had been made by the Democrat negotiators," Meadows said.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., issued a pointed reminder that she and Schumer are "legislators with long experience" and a track record of working complicated deals — a rejoinder to critics complaining that they are being too tough and that the talks are taking too long.

"We agree that we want to have an agreement," Pelosi said. "Let's engineer back from there as to what we have to do to get that done."

Another glimmer of hope emerged as a key Senate Republican telegraphed that the party may yield to Democrats on an increase in the food stamp benefit as part of the huge rescue measure, which promises to far exceed a \$1 trillion target set by the GOP.

Senate Agriculture Committee Chair Pat Roberts, R-Kan., said Tuesday that "you can make an argument that we need some kind of an increase" in food stamps and that he's raised the topic with Majority Leader Mitch McConnell. He added that an agreement on that issue could lead to further overall progress on the legislation, which remains stalled despite days of Capitol negotiations.

"They are taking a look at it and I think we can get a positive result," Roberts told The Associated Press. "If we can get a breakthrough on that, it could lead to some other stuff."

The food stamp issue — left out of earlier relief bills — is a top priority for House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, among other powerful Democrats, who have passed a 15% increase in the food stamp benefit as part of their \$3.5 trillion coronavirus relief bill.

The overall talks are grinding ahead slowly, though urgency is growing among Senate Republicans, several of whom face tough election races and are eager to deliver a bill before heading home to campaign this month.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, said Monday that the chamber should not go on recess without passing the huge relief measure, and Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., offered a jobless benefit proposal that's more generous than a pending GOP alternative. Both are facing closer-than-hoped reelection bids in states that should be easy holds for Republicans.

Multiple obstacles remain, including an impasse on extending the \$600-per-week pandemic jobless benefit aid to the renters facing eviction. The benefit has helped sustain consumer demand over recent months as the coronavirus has wrought havoc. Pelosi wants to extend it through January at a \$400 billion-plus cost, while Republicans are proposing an immediate cut to \$200 and then replacing the benefit with a cumbersome system that would attempt to provide 70% of a worker's "replacement wage."

They are also pressing for funding for the Postal Service. Schumer and Pelosi summoned Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to the Capitol on Wednesday to discuss the agency's worsening performance and need for emergency funding.

"We've seen the delay of mail, and we're very worried about that affect on the election," Schumer said.

On the Senate floor, McConnell, R-Ky., continued to protest that Democrats are taking too tough a line. But he signaled he's far more flexible now than he was weeks ago.

"The American people in the end need help," McConnell told reporters. "And wherever this thing settles between the president ... and the Democrats is something I am prepared to support even if I have some problems with certain parts of it."

Most members of the Democratic-controlled House have left Washington and won't return until there is an agreement to vote on, but the GOP-held Senate is trapped in the capital.

Areas of agreement already include another round of \$1,200 direct payments and changes to the Paycheck Protection Program to permit especially hard-hit businesses to obtain another loan under generous forgiveness terms.

The House passed a \$3.5 trillion measure in May, but Republicans controlling the Senate have demanded a slower approach, saying it was necessary to take a "pause" before passing additional legislation. Since they announced that strategy, however, coronavirus caseloads have spiked and the economy has absorbed



an enormous blow.

The Senate GOP draft measure carries a \$1.1 trillion price tag, according to an estimate by the Committee for a Responsible Federal Budget. Republicans have not released any estimates of their own.

Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

## Trump encourages mail voting in key battleground Florida

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — In an abrupt reversal, President Donald Trump now is encouraging voters in the critical swing state of Florida to vote by mail after months of criticizing the practice, and only days after threatening to sue Nevada over a new vote-by-mail law.

His encouragement follows a surge in Democratic requests to vote for mail in Florida, a state that Trump almost certainly must win to secure a second term. Democrats currently have about 1.9 million Floridians signed up to vote by mail this November, almost 600,000 more than the Republicans' 1.3 million, according to the Florida Secretary of State.

In 2016, both sides had about 1.3 million signed up before the general election.

"Whether you call it Vote by Mail or Absentee Voting, in Florida the election system is Safe and Secure, Tried and True. Florida's Voting system has been cleaned up (we defeated Democrats attempts at change), so in Florida I encourage all to request a Ballot & Vote by Mail!" Trump tweeted Tuesday.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany rejected the notion that the president has changed his views. She said he supports absentee voting by mail for a reason, as opposed to states mailing out ballots to all voters regardless of whether they requested them. Most election officials say there is little effective difference between absentee voting and voting by mail.

Trump elaborated on why he supports voting by mail in Florida, but not elsewhere.

"They've been doing this over many years and they've made it really terrific," Trump said.

"This took years to do," he added. "This doesn't take weeks or months. In the case of Nevada, they're going to be voting in a matter of weeks. And you can't do that."

Yet Florida hardly has a history of flawless elections, most notably in 2000 when the state's disputed vote count had to be resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court, delivering the presidency to George W. Bush over Al Gore.

Trump cited a New York race as an example of what can go wrong, claiming no one could know the winner. In that race, a judge ruled Monday that about 1,000 disputed ballots should be counted. That will likely not affect the outcome since the incumbent, longtime Democratic Rep. Carolyn Maloney is leading her closest challenger by about 3,700 votes.

"I think they have to do the election over. That election is no good," Trump said.

More voters during this year's primary elections opted to vote by mail, and several states relaxed restrictions for voting absentee through the mail. Trump himself voted by mail in the Florida primary earlier this year.

Five states have relied on mail-in ballots since even before the coronavirus pandemic raised concerns about voting in person, but there is no evidence to support Trump's assertion that voting by mail leads to widespread fraud.

