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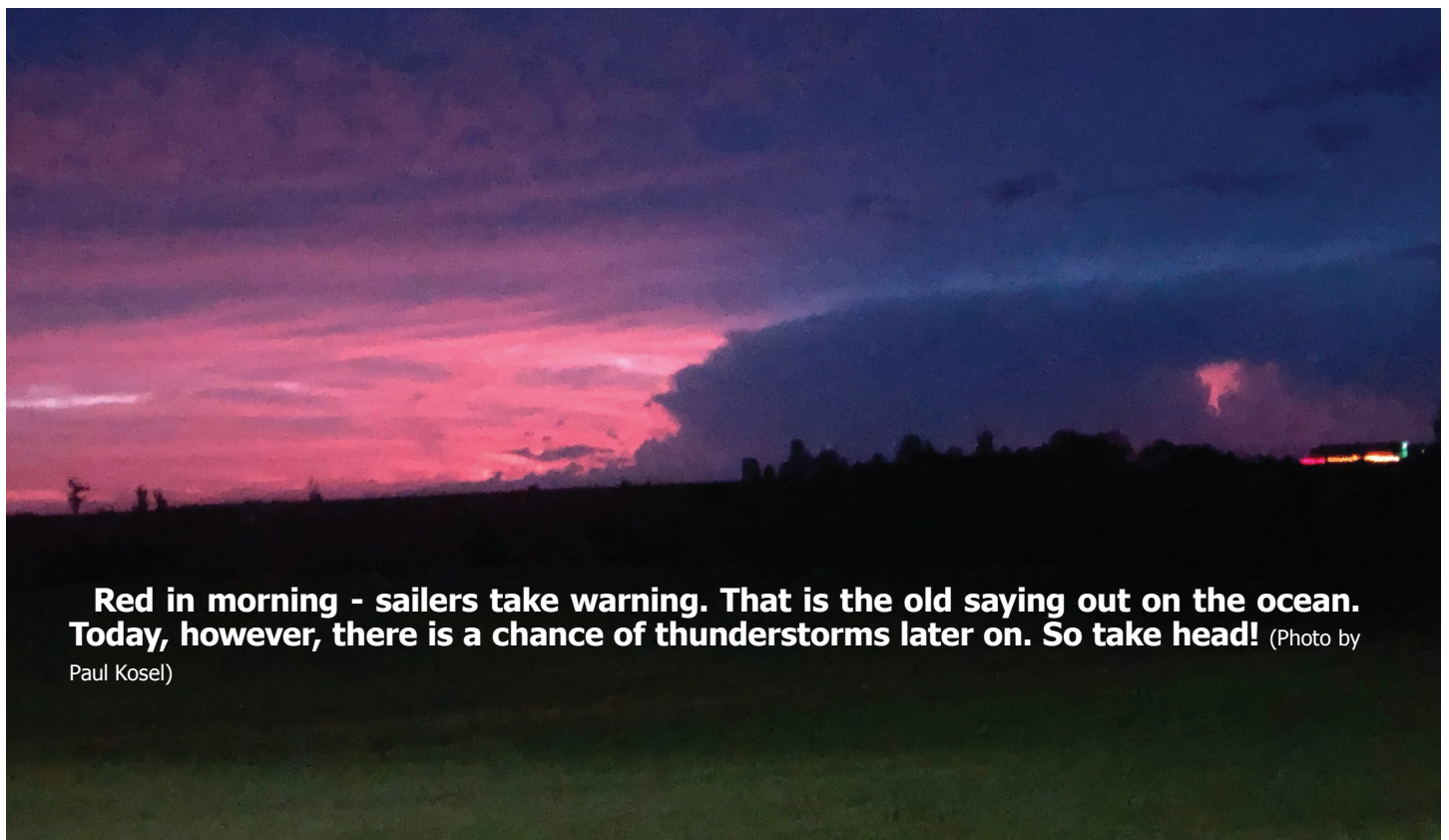
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Chicken Soup  
for the Soul

“HOLDING ON IS  
BELIEVING THAT  
THERE'S ONLY A  
PAST; LETTING  
GO IS KNOWING  
THAT THERE'S A  
FUTURE.”

-ROSE KINGMA



**Red in morning - sailors take warning. That is the old saying out on the ocean. Today, however, there is a chance of thunderstorms later on. So take head!** (Photo by

Paul Kosel)

**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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## Locke Electric Amateur Baseball Team wins first round at state

Groton's Locke Electric Amateur Baseball Team defeated Madison on the first round of the state amateur baseball tournament, 7-4. The next game is Sunday at 5:30 p.m.

Members of the team are in back, left to right, Dylan Frey, Edwin Rodriguez, Josh Heupel, Evan Erickson, Austin Fordham and Heath Giedt; in front, left to right, are Spencer Locke, Spencer Knecht, Korbin Blackmun, Anthony Schinkel, Roniel Tejeda and Carlos Camacho.

(Photo from Groton Amateur Baseball Facebook Page)



## #165 in a series

### Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Today's report comes with a note that both Florida and California, the top two states for total cases are likely seriously underreporting new cases this week. We expected a problem with Florida's reporting because of the testing reduction due to the hurricane, and we're also getting the picture that the glitches in California's electronic lab reporting system have been going on for some time. So we'll put an asterisk on the daily reports from the last week or so and until these two issues are cleared up, and we'll expect there may be a big bump when each one of these corrects.

We're at 4,879,200 total cases. Today 48,300 new cases were reported, a 1.0% increase from yesterday's total. I have just 12 states reporting 14-day average increases at the moment. There have been 159,553 deaths reported in the US. Today 1029 were reported, a 0.6% increase. This is our third consecutive day with a number over 1000. I have 23 states reporting increasing numbers of deaths.

We continue to see a somewhat smaller number of new cases per day than we did at the peak a couple of weeks ago. This feels like good news, and it certainly is better news than we'd been having; so you might be wondering why the big guns are still so negative about our situation—Dr. Birx talking about being in a "new phase" and Dr. Fauci warning about many, many more cases and deaths. Well, here's the thing: It's not enough just to get new case numbers down—although that is important so that we can do more contact tracing to get a better handle on interrupting transmission. Our problem now is that, instead of having most of our big problems confined to a few places (pretty much in the Northeast) as we did in April, we now have such widespread transmission so broadly across the country to so many people who don't know they're infected that we're in a phase the experts are calling "inherent community spread." This means there is so much viral material circulating that when people get infected we have no idea where it came from—it sort of could be anywhere; the result is that outbreaks are almost impossible to trace and contain. So while lower numbers are good, they're not good enough; and we're unlikely to be able to drive them lower when we can't apply the tried-and-true public health measures to containment efforts. And that's really scary.

The issue on everyone's minds these days is school. Today again there were more reports of school districts with positive tests, just days into their new school year. I can't tell you how many conversations I've had with concerned parents, concerned teachers, even concerned school officials and board members. Frankly, we're in a place where all of the choices are bad ones: We know keeping kids home is bad for their development, learning, and in some cases, safety. We know it's bad for parents who need to work and that the harm comes disproportionately to women and people of color and the poor, the same folks who always pay the price for society's mistakes. We know remote learning will exacerbate gaps between the advantaged and the disadvantaged. On the other hand, we are also becoming ever more aware that during this pandemic large groups of small people are dangerous, somewhat for the small people and quite a lot more for their teachers, their families, and their communities. We know that starting up school in an environment of widespread community transmission as we have right this very moment is a very bad idea. We know people will die. So what's worse—starting school or not starting school? I honestly don't know. I'll share a couple of pieces of insight with you though in the hope it may inform your decisions.

The first is a recent (July 21-24) national poll of teachers from NPR/Ipsos which shows widespread concern (82%) about returning to in-person classes. Two-thirds of teachers would rather teach primarily remotely. An earlier poll shows just about the same proportion of parents of school-aged children with the same preference.

Almost 30% of teachers are 50 and older, and there are also younger teachers with health conditions that place them at risk. This is reflected in the report from the poll that 77% of teachers are worried about risking their own health. There will, of course, be others who have an at-risk household member—parent, spouse, or child, even if the teacher's health is fine. 78% specify their concern about personal protective equipment and cleaning materials availability, some pointing out that they were already, before the pan-

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demic, purchasing cleaning materials with their own money. With budgetary constraints exacerbated by the economic collapse that has attended the pandemic, many are having trouble believing these things will be and remain available.

Additionally, 73% of teachers cite concern about whether the necessary safety measures will interfere with teaching and learning—the wearing of masks, the need to enforce social distancing. One mentions it will be particularly difficult to enforce mask-wearing because, in her area of the country, the topic is highly politicized. And the need to constantly police distancing and mask-wearing will not improve relationships with students.

The good news is that 80% of teachers say they're more prepared to teach online now than they were in the spring. In addition, 70% think their school's distance-learning program is generally headed in the right direction. Some say online learning will be more interactive and less stilted than a classroom with distancing rules and masks would be. One mentions, "We're developing students' digital citizenship skills, which will support them after graduation." Despite this, they also are worried about online learning opportunity gaps for students and acknowledge they cannot do their jobs as effectively online as in person. The nearly half of them who have children at home also expressed concern about doing their jobs well with their own children in the picture even while they also say they're not comfortable sending their own kids to school.

The other is a set of recommendations for evaluating your school's safety plan as you decide what to do about your own children's education this fall. These were put together in consultation with pediatricians, infectious disease specialists, and education experts. If nothing else, they give you fodder for conversations with school officials and other parents as you weigh your decisions. If you don't have children in school, feel free to scroll on past this next; it may have limited interest for you.

The experts consulted pointed out that there is no zero-risk option available, so you're going to have to balance your personal and family concerns against what you see here. It will help to get a clear picture of your own risks and how much spread there is in your community; there are undoubtedly communities in which spread is suppressed sufficiently to tip the balance in favor of in-person schooling (with precautions) and others where it is not. The American Federation of Teachers recommends the test positivity rate in your area should be below 5%. So if you're all relatively healthy and this number is good here's what to look for:

(1) Buses should have limited capacity and physical distancing as well as requiring masking. Windows should be open as long as the weather permits. Even with precautions, buses are somewhat problematic, so if possible, employ an alternate way to get your kids to school; that not only keeps your kids safer, it helps limit rider numbers for those who don't have a choice about taking the bus.

(2) There should be clear policies requiring sick people to stay home, even if their symptoms are very mild. This may require rewriting attendance policies for the duration and support for employees who miss more work than they have PTO to cover; you do not wish to create incentives to come to work sick. There was not agreement about the value of temperature checks because a high proportion of infected people do not have a fever, but still shed virus.

(3) Masks should be mandatory for everyone in the building. It will help to have planned times each day, preferably outdoors, when younger children can take off the masks for a while. There was disagreement about substituting clear face shields for masks. It should be noted there is no evidence these reduce infection rates as well as masks do, and the CDC does not recommend this substitution in any setting.

(4) Plans for social distancing and cohorts (or bubbles) should be in use. We already know about social distancing. Moving desks farther apart, using larger rooms for class meetings, and staggered scheduling are all means recommended to accomplish this. As for cohorts, we're talking here about putting children in groups who interact exclusively within the cohort to reduce spread within a school from the inevitable infections that will pop up. The use of plexiglass dividers was more controversial. There isn't great evidentiary support for using them unless they go to the ceiling. They're more useful for other kinds of interactions like retail check-out lines and such, not so much for instances of prolonged contact like all day in a classroom.

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(5) There must be a well-developed plan for what happens when a case shows up—as it will—more than once. The plan should be communicated widely so that everyone's on the same page when the time comes—as it will—more than once.

(6) A plan for sanitizing surfaces should be in place. This should focus on hand hygiene and high-touch surfaces. While the virus can live on a surface for a few hours, maybe a few days (jury's still out on that), the critical issue here is not to sterilize the entire school every 15 minutes, but to focus on frequently touched items and on finding ways to reduce touching—like leaving doors open when class is not in session so everyone doesn't need to open the door as they enter and leave.

(7) The HVAC system should provide plenty of air exchange with the outdoors. Systems should be modified if possible to provide optimal airflow in each classroom. HEPA filters should be changed frequently. In schools with older systems that can't reasonably be modified, it is worthwhile to consider opening windows while the weather permits and the use of free-standing HEPA filters in each classroom; these significantly reduce airborne contaminants. There is not widespread agreement that UV light systems for disinfecting the air stream are really beneficial, so I probably wouldn't encourage schools to spring for those yet.

(8) Look for staggered lunch times or in-classroom lunches. At times when masks are removed, distancing is more important than ever, and kids should definitely stay within their cohorts.

(9) Recess should be outdoors in small groups with careful supervision to enforce distancing. If that can happen, the masks can be removed for recess time. In fact, it will be helpful to look for opportunities students can safely go mask-free a few times throughout the day; that will likely improve compliance the rest of the time.

(10) Sports and physical education activities should be outdoors and distanced as much as possible. There should be no contact sports. If outdoor activity is not possible, then large rooms like the gym should be used. Team sports shouldn't happen at all until there is a substantial decrease in cases in the area from which teams are drawn. Remember that the safety of interscholastic competition depends not just on the transmission situation in your community, but also on the situation in every community against which you compete.

The experts also mentioned the one thing schools need most to make them safe is the one thing in shortest supply these days, money. Almost everything recommended above has costs associated with it, and school budgets were stretched before the pandemic, with teachers buying classroom supplies out of their own personal budgets (for the record, a situation I find absolutely shameful). Some schools were far better resourced than others all along; we should not let this crisis deepen the existing inequities or push this risk disproportionately into the underresourced communities. Teachers aren't well enough paid to finance this effort; this time, we need to give schools a hand.

I suppose it was inevitable, given the climate in college sports these days, but this next is disappointing. Players at Colorado State University are alleging that student-athletes are being discouraged from reporting symptoms and being tested, that their playing time was threatened if they quarantined themselves, and that contact tracing reports were being altered. Ten football players and staff have come forward, so it's unlikely to be a false alarm, although we'll await the results of the investigation now underway before passing judgement. A member of the department said the current environment "makes [students] feel more like cattle than student-athletes." I can see how that would happen. We'll see what the investigation turns up, but I'm not going to profess much surprise if it turns out this sort of thing is happening in more than one place. For many institutions there is a very substantial amount of money at stake here.

In case we needed more evidence of the efficacy of wearing masks (and looking at my social media feed, I guess we do), here's sort of an unintentional controlled experiment conducted right here in the good old US of A: Kansas, where, about a month ago, Governor Laura Kelly announced a mask mandate in public buildings, but 80% of counties refused to comply with her executive order. So 15 counties containing around two-thirds of the state's population operated under a mask mandate, making themselves the experimental group and 90 counties did not, making themselves the control group. You see what they did there? They made themselves into a giant guinea pig farm full of research subjects without any need for

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messy old consent forms and fussy Institutional Review Boards and rules and such. Ain't freedom grand?

So what did the study show? Here's a shocker: "While new confirmed coronavirus cases across Kansas have trended downward," according to Dr. Lee Norman, the secretary of the Kansas Department of Health and Environment, the "case reductions could be attributed to the 15 counties that require masks." The 15 counties in question would generally be expected to have the higher case rates because they are urban, more densely populated, and have a high proportion of minority populations and the poor who are more likely to become infected and to become seriously ill. Norman said, "All of the improvement in the case development comes from those counties wearing masks." All of it. All.