Trump has gone so far as to suggest by tweet that the November election should be delayed "until people can properly, securely and safely vote."

States that use mail-in votes exclusively say they have necessary safeguards in place to ensure that a hostile foreign actor doesn't disrupt the vote. Election security experts say voter fraud is rare in all forms of balloting, including by mail.

With Florida's large retirement population, voting by mail is expected to become a more popular option this November. Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., was asked Saturday if he had concerns about the option. "No, I'm not concerned about mail-in voting in Florida," he said tersely.

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Florida GOP officials welcomed Trump's tweet.

"Thank you for the clarification Mr President! This is very helpful," said Joe Gruters, the chair of Florida's Republican Party. "Florida will deliver you the 29 electoral votes!"

Florida is considered a must-win state for Trump's reelection prospects. Its presidential contests are usually close, with Trump winning by just 1.2 percentage points in 2016, and George W. Bush winning Florida by just 537 votes in 2000.

Nevada lawmakers have recently passed a bill that would add the state to a growing list of U.S. states mailing active voters ballots ahead of the November election.

The bill, which was passed Sunday, was signed into law Monday by Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat. Nevada joins seven states that plan on automatically sending voters mail ballots, including California and Vermont, which moved earlier this summer to adopt automatic mail ballot policies.

Trump called the bill's passage "an illegal late night coup" in a tweet Monday morning. He accused Sisolak of exploiting COVID-19 to ensure votes in Nevada would favor Democrats.

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Associated Press writers Bobby Caina Calvin in Tallahassee, Florida, and Terry Spencer in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, contributed to this report.

## Questions being raised after Kodak's stock has a big moment

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Business Writer

Eastman Kodak's potentially lucrative deal to help the U.S. government make more generic drugs domestically is threatening to turn into a regulatory headache for the fallen photography giant.

Kodak's depressed stock price surged last week before the company announced its plans to work with President Donald Trump's administration in exchange for a \$765 million loan. That prompted Sen. Elizabeth Warren to send a Monday letter asking the Securities and Exchange Commission to investigate whether insider trading laws have been broken.

The SEC is now in the early stages of a probe, according to a report published Tuesday by The Wall Street Journal. The newspaper cited unidentified people familiar with the matter.

The SEC declined to comment on the report.

Kodak said Tuesday that the Rochester, New York, company intends to cooperate with any potential inquiries, without saying whether it has been contacted by the SEC.

The company's stock soared on the July 28 news about the \$765 million loan from the federal government to help Kodak make factory changes necessary to make pharmaceutical ingredients in short supply in the U.S. Its shares rocketed from around \$2 to as high as \$60 before some of its former debt was converted into stock as part of a complex arrangement.

The conversion resulted in Kodak issuing nearly 30 million additional shares, undercutting the value of the stock already outstanding. Kodak's stock closed at \$14.40 after falling 3.6% in Tuesday's trading.

Any investigation is likely to focus in an abrupt rally and trading frenzy in Kodak's stock before the company and the Trump administration made their announcement. The rally may have triggered by some of the news being shared online on Twitter and websites by at least two reporters in Rochester and two television stations before the official release of the information.

In its Tuesday statement, Kodak said it didn't intend for the news to be shared by the media in advance.

Asked Tuesday if he had concerns about the Kodak deal, Trump told reporters at the White House: "Well, I don't know. I wasn't involved in the deal. The concept of the deal is good, but I'll let you know."

He added, "If there is any problem, we'll let you know about it very quickly, but I wasn't involved in it."

Last week, Trump hailed the deal as a breakthrough in bringing more pharmaceutical manufacturing to the United States, and said Kodak has hired some "of the best people in the world" for the new venture.

Warren, a former Democratic Party presidential candidate from Massachusetts, also asked the SEC to look into whether Kodak board members were buying stock in the company while they were secretly negotiating the loan with the Trump administration.

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After the news of the deal came out, Kodak also disclosed in regulatory filings that it had issued stock options to several executives on July 27 before its shares soared. Kodak CEO James Continenza was among the recipients.

Kodak said the stock option grants were approved by shareholders in May and issued July 27 to preserve the value of Continenza had already earned before the dilution triggered by the conversion of old debt.

Although Kodak became world famous for its inroads in photography before digital technology decimated the market for film, it also has a lesser-known pharmaceutical division. The government loan agreement, which hasn't been finalized, is supposed to be used to help expand and renovate existing plants in Rochester and St. Paul, Minnesota.

## Trump signs \$3B-a-year plan to boost conservation, parks

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump signed legislation Tuesday that will devote nearly \$3 billion a year to conservation projects, outdoor recreation and maintenance of national parks and other public lands following its overwhelming approval by both parties in Congress.

"There hasn't been anything like this since Teddy Roosevelt, I suspect," Trump said, seemingly comparing himself to the 26th president, an avowed environmentalist who created many national parks, forests and monuments that millions of Americans flock to each year.

Supporters say the Great American Outdoors Act is the most significant conservation legislation enacted in nearly half a century. Opponents countered that the money isn't enough to cover the estimated \$20 billion maintenance backlog on federally owned lands.

At a White House bill-signing ceremony, Trump failed to give Democrats any credit for their role in helping to pass the measure, mispronounced the name of one of America's most famous national parks, blamed a maintenance backlog that has been decades in the making on the Obama administration and claimed to have deterred a march to Washington that had been planned to tear down monuments in the nation's capital. No such march was ever planned.

The Great American Outdoors Act requires full, permanent funding of the popular Land and Water Conservation Fund and addresses the maintenance backlog facing national parks and public lands. The law would spend about \$900 million a year — double current spending — on the conservation fund and another \$1.9 billion per year on improvements at national parks, forests, wildlife refuges and range lands.