John Capron has had a rough time; in foster care from the age of 7 and entirely on his own since 15 and having spent time living on the streets, nothing's come easy. He got a chance to sort his life out in a sanctuary for homeless teens where he encountered a piano, a counselor who taught him to play a song, "Don't Stop Believin'", and a new love, music. He never learned to read music, but he could play most anything by ear. Capron managed to finish high school and got himself into college, where he is studying architecture, so he's getting by these days.

But now that he's left the shelter and its piano behind and living on his own, he doesn't get many chances to play, so when he saw an old piano sitting outside an estate clearance shop, he asked if he could play it. An employee at the store took a video and posted it to Facebook where it has been seen tens of thousands of times. People who saw the video wondered who this kid was, and some were so taken with his playing they offered to buy the old piano for him; but the store owner, Mark Waters, had a better idea. He decided this kid deserved a lovely old Steinway that was in much better shape than the old beater he'd let sit outside.

The problem was no one knew who this kid was or how to find him—until a local TV affiliate did a story and Capron saw a post about it on Twitter. He was worried when he heard the "TV news is looking for me. I wondered if I might be in some kind of trouble." He got in touch, and that's when he learned his performance at the store had been shared all over social media. Then came the real news: "I started crying when I learned that they wanted to give me a piano. I've never owned one."

I watched the moment when the store's owner, Mark Waters, told him he wasn't getting just any old piano, but the Steinway that was tucked into the back of the shop, one with a \$6000 price tag on it. He cried again. Waters cried with him. Soon, the piano was hoisted by a crane up to his third-floor apartment, another gift, this contribution to the cause from a local piano moving company; and now Capron plays his piano for his friends when he has the chance and for himself whenever he damned well pleases, which is often.

Tonight, we'll let Waters take us home: "If I could, I'd do something like this every day. This country is starving for good news. People are moved when they watch John play. He's welcome back in the shop any time he likes for a repeat performance." Mr. Waters is welcome on my Good Guys, 2020, list. See a need, meet a need. Easy when you're paying attention.

Be well. We'll talk 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	Aug. 6	Aug. 7				
Minnesota	57,162	57,779	58,640				
Nebraska	27,178	27,489	27,821				
Montana	4,314	4,429	4,602				
Colorado	48,394	48,988	49,436				
Wyoming	2,392	2,424	2,449				
North Dakota	6933	7057	7177				
South Dakota	9,079	9168	9273				
United States	4,768,083	4,818,328	4,883,657				
US Deaths	156,753	157,930	160,104				
Minnesota	+602	+617	+861				
Nebraska	+222	+311	+332				
Montana	+81	+115	+173				
Colorado	+426	+594	+448				
Wyoming	+28	+32	+25				
North Dakota	+148	+124	+120				
South Dakota	+59	+89	+105				
United States	+49,834	+50,235	+65,329				
US Deaths	+1,275	+1,177	+2,174				

\* 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 6th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Jerauld and Potter counties have joined the fully recovered list. Four deaths were recorded in South Dakota and one in North Dakota. Here in South Dakota, all were females with one in the 70s and three in the 80+ age group. There were two recorded in Pennington County, one in Minnehaha County and one in Oglala Lakota County.

The positivity rate in South Dakota is 5.9 percent while in Brown County, it is 5.1 percent with three more positive cases in the county. South Dakota had 105 positive cases and 65 recovered moving the active cases up to 987. There are 1,119 active cases in North Dakota.

Minnehaha County took a big jump with 44 positive cases and only 14 recoveries. Lincoln County had 14 positive and 6 recoveries. Brown was three and three with no gain in the active cases.

#### **Brown County:**

Active Cases: 0 (38)  
Recovered: +3 (381)  
Total Positive: +3 (422) 5.1%  
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (20)  
Deaths: 0 (3)  
Total Tests: 59 (5580)  
Percent Recovered: 90.2% (0)

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +105 (9273 total) 5.9%  
Total Tests: 1,781 (147,336 total)  
Hospitalized: +5 (861 total). 44 currently hospitalized (up 1 from yesterday)  
Deaths: +4 (141 total)  
Recovered: +65 (8145 total)  
Active Cases: +36 (987)  
Percent Recovered: 87.8 -.3  
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 48% Non-Covid, 51% Available  
ICU Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 67% Non-Covid, 31% 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: (Gained Jerauld and Potter) Bon Homme 13-13, Day 21-21, Jerauld

40-39-1, Haakon 1-1, Hand 7-7, Hyde 3-3, Perkins  
4-4, Potter 1-1, 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: 2 active case  
Beadle (9): +2 recovered (15 active cases)  
Bennett: 1 active case  
Bon Homme: Fully Recovered  
Brookings (1): +5 positive, +1 recovered (18 ac-

tive cases)

Brown (3): +3 positive, +3 recovered (38 active cases)

Brule: 6 active cases

Buffalo (3): 10 active cases

Butte: +2 positive (7 active cases)

Campbell: 2 active cases

Charles Mix: 8 active cases

Clark: 2 active cases

Clay: +3 positive (17 active cases)

Codington (1): +1 positive, 1 recovered (19 active cases)



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Corson: 6 active cases  
 Custer: +3 positive, +3 recovered (9 active cases)  
 Davison (1): +1 positive (13 active cases)  
 Day: Fully Recovered  
 Deuel: 1 active cases  
 Dewey: +1 positive, +16 recovered (16 active cases)  
 Douglas: 2 active cases  
 Edmunds: 3 active cases  
 Fall River: 5 active cases  
 Faulk (1): +1 recovered (2 active cases)  
 Grant: +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)  
 Gregory: 1 active case  
 Haakon: 1 active case  
 Hamlin: 2 active cases  
 Hand: Fully Recovered  
 Hanson: 5 active cases  
 Harding: No infections reported  
 Hughes (3): +4 positive (9 active cases)  
 Hutchinson: 5 active cases  
 Hyde: Fully Recovered  
 Jackson (1): 3 active cases  
 Jerauld (1): +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)  
 Jones: 1 active case  
 Kingsbury: 3 active cases  
 Lake (2): +3 positive, +2 recovered (15 active cases)  
 Lawrence: +5 positive (14 active cases)  
 Lincoln (2): +14 positive, +6 recovered (97 active cases)  
 Lyman (2): 10 active cases  
 Marshall: 1 active case  
 McCook (1): 3 active cases  
 McPherson: +1 positive (2 active cases)  
 Meade (1): +1 recovered (18 active cases)

Mellette: 2 active cases  
 Miner: 5 active cases  
 Minnehaha (65): +44 positive, +14 recovered, 1 death (360 active cases)  
 Moody: +2 positive (5 active cases)  
 Oglala Lakota (2): +1 recovered, 1 death (25 active cases)  
 Pennington (31): +5 positive, +5 recovered, 2 death (118 active cases)  
 Perkins: 1 active case  
 Potter: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)  
 Roberts (1): +2 positive (10 active cases)  
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered  
 Spink: 5 active cases  
 Stanley: Fully Recovered  
 Sully: Fully Recovered  
 Todd (4): 5 active cases  
 Tripp: Fully Recovered  
 Turner: 10 active cases  
 Union (3): +4 positive, +1 recovered (38 active cases)  
 Walworth: 1 active case  
 Yankton (2): 7 active cases  
 Ziebach: +1 positive, +4 recovered (3 active cases)

## North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 6:

- 5,471 tests (1,705)
- 7,177 positives (+122)
- 5,949 recovered (+112)
- 109 deaths (+1)
- 1,119 active cases (+7)

Race/Ethnicity	# of Cases	% of Cases
Asian, Non-Hispanic	726	8%
Black, Non-Hispanic	1035	11%
Hispanic	1219	13%
Native American, Non-Hispanic	1455	16%
Other	866	9%
White, Non-Hispanic	3972	43%

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	1179	0
20-29 years	2013	1
30-39 years	1821	6
40-49 years	1402	7
50-59 years	1371	17
60-69 years	825	25
70-79 years	353	22
80+ years	309	63