Trump in the budget proposals he has sent to Congress had previously recommended cutting money allocated to the fund, but reversed course and requested full funding in March.

Interior Secretary David Bernhardt said the law will help create more than 100,000 jobs.

The maintenance backlog has been a problem for decades, through Republican and Democratic administrations. Trump falsely claimed it was caused by the "last administration."

The House and the Senate cleared the bill by overwhelming bipartisan margins this summer, including significant support from congressional Democrats. No Democratic lawmakers attended the ceremony and Trump, in his remarks, credited only Republicans.

Asked why Democrats weren't recognized, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany said it was because Democrats and Republicans — including the administration — have yet to agree on extending now-expired coronavirus relief payments and protections.

Her answer focused on Senate Democrats' rejection of a proposal by Sen. Martha McSally, R-Ariz., for a one-week extension of a special federal unemployment benefit. She ignored that Senate Republicans themselves are divided over how to proceed on a larger relief package.

"The only thing we're recognizing about congressional Democrats right now is how appalling it is that there are Americans who are going without paychecks because they refused to partner with Martha McSally, Republicans and the president in ensuring that those payments go out."

Among the bills' congressional champions are Republican Sens. Cory Gardner of Colorado and Steve Daines of Montana. Both are among the Senate's most vulnerable incumbents, and each one represents

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a state where the outdoor economy and tourism at sites such as the Rocky Mountain and Yellowstone national parks play an outsize role.

Daines and Gardner persuaded Trump to support the legislation, which Gardner has made the cornerstone of his reelection campaign.

Democratic Sens. Maria Cantwell of Washington state, Joe Manchin of West Virginia and Tom Udall of New Mexico all were instrumental in getting the bill passed. Cantwell has spent years working to reauthorize and fund the Land and Water Conservation Fund, and she worked with Gardner and Daines to make it happen.

"For all of us who've fought for years to protect our public lands and invest in our outdoor recreation economy, today is a historic win for America's beloved shared spaces," Cantwell said in a statement that criticized environmental and public health rollbacks by Trump that benefit the oil and gas industry.

The law's mostly Republican opponents complained it would not eliminate an estimated \$20 billion maintenance backlog on 640 million acres (259 million hectares) of federally owned lands. The legislation authorizes \$9.5 billion for maintenance over five years.

Lawmakers from Gulf Coast states also complained that their states get too small a share of revenue from offshore oil and gas drilling that is used to replenish the conservation fund.

Ivanka Trump, the Republican president's daughter and adviser who supported the legislation, described it at the ceremony as a "great legacy" for the administration as well as the country.

In discussing the beauty of national parks Tuesday, President Trump tripped over one name when he referred to Yosemite's towering sequoia trees. He twice mispronounced "Yosemite's" as yoh-SEH'-mytz instead of yoh-SEM'-it-eez.

Trump also claimed an executive order highlighting the threat of up to 10 years in prison for defacing federal monuments was the reason a march to Washington for the sole purpose of destroying statues was canceled.

People protesting racial injustice after George Floyd's death in police custody in May began toppling monuments around the country of Confederate and other figures considered racist, but no such march to Washington was ever planned.

"They were having a march on Washington to knock down a lot of monuments, and I signed it before the march," Trump said of the executive order he signed June 26. "We announced it at a news conference that you go to jail for 10 years if you knock down a monument, and the march to Washington never happened. I don't know — that's strange how that all works. Isn't it, though? Isn't that a beautiful thing?"

The Rev. Al Sharpton is planning a march on Washington for Aug. 28, the anniversary of the 1963 march in the nation's capital led by Martin Luther King Jr.

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Associated Press writers Matthew Daly, Kevin Freking and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

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This story has been corrected to show the area with the maintenance backlog is 640 million acres, not 640 acres.

## Disney to release 'Mulan' on streaming service, for a price

By LINDSEY BAHR AP Film Writer

"Mulan" is no longer headed for a major theatrical release. The Walt Disney Co. said Tuesday that it will debut its live-action blockbuster on its subscription streaming service, Disney+, on Sept. 4.

But this is no "Hamilton": Customers will have to pay an additional \$29.99 on top of the cost of the monthly subscription to rent "Mulan." The company plans to release it in theaters in areas where Disney+ is not available.

"In order to meet the needs of consumers during this unpredictable period, we thought it was important to find alternative ways to bring this exceptional family-friendly film to them in a timely manner," Disney CEO Bob Chapek said on the company's earnings call. "We see this as an opportunity to bring this incredible film to a broad audience currently unable to go to movie theaters."



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The live-action remake of the animated film was one of the first major films to be affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Originally set for a March 27 release, "Mulan" moved to late July, then late August and was then pulled from the calendar all together as COVID-19 cases spiked through the U.S.

Along with Warner Bros.' "Tenet," "Mulan" was going to be one of the first major movies to open in theaters since the shutdown. Exhibitors, most of which have been closed for over four months, have been desperate for new films that would help draw wary audiences back to theaters.

But while Warner Bros. is moving forward with a theatrical release plan, which involves opening "Tenet" internationally first and then in select U.S. theaters a week later, on Sept. 3, Disney decided to pivot and direct consumers to its streaming service.

It is not unprecedented for a major studio to offer a premium video on demand release during the pandemic. Universal Pictures debuted "Trolls World Tour" on streaming in April while most theaters were shuttered. Although it caused a major rift at the time, it has since led to an historic compromise between the nation's largest theater chain and Universal to shrink its theatrical window to 17 days.

But few expected "Mulan," a \$200 million production, to go this route, even Disney. In late June, when announcing its delay to August, Disney executives Alan Horn and Alan Bergman wrote in a joint statement that "Mulan" was, "Everything the cinematic experience should be, and that's where we believe it belongs—on the world stage and the big screen for audiences around the globe to enjoy together."

## Worries about 2020 census' accuracy grow with cut schedule

By MIKE SCHNEIDER Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — The U.S. Census Bureau is cutting its schedule for data collection for the 2020 census a month short as legislation that would have extended the national head count's deadlines stalls in Congress. The move is worrying researchers, politicians and others who say the change will miss hard-to-count communities, including minorities and immigrants, and produce less trustworthy data.

The Census Bureau said late Monday that the door-knocking and ability for households to respond either online, by phone or by mail to the questionnaire will stop at the end of September instead of the end of October so that it can meet an end-of-the-year deadline to turn in numbers used for redrawing congressional districts.

Census experts, academics and civil rights activists worry the sped-up count could hurt its thoroughness and produce inaccurate data that will have lasting effects through the next decade. The count determines how \$1.5 trillion in federal spending is distributed and how many congressional districts each state gets.

"This move will rush the enumeration process, result in inadequate follow-up, and undercount immigrant communities and communities of color who are historically undercounted," U.S. Rep. Carolyn Maloney, chairwoman of the House Committee on Oversight and Reform, wrote Census Bureau director Steven Dillingham in a letter Tuesday.

In the letter, Maloney, a Democrat from New York, requested interviews before her committee with eight Census Bureau officials, including two recent additions to the bureau's leadership whose appointments by the Trump administration have been sharply criticized as politically driven.

But Dillingham said the agency aimed to have the same level of responses as past censuses. "We will improve the speed of our count without sacrificing completeness," he said.

If communities are missed, it will have "a large downstream impact" not only on apportionment but social science research and other Census Bureau surveys that rely on the once-a-decade census, said David Van Riper, director of spatial analysis at the University of Minnesota's Institute for Social Research and Data Innovation.

"It's interesting that this is happening now because all of the COVID databases are using population data from the census," Van Riper said. Data used from an inaccurate count during a pandemic like the one the U.S. is experiencing "would give us a false perception of what's going on on the ground," he added.

As of Monday, 37% of U.S. households hadn't yet responded to the census questionnaire. Some of the 500,000 door knockers hired by the Census Bureau have begun visiting those households, but they weren't

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expected to go out in force until next week.

An analysis by the CUNY Center for Urban Research shows that 10 states currently are trailing their 2010 self-response rates by 5 to 10 percentage points, meaning they will require a greater share of door-knocking than they did a decade ago. Those states are Alaska, Montana, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Texas and Wyoming.

Four former Census Bureau directors who have served in both Democratic and Republican administrations warned in a letter that cutting short the door-knocking phase would force the bureau to rely on administrative records and statistical techniques to fill gaps on a much larger scale than in previous censuses.

Congress should task an independent institution to measure whether the 2020 count matches the outcomes of previous censuses, and if not, recommend what steps should be taken, said the letter signed by Vincent Barabba, Robert Groves, Kenneth Prewitt and John Thompson.

Facing delays caused by the pandemic, the Census Bureau had earlier this year pushed back wrapping up field operations for the once-a-decade head count from the end of July to the end of October.

The bureau also asked Congress in April to extend the deadline for turning in apportionment data used for drawing congressional districts from Dec. 31, 2020, to April 30, 2021. Top Census Bureau officials have said it would be impossible to meet the end-of-the-year deadline, and that the bureau expected bipartisan support for the request.

The request passed the Democratic-controlled House as part of coronavirus-relief legislation but it hasn't gone anywhere in the Republican-controlled Senate. The chamber's inaction coincides with a memorandum Trump issued last month to try to exclude people living in the U.S. illegally from being part of the process for redrawing congressional districts.

Civil rights groups, states, cities and individuals have filed at least a half-dozen lawsuits challenging the memorandum as unconstitutional and an attempt to limit the power of Latinos and immigrants of color.

The request to Congress also asked that the deadline for turning in data used for drawing legislative and local districts be extended from March 30, 2021, to July 31, 2021, but the Census Bureau is now aiming to finish those responsibilities by the end of March.

Maloney on Tuesday introduced an update to the legislation pending in Congress that would give the Census Bureau more time by pushing back the deadlines to the later dates.

Critics say the move to speed up the deadlines is just the latest Trump administration effort to politicize the 2020 census, starting with a failed attempt to add a citizenship question to the form.

"This is nothing but a disgusting power grab from an administration hell-bent on preserving its fleeting political power at all costs," said Julie Menin, census director for New York City.

Follow Mike Schneider on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/MikeSchneiderAP>

## Trump's demand for US cut of a TikTok deal is unprecedented

By TALI ARBEL AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump's demand that the U.S. government get a cut from a potential Microsoft purchase of TikTok is the latest unprecedented scenario in an unprecedented situation.

Microsoft is in talks to buy parts of TikTok, a forced sale after Trump threatened to ban the Chinese-owned video app, which claims 100 million U.S. users and hundreds of millions globally. The Trump administration says TikTok is a national-security concern. How a ban would have worked was not clear; that federal authority has never been used before with a consumer app. TikTok denies that it would send U.S. user data to the Chinese government.

Microsoft did not address a potential price when it confirmed the talks.

Trump said Monday to reporters that the U.S. "should get a very large percentage of that price because we're making it possible," adding that "we want and we think we deserve to have a big percentage of that price coming to America, coming to the Treasury."