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County ▲	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased
Aurora	38	36	370	0
Beadle	587	563	1839	9
Bennett	6	5	530	0
Bon Homme	13	13	737	0
Brookings	127	108	2610	1
Brown	422	381	4290	3
Brule	45	39	721	0
Buffalo	109	96	621	3
Butte	14	7	768	1
Campbell	3	1	91	0
Charles Mix	100	92	1217	0
Clark	16	14	379	0
Clay	123	106	1281	0
Codington	124	104	2742	1
Corson	30	24	444	0
Custer	26	17	770	0
Davison	94	80	2280	1
Day	21	21	618	0
Deuel	9	8	391	0
Dewey	65	49	2049	0
Douglas	16	14	387	0
Edmunds	13	10	398	0
Fall River	20	15	949	0
Faulk	26	23	182	1
Grant	24	19	684	0
Gregory	7	6	378	0
Haakon	2	2	287	0
Hamlin	16	14	616	0
Hand	7	7	276	0
Hanson	21	16	191	0
Harding	0	0	50	0
Hughes	88	76	1673	2
Hutchinson	27	22	880	0

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex ▲	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	4573	72
Male	4700	69

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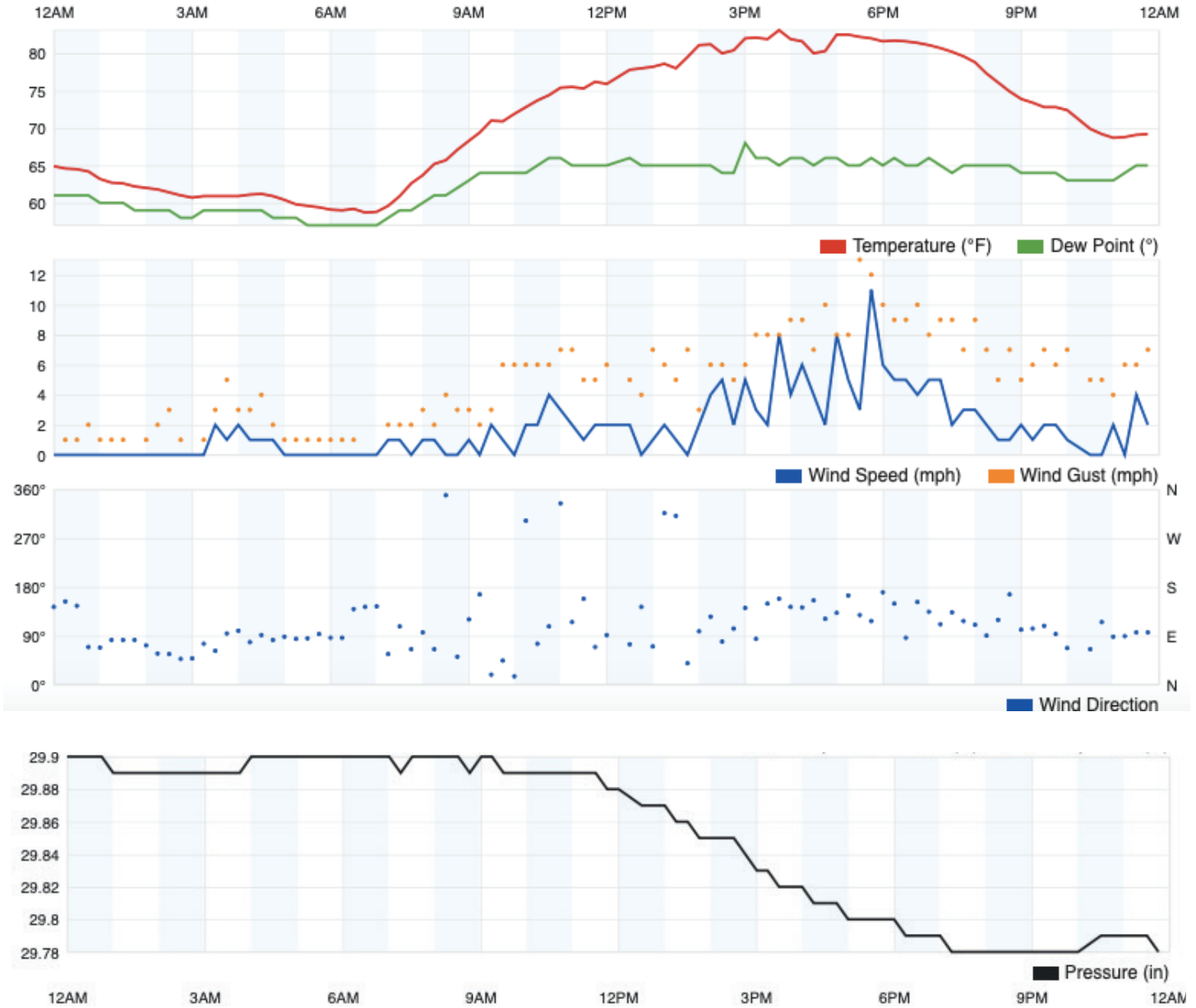
Hyde	3	3	128	0
Jackson	11	7	423	1
Jerauld	40	39	264	1
Jones	2	1	58	0
Kingsbury	14	11	541	0
Lake	89	72	896	2
Lawrence	40	26	2043	0
Lincoln	602	504	6527	2
Lyman	88	77	927	2
Marshall	8	7	446	0
McCook	26	22	623	1
McPherson	8	6	207	0
Meade	82	63	1918	1
Mellette	24	22	379	0
Miner	15	10	247	0
Minnehaha	4329	3904	26582	65
Moody	32	27	611	0
Oglala Lakota	152	125	2879	2
Pennington	863	714	10605	31
Perkins	6	5	172	0
Potter	1	1	284	0
Roberts	73	62	1721	1
Sanborn	13	13	216	0
Spink	22	17	1120	0
Stanley	14	14	243	0
Sully	1	1	67	0
Todd	67	59	2026	4
Tripp	20	20	599	0
Turner	49	39	888	0
Union	208	167	1848	4
Walworth	18	17	682	0
Yankton	104	95	2982	2
Ziebach	10	7	288	0
Unassigned	0	0	7162	0



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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Saturday

Saturday  
Night

Sunday



Chance  
T-storms and  
Patchy Fog  
then Mostly  
Sunny

Chance  
T-storms

Slight Chance  
T-storms then  
Slight Chance  
Showers

Chance  
T-storms

Chance  
T-storms

High: 85 °F

Low: 68 °F

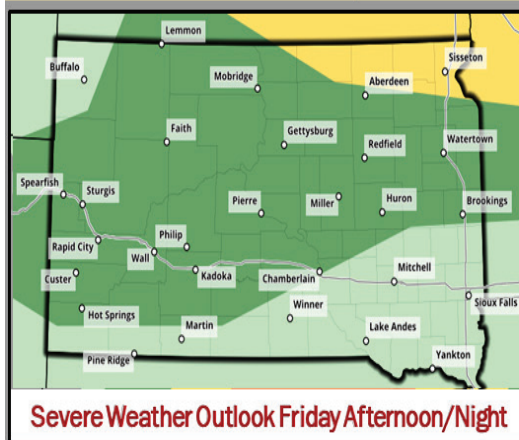
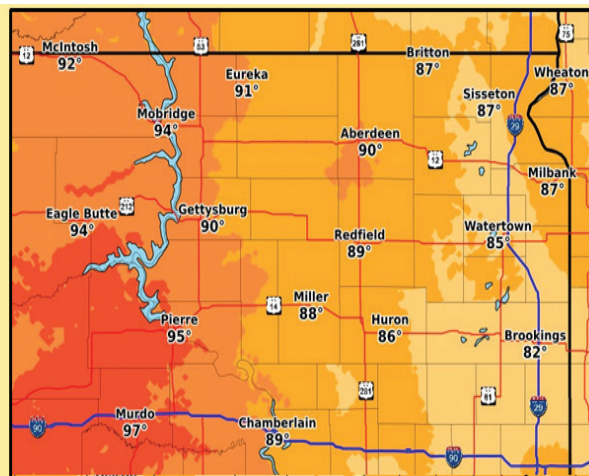
High: 85 °F

Low: 67 °F

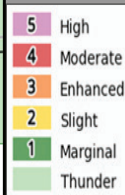
High: 87 °F

**Hot & Humid  
Today...  
Partly Cloudy  
Skies**

**Highs:  
Mid 80s - Mid 90s**



**...Storms Return**  
Storms possible This  
afternoon into Saturday  
morning



ISSUED: 4:52 AM - Friday, August 07, 2020



Showers and storms linger this morning and will weaken over time. This afternoon and evening, we see another chance for storms with the potential for severe, especially this evening into Saturday morning.