Trump sometimes floats ideas or actions that get set aside without follow-through. Appearing on the

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Fox Business Network Tuesday, White House economic adviser Larry Kudlow appeared to walk back the idea of a payment to the Treasury, saying "I don't know if that's a key stipulation."

TikTok was under review by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, known as CFIUS, a U.S. government group chaired by the Treasury Secretary that studies mergers for national-security reasons, for its acquisition of another video app, Musical.ly, in 2017. The president can approve or disapprove a transaction recommended by the interagency panel. CFIUS collects filing fees, but those top out at \$300,000.

"I doubt that's what Trump has in mind," said Hal Singer, an antitrust expert and managing director at consulting firm Econ One. "Outside of that I can't think of any means by which the U.S. could basically get its vig on its forced transfer." A "vig" is slang for interest on a loan, usually in the context of illegal activity, or the fee charged by a bookie for a bet.

There's no legal precedent in antitrust law for such a payment, said Gene Kimmelman, a senior adviser at the advocacy group Public Knowledge and a former antitrust official at the Department of Justice. "In terms of a foreign company agreeing to sell assets to a U.S. company subject to antitrust review, I can't see any logical basis under which Treasury or the White House would be negotiating elements of the financial portions of the deal."

While noting that he is not an expert in all areas of U.S. law and the broad authority that the president has, he said the TikTok deal and the White House's role in it was highly unusual. "Not in my experience have I seen any engagement from the White House in this manner," he said. "It's already a unique situation from start to finish with the government intervening to prevent use of a service in the U.S."

There are no "obvious antitrust or other legal bases" for the demand for "what is in effect a payoff to the U.S. government," said Eswar Prasad, an economist at Cornell University. "The notion of a payment to the U.S. government sets a dangerous precedent of explicit entanglement between national security and economic considerations."

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany sidestepped a question Tuesday about what authority the federal government had to collect a portion of proceeds from the potential sale of TikTok, saying "I'm not going to get ahead of the president on any official action."

Treasury did not reply to questions about what legal precedent Trump is relying on to get a payment for the TikTok deal.

In a statement Sunday, Microsoft had said that that it was committed to the deal "subject to a complete security review and providing proper economic benefits to the United States, including the United States Treasury."

TikTok has said that it is loved by Americans and "will be here for many years to come." In a memo ByteDance CEO Zhang Yiming sent Chinese employees Tuesday, a translated version of which ByteDance sent to The Associated Press, he said that he felt the goal of the Trump administration was not the forced sale of TikTok's U.S. business to an American company through CFIUS, but "a ban or even more."

A representative for Microsoft did not reply to questions about the payment demand Tuesday. TikTok declined to comment beyond its Monday statement.

AP reporters Kevin Freking and Martin Crutsinger contributed to this article from Washington.

## Minneapolis mayor: City seeks right mentors for new officers

By MOHAMED IBRAHIM and AMY FORLITI Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey said the city is working to pair new police officers with "the right individuals" for field training following George Floyd's death, in which a senior officer rejected a younger colleague's question about how Floyd was being restrained.

In an interview with The Associated Press as part of its AP Newsmakers series, Frey said the city wants to make sure that the training new officers get isn't undermined once they go into the field.

"We need to make sure that those who are in a supervisory role, those that are riding with new officers

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with new cadets, are the right individuals to be role models," Frey said. "You learn from who your role models are, and that can be a good thing and that can also be a bad thing."

Floyd, a 47-year-old Black man who was in handcuffs, died May 25 after Officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes as Floyd pleaded for air. Chauvin, who is white, is charged with second-degree murder. Three other officers who were at the scene — Thomas Lane, Tou Thao and J. Kueng — are charged with aiding and abetting.

Attorneys for Lane and Kueng have portrayed the two officers as rookies who deferred to the far more senior Chauvin. Body camera video shows as Floyd repeatedly said he couldn't breathe, Lane asked Chauvin whether the officers should turn Floyd from his stomach to his side. Chauvin responded that they would keep Floyd as he was.

The police department has been under significant pressure to change its practices since Floyd's death, with a majority of City Council members in favor of eliminating the department entirely and replacing it with a new public safety unit. The city's charter commission is expected to vote Wednesday on whether to advance a proposal that could ultimately send the idea to voters in November.

Frey told the AP that he remains opposed to the idea.

"We should not go down the route of simply abolishing the police department," Frey said. "What we need to see within this department, and within many departments throughout the country, is a full-on culture shift."

The mayor and Chief Medaria Arradondo have moved ahead with their own changes since Floyd's death, including requiring officers to document attempts to de-escalate situations whether or not force is used. They also have expanded requirements for reporting use-of-force incidents, ordering officers to provide more detail.

Arradondo also pulled the department out of negotiations for a union contract, saying he wanted a review aimed at making major changes to things such as the grievance and arbitration process that makes it hard to get rid of problem officers.

Some local residents have voiced concerns about the prospect of dismantling the police department. There were 224% more incidents involving gunfire in June than in June 2019 and 166% more in July than in the previous one, according to a Minneapolis Star Tribune analysis of police data. The police department has also lost scores of officers to firings, resignations and medical leave in the two months that followed Floyd's death and the ensuing protests, some of which turned violent.

Asked about the perception that officers might be deliberately slowing their response, Frey said he's seen no evidence of that but acknowledged that the "significant attrition" of officers had slowed response times.

"We have officers in our department who wear the badge that they do, wear the uniform that they do, because they want to make the city a better place," Frey said.

Asked whether he supports reparations to Black Americans, Frey, who is white, said he does, noting that for generations, Black people have struggled to build wealth for various reasons, including that they've had unequal access to higher education and home mortgages.