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## Today in Weather History

August 7, 1968: From 9 miles north of Isabel, hail up to golf ball size was observed with a severe thunderstorm. This storm continued moving in a southeast direction, causing extensive damage to crops, trees, utility lines, and structures. A radio tower was blown over near Huron, and a wind gust of 115 mph was reported at Huron. A woman was swept from a roof in Huron and was critically injured.

August 7, 2009: A supercell thunderstorm developed across the northern Black Hills and moved eastward across the Sturgis area, southern Meade County, northeastern Pennington County, Haakon County, and northeastern Jackson County. The storm produced baseball sized near Sturgis, then high winds and hail larger than baseball sized developed as the storm moved across the plains. The storm hit Sturgis during the annual motorcycle rally and caused extensive damage to motorcycles, vehicles, and property. Minor injuries from the hail were also reported.

August 7, 2010: An EF4 tornado touched down south of Tyler in Richland County North Dakota and tracked to the northeast for roughly 2.5 miles before crossing the Bois de Sioux River into Wilkin County, Minnesota. In Wilkin County, the tornado continued for another 2.5 miles and lifted about 650 pm CDT. The total track length was about 5 miles, and peak winds were estimated at 175 mph.

1924: A tornado caused estimated F4 damage moved southeast from south of Osseo, WI to Black River Falls, WI. One person was killed as a home was leveled and a boy was killed running to the storm cellar near the start of the path. Two people died as farm homes were swept away near the northeast edge of Black River Falls. Damage totaled \$200,000 as 50 farms were hit and buildings were unroofed in the town of Northfield. The tornado followed the present route of Interstate 94.

1980: Hurricane Allen bottomed out at 899 millibars (26.55 inches of mercury) while moving through the Yucatan Channel in the southeastern part of the Gulf of Mexico. Allen was the second lowest pressure ever recorded in the Western Hemisphere up to that time. Allen's winds at the time were sustained at 190 mph.

1904 - A flash flood near Pueblo, CO, washed a train from the tracks killing 89 passengers. A bridge, weakened by the floodwaters sweeping through the valley below, gave way under the weight of the train dashing all but the sleeping cars into the torrent drowning the occupants. Rail service was frequently interrupted in the Rocky Mountain Region and southwestern U.S. that summer due to numerous heavy downpours which washed out the railroad beds delaying trains as much as five days. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1918 - Philadelphia, PA, established an all-time record with a high of 106 degrees. New York City experienced its warmest day and night with a low of 82 degrees and a high of 102 degrees. Afternoon highs of 108 degrees at Flemington NJ and Somerville NJ established state records for the month of August. (The Weather Channel) (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1984 - El Paso, TX, normally receives 1.21 inches of rain in August. They got it in forty-five minutes, with four more inches to boot, during a storm which left Downtown El Paso under five feet of water. (The Weather Channel)

1986 - A rare outbreak of seven tornadoes occurred in New England. One tornado carved its way through Cranston RI and Providence RI causing twenty injuries. Rhode Island had not reported a tornado in twelve years, and three touched down in 24 hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1987 - Morning thunderstorms drenched Goldsboro, NC, with 3.37 inches of rain. Late morning thunderstorms in Arizona produced dime size hail, wind gusts to 50 mph, and two inches of rain, at Sierra Vista. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A dozen cities in the central U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Waco, TX, with a reading of 107 degrees. The record high of 88 degrees at Marquette, MI, was their twenty-third of the year. Afternoon and evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in Nebraska, Minnesota and Wisconsin, with wind gusts to 81 mph reported at McCool, NE. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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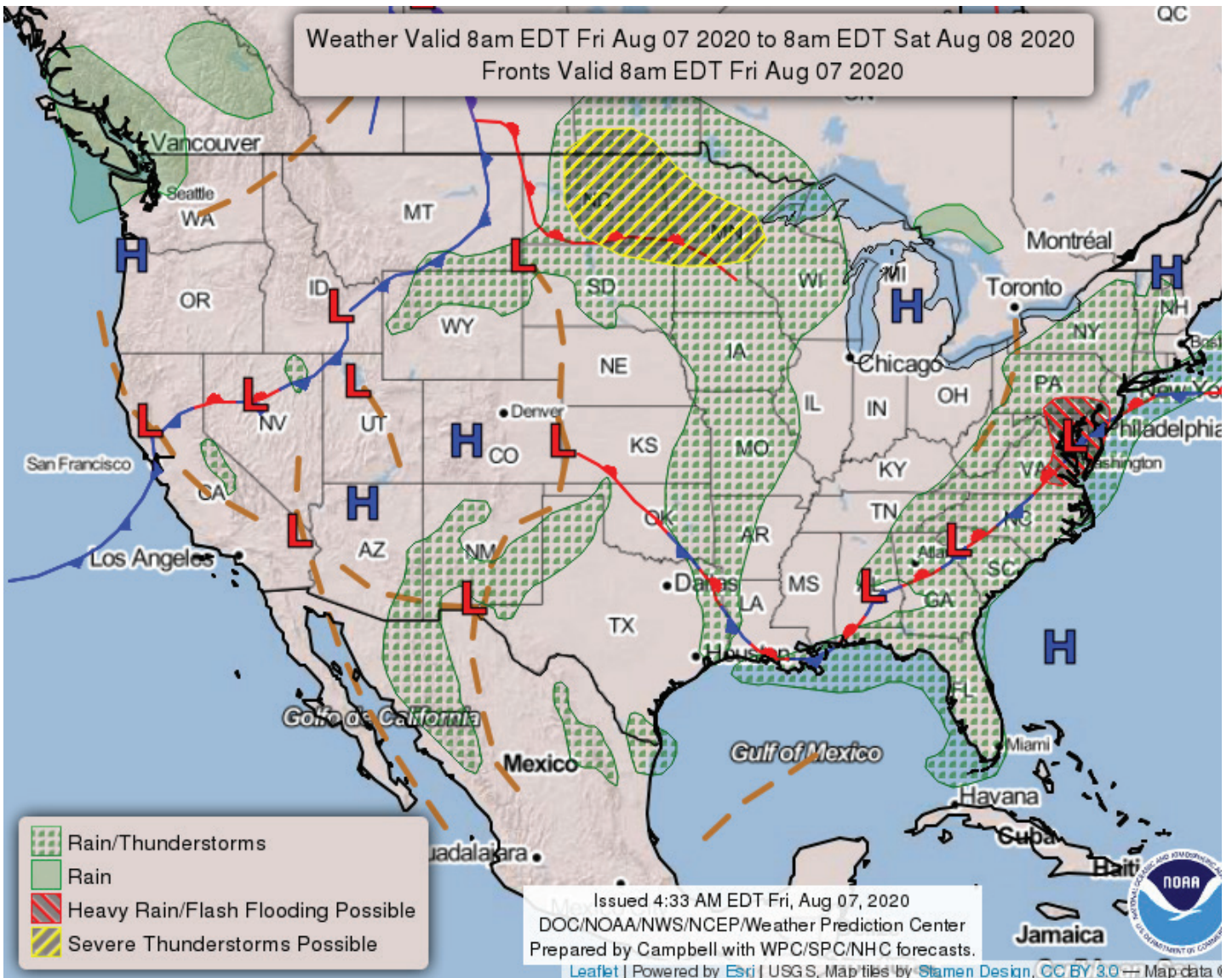
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 83 °F at 3:43 PM**  
**Low Temp: 58 °F at 6:54 AM**  
**Wind: 15 mph at 4:50 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 102° in 1949**  
**Record Low: 42° in 1921**  
**Average High: 83°F**  
**Average Low: 58°F**  
**Average Precip in Aug.: 0.47**  
**Precip to date in Aug.: 0.45**  
**Average Precip to date: 14.33**  
**Precip Year to Date: 10.96**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:52 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:27 a.m.**



Issued 4:33 AM EDT Fri, Aug 07, 2020  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by Campbell with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts.