"There are clear monetary financial impacts to the society that we are living in," Frey said. "I feel that that should be recognized at some point. ... It's something that I am very open to and I feel it's the right thing to do."

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Mohamed Ibrahim is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## Judge sentences ex-MSU coach to jail in Nassar-related case

By ANNA LIZ NICHOLS Associated Press/Report for America

LANSING, Mich. (AP) — A former Michigan State University head gymnastics coach was sentenced Tuesday to 90 days in jail for lying to police during an investigation into former Olympic and university doctor



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Larry Nassar.

Kathie Klages, 65, was found guilty in February of a felony and a misdemeanor for denying she knew of Nassar's abuse prior to 2016 when survivors started to come forward publicly. She also was sentenced to 18 months of probation.

Klages testified at trial, and in a tearful statement Tuesday, that she did not remember being told about the abuse. She said she had been seeing a therapist to try to remember the conversations, and she apologized to victims if they occurred.

"Even when I don't express it to others, I struggle with what I've been accused of and what my role in this tragedy may have been," she said in court.

Two women testified in November 2018 that they told Klages in 1997 that Nassar had sexually abused them and spoke Tuesday in court ahead of the sentencing. One of the women, Larissa Boyce, testified that Klages held up a piece of paper in front of the then-teenager and warned that if she filed a report there could be serious consequences.

"I am standing here representing my 16-year-old self who was silenced and humiliated 23 years ago and, unfortunately, all of the hundreds of girls that were abused after me," Boyce said.

Nassar was sentenced in 2018 to 40 to 175 years in prison for decades of molestation of young women and girls under the guise of medical treatment.

The other woman who testified but has not publicly identified herself read statements from other alleged victims. The Associated Press does not typically identify people who say they are victims of sex crimes unless they grant permission.

She said the way Klages refused to take responsibility and how their memories and testimony were refuted by the defense was "backwards and disappointing".

"My hope was that she would be sorry and deeply apologize, but that is not the case," she said. "The first and only adult I had ever told just cancelled all of my intuitions that sexual abuse is real and painful. She silenced me not only when I was 14 but for 20 years, as I did not have the confidence to speak up about it again."

Klages attorney, Mary Chartier, has said if the case had not involved Nassar, Klages would never have been found guilty. She called Nassar a "master manipulator" and said Klages sent her granddaughter, daughter and sons to Nassar for health care.

Chartier tried to mitigate Klages' part in the abuse, saying she was among "thousands" who had been present in the room during Nassar's treatments, including parents.

Nassar's accusers say he molested them with his ungloved hands, often without explanation, while they were seeking help for various injuries. He sometimes used a sheet or his body to block the view of any parent in the room.

"Numerous people were told about the procedure — nurses, athletic trainers at other schools, psychologists, doctors and a high school counselor — and they did nothing," Chartier said, quoting investigation reports. "Most notably, police and prosecutors were aware of the procedures, and they did nothing. To ignore this and claim that Mrs. Klages could have stopped the devastation wrought by Mr. Nassar is just plain false."

Nearly 200 letters were submitted to the judge on Klages' behalf, including from former gymnasts.

Chartier argued that jail was an unfit punishment for Klages as a non-violent first offender, and because of her age and a heart murmur, especially during the coronavirus pandemic. Defense planned to appeal the sentence.

Draganchuk said she was confident of COVID-19 safety protocols in the jail.

After the hearing, Boyce said she was relieved to have testified against Klages and Nassar.

"I feel much lighter. I feel like I can breathe. I feel like I can finally move forward and past all this," Boyce said. "I hope that the fact that she got jail time deters other people and people truly believe children and women who come forward with allegations of assault."

Klages is the second person to be convicted of charges related to Nassar's case. Nassar's boss at Michigan State, ex-College of Osteopathic Medicine Dean William Strampel, was sentenced to jail for crimes including neglecting a duty to enforce protocols on Nassar after a patient complained about sexual contact in 2014.

Anna Liz Nichols is a corps member for the Associated Press/Report for America Statehouse News Initiative. Report for America is a nonprofit national service program that places journalists in local newsrooms to report on undercovered issues.

## **AP Exclusive: Rare wildflower could jeopardize lithium mine**

By SCOTT SONNER Associated Press

RENO, Nev. (AP) — A botanist hired by a company planning to mine one of the most promising deposits of lithium in the world believes a rare desert wildflower at the Nevada site should be protected under the Endangered Species Act, a move that could jeopardize the project, new documents show.

The unusually candid disclosure is included in more than 500 pages of emails obtained by conservationists and reviewed by The Associated Press regarding Ioneer Ltd.'s plans to dig near the only population of Tiehm's buckwheat known to exist on earth.

Six months of communications between government scientists, Ioneer's representatives and University of Nevada, Reno researchers studying the plant also show the director of UNR's work — financed by Ioneer — repeatedly pushed back against company pressure to prematurely publicize early success of efforts to grow buckwheat seedlings in a campus greenhouse for replanting in the wild.

"I'm not used to such a focus on in-progress research," Beth Leger, a biology professor who also heads UNR's Museum of Natural History, wrote in April.

"I feel like maybe one very important thing isn't clear, and that's that these plants could die at any stage of this experiment."

The experiment is part of Ioneer's strategy intended to help avert a federal listing of the plant that could scuttle the mine.

The Center for Biological Diversity, which petitioned last year to list the plant under the Endangered Species Act, obtained the documents under a Nevada public records request. It's public information because of UNR's research contract.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently announced it's received enough scientific information to warrant a full-year review of the buckwheat's status 200 miles (320 kilometers) southeast of Reno to determine whether it should be federally protected.