Leaflet | Powered by Esri | USGS, Map tiles by Stamen Design, CC BY 3.0 | Map data ©

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## COUNT ON ME!

General Robert E. Lee had a brilliant officer serving on his staff. He was fiercely faithful and loyal to the general. He was also a man of conviction, courage, and confidence. Every letter or note he wrote to General Lee was signed, "You can count on me!"

Our Lord has many people He can "count," but not many He can "count on." But there is one who stands as an example to all of us: Joshua!

Joshua was careful to obey all of the teachings and instructions that were given by God. As we read the book that bears his name, we find the theme of "obedience" time and time again. This theme of "obedience" is so very prominent because it is an essential aspect of the believer's life. Additionally, it is a significant part of our lives, and one very crucial part of our lives that, with God's help, we can control.

We cannot control the events that God brings into our lives, but we can control the way we respond to them. We cannot control the behavior of others around us, but we certainly can control how we behave when we are in their presence. We cannot control the decisions of our leaders, but we certainly can "pray without ceasing" for them. We cannot control the content of the media, but we can certainly choose different materials to read or programs to watch on television.

However, one choice that every Christian has is whether or not to obey God's Word. The instructions in His Word sets the standard for all believers to follow and represent Him well!

Prayer: Heavenly Father, empower us with Your Holy Spirit to understand and accept Your Word Then enable us to be obedient to it so You will be able to "count on us." In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: As the Lord had commanded his servant Moses, so Moses commanded Joshua. And Joshua did as he was told, carefully obeying all the commands that the Lord had given to Moses. Joshua 11:15

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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

### **Police arrest 2 suspects in fatal shooting near Sioux Falls**

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Authorities have arrested two suspect in the fatal shooting of a man whose body was found in a ditch west of Sioux Falls.

The suspects — ages 27 and 38 — are both from Sioux Falls and faces charges of first-degree premeditated murder, second-degree murder and kidnapping. One man was arrested Tuesday on an outstanding warrant, the other was taken into custody Wednesday.

Minnehaha County sheriff's Capt. Josh Phillips said there may be other arrests, since the investigation is continuing, the Argus Leader reported.

Cody Allen Schmidt, 30, of Sioux Falls was found shot to death Monday morning. Schmidt's body was found by a farmer checking on his cattle after a neighbor reported hearing gunshots the night before.

Schmidt was found with at least three gunshots to his body, including his upper abdomen, stomach and at least one wound in his head, according to court documents. Authorities believe Schmidt was shot four or five times around 11 p.m. Sunday, Phillips said. Five shell casings were found near his body.

The suspects and the victim knew each other, Phillips said.

### **Rapid City police looking for man in fatal stabbing**

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Rapid City police are searching for a 29-year-old Box Elder man in a fatal stabbing.

Police were called early Thursday about a man lying in the grass in Rapid City. Police say the man had been stabbed in the chest. Officers began life-saving measures, and the man was taken to a hospital, where he was pronounced dead.

The name of the victim is being withheld until his relatives are notified.

Police have identified a suspect and are asking for the public's help in finding him. But authorities warn that he may have a gun and should not be approached.

### **Sinkhole no longer poses danger, engineering study says**

BLACK HAWK, S.D. (AP) — A sinkhole near an interstate in Black Hawk that forced some residents to evacuate their homes no longer poses danger based on an engineering study that did not find any voids under the road, the South Dakota Department of Transportation says.

DOT hired Rapid City-based FMG Engineering to look for underground abnormalities after the sinkhole on April 27 exposed that part of the Hideaway Hills community was built over an abandoned gypsum mine.

The study examined 1,500 feet (457.2 meters) of Interstate 90 adjacent to the mine and 60 feet (18.28 meters) under ground, according to a report from Geo-Vision, a California-based geophysical company that assisted FMG Engineering conduct the study.

The groups used electrical resistivity tomography to look for any voids.

"The test results of the borings revealed none of the areas identified as anomalies were a void or anything else that would cause concern for the integrity of the interstate," DOT spokeswoman Kristi Sandal said in an email to the Rapid City Journal. The Department and the state "are confident there is no threat to I-90 because of the mine discovery."

The sinkhole forced about 40 residents in the area to evacuate. Hideaway Hill residents are suing the state, real estate agents, county officials and developers after public records revealed the Meade County Planning Board knew about the mine when it approved the Black Hawk housing development.

Meade County is investigating how the Meade County Planning Board approved the subdivision in 2002.

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## 2 Keystone XL pipeline workers get virus, but work continues

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — Two people working on the Keystone XL oil pipeline have tested positive for the coronavirus in northern Montana, but the company said Thursday that construction work on the disputed project will continue after a temporary shut down of a pipe storage yard.

Calgary-based TC Energy says the first pipe yard worker in Phillips County tested positive at a local clinic on July 28, Yellowstone Public Radio reported. Testing on six close contacts of the infected person found a second worker with the virus.

Native American tribes and others along the pipeline's 1,200-mile (1,930-mile) route have raised concerns that workers could bring the virus into rural communities unable to handle a large outbreak.

The infected workers were in quarantine and not expected to return to the storage yard, where construction was expected to wrap up in coming days, company spokesman Terry Cunha said.

Work was not interrupted ongoing elsewhere along the route, including site work on planned camps for workers in Baker, Montana and Philip, South Dakota and at eight pump stations in Montana, Nebraska and South Dakota.

"We are continuing to follow the safety protocols and there are no other cases to report," Cunha said.

The pump station construction does not include laying of pipeline. That's stalled because of a court ruling that invalidated a permit needed for the hundreds of rivers, wetlands and other water bodies that Keystone XL would cross between Hardisty, Alberta, Canada and Steel City, Nebraska.

TC Energy this spring negotiated a plan with Montana health officials to minimize virus risks, including checking people entering work sites for fever. Pipeline opponents have said those measures are insufficient.

The project was proposed more than a decade ago but was stalled for years until President Donald Trump reversed the Obama administration's rejection of the project. Its price tag has grown to more than \$9 billion, according to recent regulatory filings by the company.

The company initially planned to build 11 camps housing up to 1,000 workers each along the pipeline's route — six in Montana, four in South Dakota and one in Nebraska.

Construction of most camps for now has been deferred because of the court ruling on river crossings, Cunha said, and it's uncertain if all the camps will be built after the arrival of the pandemic.

## Unemployed in South Dakota have received \$267 million

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — South Dakotans have received about \$267 million in unemployment benefits since the coronavirus pandemic started to take hold in the U.S. in mid-March.

The South Dakota Department of Labor and Regulation said Thursday the state has paid \$70 million in regular unemployment claims since March 16, while new federal unemployment programs have paid the rest.

The Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation program, which provided the additional \$600 weekly, paid \$187 million to the unemployed in South Dakota. Those payments ended July 31.

The federal program for self-employed workers, independent contractors and gig workers has paid \$8.7 million in South Dakota and the program that extends unemployment payments for those who have reached the limit, has paid \$925,000.

During the week of July 26 through Aug. 1, a total of 731 initial weekly claims for state unemployment benefits were processed by the department, a decrease of 77 claims from the prior week's total of 808.

The latest number of continued state claims is 15,643 for the week ending July 18, a decrease of 957 from the prior week's total of 16,600.

## Noem uses COVID-19 restrictions elsewhere to lure business

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Gov. Kristi Noem is using COVID-19 restrictions in other states to lure businesses to relocate to South Dakota.

In an online ad, Noem tells business owners to "grow their company" in South Dakota where government will stay out of their way.

"When it comes to supporting growth and eliminating government heavy-handed interference, South

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Dakota means business,” Noem said in the ad from the Governor’s Office of Economic Development.

The Republican governor says Minnesota’s COVID-19-related restrictions, including a mandate to wear face masks in public buildings, has created an opportunity for businesses there to cross the border to South Dakota.

Noem says in South Dakota, people’s individual rights are respected and businesses won’t be shut down.

Noem has taken a relaxed approach to the pandemic. Even as Republican governors in states like Texas have moved to require people to wear masks, Noem didn’t require physical distancing or masks at the July 3 celebration at Mount Rushmore, which President Donald Trump attended.

## Trump bans dealings with Chinese owners of TikTok, WeChat

By TALI ARBEL AP Technology Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — President Donald Trump has ordered a sweeping but vague ban on dealings with the Chinese owners of popular social media apps TikTok and WeChat on security grounds, a move China’s government criticized as “political manipulation.”

The twin executive orders Thursday — one for each app — add to growing U.S.-Chinese conflict over technology and security. They take effect in 45 days and could bar the apps from the Apple and Google app stores, effectively removing them from U.S. distribution.

China’s foreign ministry said it opposed the move but gave no indication whether Beijing might retaliate.

Earlier, Trump threatened a deadline of Sept. 15 to “close down” TikTok in the United States unless Microsoft Corp. or another company acquires it.

TikTok, owned by Beijing-headquartered ByteDance Ltd., is popular for its short, catchy videos. The company says it has 100 million users in the United States and hundreds of millions worldwide.

The Trump administration has expressed concern Chinese social media services could provide American users’ personal information to Chinese authorities, though it has given no evidence TikTok did that.

Instead, officials point to the Communist Party’s ability to compel cooperation from Chinese companies. U.S. regulators cited similar security concerns last year when the Chinese owner of Grindr was ordered to sell the dating app.

In a statement, TikTok expressed shock at the order and complained it violates U.S. law. The company said it doesn’t store American user data in China and never has given it to Beijing or censored content at the government’s request.

TikTok said it spent nearly a year trying to reach a “constructive solution” but the Trump administration “paid no attention to facts” and tried improperly to insert itself into business negotiations. TikTok said it would “pursue all remedies” available to ensure the company and its users are “are treated fairly.”

Tencent and Microsoft declined to comment.

On Friday, shares of WeChat’s owner, Tencent Holding Ltd., declined 5% in trading in Hong Kong. Tencent, Asia’s most valuable tech company with a market capitalization of \$650 billion, makes most of its money from online games and entertainment in China.

On Wednesday, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced an expansion of the U.S. crackdown on Chinese technology to include barring Chinese apps from U.S. app stores, citing alleged security threats and calling out TikTok and WeChat by name.

The Chinese foreign ministry accused Washington of “political manipulation” and said the moves will hurt American companies and consumers.

“The United States is using national security as an excuse, frequently abuses national power and unreasonably suppresses companies of other countries,” said a ministry spokesman, Wang Wenbin. “This is an outright hegemonic act. China is firmly opposed to it.”

Wang, who didn’t mention TikTok or any other company by name, called on the Trump administration to “correct its wrongdoing” but gave no indication how Beijing might respond.

Trump’s orders say the Chinese-owned apps “threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.” They cite the International Emergency Economic Powers Act and the National Emer-

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agencies Act and call on the Commerce secretary to define the banned dealings by Sept. 15.

WeChat, known in Chinese as Weixin, is a hugely popular messaging app that links to finance and other services. It has more than 1 billion users. Around the world, many people of Chinese descent use WeChat to stay in touch with friends and family and to conduct business in mainland China.

Within China, WeChat is censored and expected to adhere to content restrictions set by authorities. The Citizen Lab internet watchdog group in Toronto says WeChat monitors files and images shared abroad to aid its censorship in China.

Tencent also owns stakes in major game companies such as Epic Games, publisher of Fortnite, a major video game hit, and Riot Games, which is behind League of Legends.

The Trump administration already was embroiled in a tariff war with Beijing over its technology ambitions. Washington has blocked acquisitions of some U.S. assets by Chinese buyers and has cut off most access to American components and other technology for Huawei Technologies Ltd., a maker of smartphones and network equipment that is China's first global tech brand.

China-backed hackers have been blamed for breaches of U.S. federal databases and the credit agency Equifax.

In China, the Communist Party limits what foreign tech companies can do and blocks access to the Google search engine, Facebook, Twitter and other social media, along with thousands of websites operated by news organizations and human rights, pro-democracy and other activist groups.

The ruling party has used the entirely state-controlled press to encourage public anger at Trump's actions. "I don't want to use American products any more," said Sun Fanyu, an insurance salesperson in Beijing. "I will support domestic substitute products."

Leading mobile security experts say TikTok is no more intrusive in its harvesting of user data and monitoring of user activity than U.S. apps owned by Facebook and Google.

"The U.S. thinking is that anything that is Chinese is suspect," said Andy Mok, a senior research fellow at the Center for China and Globalization in Beijing. "They're being targeted not because of what they've done, but who they are."

The order doesn't seem to ban Americans from using TikTok, which would be nearly impossible to enforce, said Kirsten Martin, a professor of technology ethics at the University of Notre Dame.

"This is a pretty broad and pretty quick expansion of the technology Cold War between the U.S. and China," said Steven Weber, faculty director for the Berkeley Center for Long Term Cybersecurity.

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AP reporters Barbara Ortutay in Oakland, Calif., Mae Anderson in New York, Frank Bajak in Boston, Joe McDonald in Beijing and Zen Soo in Hong Kong contributed to this article.

## Hagerty vs. Bradshaw in race to succeed US Sen. Alexander

By JONATHAN MATTISE and ADRIAN SAINZ Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — The race to succeed retiring U.S. Sen. Lamar Alexander in November will feature a matchup between a Republican candidate endorsed by President Donald Trump and a Black activist who pulled off an astonishing upset victory over the Democratic establishment's choice — with a campaign war chest of less than \$10,000.

Former U.S. Ambassador to Japan Bill Hagerty fended off a challenge from Nashville trauma surgeon Manny Sethi in Thursday's Republican primary, while Marquita Bradshaw handily defeated Army helicopter pilot James Mackler, who raised more than \$2.1 million and drew endorsements from the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee.

"We didn't raise a million dollars, but the dollars that we raised came from hard-working people in Tennessee and around this nation," Bradshaw told The Associated Press in an interview. "Some of them are housekeepers, some of them push carts from WalMart, some of them are scientists. But they are people who want us to head on and deal with the issues."

The 46-year-old community organizer from Memphis will have an uphill battle: Republicans have held both



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Senate seats in Tennessee since 1994, and Trump remains popular enough in the red state that Hagerty mentioned the president at every turn.

"I have a very special person to thank. I just got off the phone with him backstage. That's President Donald Trump," Hagerty said during a victory party Thursday, accompanied by Sens. Marsha Blackburn of Tennessee and Tom Cotton of Arkansas. "You know, President Trump has had my back since before the beginning of all this."

Bradshaw, a single mother, has said she has been "one job away from middle class and one job-loss away from poverty." She said she was once under-employed, riddled with student loan debt and without adequate health insurance. Then she experienced a foreclosure and bankruptcy.