The emails include an April exchange with a Fish and Wildlife official who shared concerns expressed by the head of Nevada's own state listing review about Ioneer's transplanting strategy.

"This document is at best a mitigation plan, certainly not a 'protection plan,'" James Morefield, supervisory botanist for Nevada's Division of Natural Heritage, wrote to the service April 16.

Ioneer has spent millions at the site rich with lithium needed to manufacture such things as batteries for Tesla's electric cars. That includes UNR's \$60,000 grant to study transplants and \$168,000 for five years of monitoring.

Ioneer President Bernard Rowe told AP in March their plans "will ensure protection and, in fact, the expansion of the buckwheat population."

The emails offer a behind-the-scenes look at the sensitive relationship between public institutions and private companies funding research they often have a stake in. They indicate UNR scientists and a private one at EM Strategies — Ioneer's consultant — believe the propagation efforts could benefit the plant, but don't yet prove they could ensure its survival.

"Nothing we are researching is a quick fix, or even a fix. There isn't a fix for this type of impact," EM Strategies' biology manager Kris Kuyper wrote to a UNR researcher Jan. 7.

"I'm sure it will be listed (it should be), then it will be a matter of consultation with the USFWS," she said.

Kuyper was responding to a UNR researcher's concerns about providing information for a news release Ioneer's PR firm wanted to issue touting the success of the plant regeneration study.

"I wouldn't want them trying to frame our work in a way that would imply listing is unnecessary, or that concern for the populations that would be impacted by mining is unfounded because they may be able to

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be relocated," wrote the UNR researcher whose name was redacted. "Even if we get encouraging initial results from the propagation and transplant efforts, we wouldn't know whether that is truly possible to establish a new population, potentially for years."

The slow-growing flowers have fragile roots that dry out easily. As for transplants, Leger told AP then, "I don't think it's an awesome idea."

The emails suggest growing frustration among the researchers over what they viewed as interference with their work.

"Ioneer's press people reached out AGAIN, they seemingly want to publish a blow-by-blow as the research goes on," Leger wrote Kuyper in February.

When Ioneer's PR firm made another media request March 4, Leger responded, "I'd like to wait... (for) actual results."

On March 6 she wrote Kuyper, "My advice is that they just let the scientific process roll forward. ... You can't count your chickens before they hatch!"

Patrick Donnelly, the Center for Biological Diversity's Nevada director, said the emails underscore the "highly experimental, highly uncertain" nature of the transplant strategy.

"Ioneer has portrayed their mitigation as a sure-fire bet to save the buckwheat," he said. He maintains Ioneer's current plans would wipe out the plant's entire population and that a federal listing "would mean an end to the mine."

The company said last week it is "committed to being good stewards of the environment and working in lockstep with State of Nevada and Federal oversight bodies."

"As such, we have retained the most reputable, independent and unbiased research team available," Ioneer said in a statement emailed to AP. "This work is informing our efforts to protect Tiehm's buckwheat in its natural habitat and help set a path forward to produce critical minerals necessary to reduce greenhouse gas emissions globally."

Leger said in an email Friday to AP that her job is to "present the information to decision makers, who can then make fully-informed choices about how to best protect it."

Donnelly countered:

"This is science being done to greenwash a mine. ... It appears that is not Dr. Leger's intention, but it is very much Ioneer's intention."

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This version corrects that the wildflower's name is Tiehm's buckwheat, not Theim's buckwheat

## COVID-19 measures could disrupt rare polio-like disease

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Health experts once thought 2020 might be the worst year yet for a rare paralyzing disease that has been hitting U.S. children for the past decade.

But they now say the coronavirus pandemic could disrupt the pattern for the mysterious illnesses, which spike every other year starting in late summer.

Scientists say it's possible that mask wearing, school closures and others measures designed to stop spread of the coronavirus may also hamper spread of the virus suspected of causing the paralyzing disease.

Dr. David Kimberlin, a researcher at the University of Alabama at Birmingham, called it "the million-dollar question."

"We just simply don't know right now," said Kimberlin, who is co-leader of a national study to gather specimens from children who develop the paralyzing condition.

The pandemic is dominating public health work right now, but officials are trying to draw attention to the polio-like condition they call acute flaccid myelitis, or AFM. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Tuesday made a public call for parents and doctors to watch for it, and act.

"We are concerned that in the midst of a COVID pandemic, that (AFM) cases might not be recognized. Or we're concerned that parents might be worried about taking their child to the doctors with something

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as serious as limb weakness," said Dr. Thomas Clark, a CDC official overseeing AFM surveillance.

That was a problem before COVID-19. In 2018, 10% of patients were not hospitalized until four or more days after limb weakness started, the CDC reported.

Hundreds of U.S. children have developed AFM since 2014. Most had a cold-like illness and fever, seemed to get over it, then descended into paralysis. In some cases it started small — for example, a thumb that suddenly wouldn't move. Some children went on to lose the ability to eat or breathe.

The CDC on Tuesday released a study of cases from 2018 that found that the median age of the affected children was 5 years old. Nearly a quarter needed to be put on breathing machines.

Many families say their children have regained at least some movement in affected limbs, but stories of complete recovery are unusual.

It's been difficult to come up with definitive proof, but experts believe the main culprit is an enterovirus called EV-D68. Enteroviruses are a large family of viruses. Some, such as polio, can damage the central nervous system, while many others cause mild symptoms or none at all. Another enterovirus, called EV-A71, has also been linked to some cases.

Doctors think extremely rare cases of AFM have popped up since at least 2008. But it became national concern in 2014, when a wave of EV-D68 infections was followed by a burst of at least 120 AFM cases.

What followed was an even-year, odd-year pattern: U.S. cases dropped to 22 in 2015, then jumped to 153 in 2016. They fell again in 2017 and hit 238 in 2018. There were 46 cases last year.

This year, as of the end of June, 16 cases have been reported, at least one of them fatal. Typically, most cases happen in August through November.

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The Associated Press Health & Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 5, the 218th day of 2020. There are 148 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 5, 1974, the White House released transcripts of subpoenaed tape recordings showing that President Richard Nixon and his chief of staff, H.R. Haldeman, had discussed a plan in June 1972 to use the CIA to thwart the FBI's Watergate investigation; revelation of the tape sparked Nixon's resignation.

On this date:

In 1864, during the Civil War, Union Adm. David G. Farragut led his fleet to victory in the Battle of Mobile Bay, Alabama.

In 1914, what's believed to be the first electric traffic light system was installed in Cleveland, Ohio, at the intersection of East 105th Street and Euclid Avenue.

In 1936, Jesse Owens of the United States won the 200-meter dash at the Berlin Olympics, collecting the third of his four gold medals.

In 1953, Operation Big Switch began as remaining prisoners taken during the Korean War were exchanged at Panmunjom.

In 1961, the amusement park Six Flags Over Texas had its official grand opening day in Arlington.

In 1962, movie star Marilyn Monroe, 36, was found dead in her Los Angeles home; her death was ruled a probable suicide from "acute barbiturate poisoning." South African anti-apartheid activist Nelson Mandela was arrested on charges of leaving the country without a passport and inciting workers to strike; it was the beginning of 27 years of imprisonment.

In 1964, U.S. Navy pilot Everett Alvarez Jr. became the first American flier to be shot down and captured by North Vietnam; he was held prisoner until February 1973.

In 1966, the Beatles' "Revolver" album was released in the United Kingdom on the Parlophone label; it



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was released in the United States three days later by Capitol Records. (Songs included "Eleanor Rigby" and "Yellow Submarine," which were also issued as a double A-side single on Aug. 5 and 8.)

In 1981, the federal government began firing air traffic controllers who had gone out on strike.

In 1984, actor Richard Burton died in Geneva, Switzerland, at age 58.

In 1991, Democratic congressional leaders formally launched an investigation into whether the 1980 Reagan-Bush campaign had secretly conspired with Iran to delay release of American hostages until after the presidential election, thereby preventing an "October surprise" that supposedly would have benefited President Jimmy Carter. (A task force later concluded there was "no credible evidence" of such a deal.)

In 2002, the coral-encrusted gun turret of the Civil War ironclad USS Monitor was raised from the floor of the Atlantic, nearly 140 years after the historic warship sank during a storm.

Ten years ago: The Senate confirmed Elena Kagan, 63-37, as the Supreme Court's 112th justice and the fourth woman in its history. BP finished pumping cement into the blown Deepwater Horizon oil well in the Gulf of Mexico. Thirty-three workers were trapped in a copper mine in northern Chile after a tunnel caved in (all were rescued after being entombed for 69 days). Ten members of a Christian medical team from the International Assistance Mission were gunned down in Afghanistan by unknown attackers.

Five years ago: In a speech at American University in Washington, President Barack Obama assailed critics of his Iran nuclear deal as "selling a fantasy" to the American people, warning Congress that blocking the accord would damage the nation's credibility and increase the likelihood of more war in the Middle East. Actor Jennifer Aniston secretly married actor-director Justin Theroux at their home in Bel Air, California.

One year ago: In the wake of deadly shootings in Texas and Ohio, President Donald Trump called for bipartisan solutions to gun violence and said he wanted legislation providing "strong background checks" for gun users. The online message board 8chan was effectively knocked offline after two companies cut off technical services; the gunman responsible for a mass shooting in El Paso, Texas had been linked to the site. The Trump administration froze all Venezuelan government assets in a dramatic escalation of tensions with Nicolás Maduro. Cesar Sayoc, a Florida amateur body builder who had sent pipe bombs to prominent Democrats and CNN, was sentenced to 20 years in prison by a judge who concluded that the bombs were not designed to explode. The U.S. Treasury Department labeled China a currency manipulator after China pushed down the value of its yuan in an escalating trade conflict with the United States. Toni Morrison, the first Black woman to receive the Nobel literature prize, died at 88 in New York; her novels included "Beloved," and "The Bluest Eye."

Today's Birthdays: College Football Hall of Famer and former NFL player Roman Gabriel is 80. Country songwriter Bobby Braddock is 80. Actor Loni Anderson is 75. Actor Erika Slezak is 74. Rock singer Rick Derringer is 73. Actor Holly Palance is 70. Pop singer Samantha Sang is 69. Rock musician Eddie Ojeda (Twisted Sister) is 65. Actor-singer Maureen McCormick is 64. Rock musician Pat Smear is 61. Author David Baldacci is 60. Actor Tawney Kitaen is 59. Actor Janet McTeer is 59. Country musician Mark O'Connor is 59. Basketball Hall of Famer Patrick Ewing is 58. Actor Mark Strong is 57. Director-screenwriter James Gunn is 54. Actor Jonathan Silverman is 54. Country singer Terri Clark is 52. Actor Stephanie Szostak is 49. Retired MLB All-Star John Olerud is 52. Rock musician Eicca Toppinen (EYE'-kah TAH'-pihn-nehn) (Apocalyptica) is 45. Actor Jesse Williams is 40. Actor Brendon Ryan Barrett is 34. Actor Meegan Warner (TV: "TURN: Washington's Spies") is 29. Actor/singer Olivia Holt is 23. Actor Albert Tsai is 16. Actor Devin Trey Campbell is 12.