With a platform that favors increasing the minimum wage to \$15 per hour, adopting the Green New Deal, expanding Medicare and requiring universal background checks for gun purchases, she spent around \$5,800 through March, the last time she reported any campaign finance activity, records show. Now she faces a candidate who spent \$9.6 million through mid-July.

"The progressive movement is undeniable!" Bradshaw tweeted after her victory. "Thank you all so much for your support and this victory. It's time to put hardworking people first. Onward."

Hagerty, a 60-year-old Nashville businessman, emerged from a tough challenge from Sethi to clinch his party's nomination. Hagerty and Sethi differed little on conservative sticking points on immigration, gun rights, abortion opposition and harsh rebukes for Black Lives Matter.

Trump let Tennessee voters know he would back Hagerty for the seat, months before Hagerty declared himself a candidate. Sethi had already been running for about a month when Trump's tweet turned the contest upside down.

Hagerty proceeded to ignore Sethi for most of the campaign, until back-and-forth attacks opened up a few weeks ago and never slowed down. Hagerty leveraged Trump's endorsement to brush back attacks on his previous business and political ties to Sen. Mitt Romney, the former GOP presidential nominee whom Hagerty now labels "weak-kneed" for voting to convict Trump during the president's impeachment trial.

Hagerty had other major Republican endorsers, including Vice President Mike Pence, Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, former U.N. Ambassador Nikki Haley, Blackburn and Cotton, while others backed him with campaign cash, including Sen. Alexander through his PAC and former Gov. Bill Haslam, for whom Hagerty served as state economic development commissioner.

Bradshaw grew up in south Memphis and attended the University of Memphis. She has worked with community advocacy groups, environmental organizations and unions, including the Mid-South Peace and Justice Center, the AFL-CIO, the Sierra Club and Tennesseans for Fair Taxation. She has not held public office.

Hagerty, who last month resigned from the board of a brokerage firm because the company expressed support for the Black Lives Matter movement, now faces a Black activist in November.

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Sainz reported from Memphis, Tennessee.

## Rescuers in Lebanon recover more bodies days after blast

By ZEINA KARAM and ANDREA ROSA Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Rescue teams were still searching the rubble of Beirut's port for bodies on Friday, nearly three days after a massive explosion sent a wave of destruction through Lebanon's capital, killing nearly 150 people and wounding thousands.

At least four more bodies have been recovered in the last 24 hours, and authorities say the death toll has risen to 149. The blast shredded a large grain silo, devastated neighborhoods near the port and left several city blocks littered with glass and rubble.

French and Russian rescue teams with dogs were searching the port area on Friday, the day after French President Emmanuel Macron paid a visit to the site, promising aid while demanding reform from Lebanon's long-entrenched political leaders.

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The blast was apparently caused by the ignition of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, a chemical used for explosives and fertilizer, that had been stored at the port since it was confiscated from an impounded cargo ship in 2013.

The government has launched an investigation as it has come under mounting criticism, with many Lebanese blaming the catastrophe on negligence and corruption.

Search and rescue teams have been sent from several countries to help locate survivors of the blast. Among those located in the rubble near the grain silo was Joe Akiki, a 23-year-old port worker who had been missing since the explosion.

A team of 55 French rescuers that began work Thursday has found four bodies, according to Col. Tissier Vincent, the head of the mission. Lebanese firefighters are also working at the demolished port, where bulldozers and excavators were churning through the rubble.

Dozens of people are still missing, and at the entrance to the port a family waited for news of a relative.

Some 300,000 people — more than 12% of Beirut's population — are unable to return to their homes because of the explosion, which blew out doors and windows across the city and left many buildings uninhabitable. Officials have estimated losses at \$10 billion to \$15 billion.

Damaged hospitals, already strained by the coronavirus pandemic, are still struggling to deal with the wounded.

The investigation is focusing on port and customs officials, with 16 employees detained and others questioned. But many Lebanese say it points to much greater rot that permeates the political system and extends to the country's top leadership.

For decades, Lebanon has been dominated by the same political elites — many of them former warlords and militia commanders from the 1975-1990 civil war. The ruling factions use public institutions to accumulate wealth and distribute patronage to supporters. Thirty years after the end of the civil war, power outages are still frequent, trash often goes uncollected and tap water is largely undrinkable.

Even before the blast, the country was mired in a severe economic crisis that was also widely blamed on the political class. Unemployment was soaring, and a collapse of the local currency wiped out many people's savings. That will make the task of rebuilding after the blast even more daunting.

Macron said France would lead international efforts to provide aid but would not give "blank checks to a system that no longer has the trust of its people."

France, which has close ties to its former colony, has also sent a team of 22 investigators to help probe the blast. Based on information from Lebanon so far, France's No. 2 forensic police official, Dominique Abbenanti, said Friday the explosion "appears to be an accident" but that it's too early to say for sure.

In an interview with The Associated Press, he predicted "the death toll will grow" as more bodies are found.

French investigators are involved at the request of Lebanon, and also because one French person died and at least 40 were injured in the massive blast.

French police could later question witnesses or suspects, said Eric Berot, chief of a unit involved in the investigation. For now, the French team is dividing up zones to cover with Lebanese counterparts and will use drones to study the area.

"The zone is enormous. It's a titanic job," Berot said. The investigation is complicated by the huge scale of the damage and "the Lebanese situation," he said, referring to the political and economic crisis in the country.

The U.N. human rights office meanwhile called for an independent investigation, insisting "victims' calls for accountability must be heard."

Rupert Colville, a spokesman for the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights, cited the need for the international community to "step up" to help Lebanon with both a quick response and sustained engagement.

He said Lebanon is facing the "triple tragedy of the socio-economic crisis, COVID-19 and the ammonium nitrate explosion." Colville urged Lebanese leaders to "overcome political stalemates and address the grievances of the population."

Associated Press writers Angela Charlton in Paris and Joseph Krauss in Jerusalem contributed.

## Russia's race for virus vaccine raises concerns in the West

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia boasts that it's about to become the first country to approve a COVID-19 vaccine, with mass vaccinations planned as early as October using shots that are yet to complete clinical trials -- and scientists worldwide are sounding the alarm that the headlong rush could backfire.

Moscow sees a Sputnik-like propaganda victory, recalling the Soviet Union's launch of the world's first satellite in 1957. But the experimental COVID-19 shots began first-in-human testing on a few dozen people less than two months ago, and there's no published scientific evidence yet backing Russia's late entry to the global vaccine race, much less explaining why it should be considered a front-runner.

"I'm worried that Russia is cutting corners so that the vaccine that will come out may be not just ineffective, but also unsafe," said Lawrence Gostin, a global public health law expert at Georgetown University. "It doesn't work that way. ... Trials come first. That's really important."

According to Kirill Dmitriev, head of Russia's Direct Investment Fund that bankrolled the effort, a vaccine developed by the Gamaleya research institute in Moscow may be approved in days, before scientists complete what's called a Phase 3 study. That final-stage study, usually involving tens of thousands of people, is the only way to prove if an experimental vaccine is safe and really works.

Health Minister Mikhail Murashko said members of "risk groups," such as medical workers, may be offered the vaccine this month. He didn't clarify whether they would be part of the Phase 3 study that is said to be completed after the vaccine receives "conditional approval."

Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova promised to start "industrial production" in September, and Murashko said mass vaccination may begin as early as October.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the top U.S. infectious disease specialist, questioned the fast-track approach last week. "I do hope that the Chinese and the Russians are actually testing a vaccine before they are administering the vaccine to anyone, because claims of having a vaccine ready to distribute before you do testing I think is problematic at best," he said.

Questions about this vaccine candidate come after the U.S., Britain and Canada last month accused Russia of using hackers to steal vaccine research from Western labs.

Delivering a vaccine first is a matter of national prestige for the Kremlin as it tries to assert the image of Russia as a global power capable of competing with the U.S. and China. The notion of being "the first in the world" dominated state news coverage of the effort, with government officials praising reports of the first-step testing.

In April, President Vladimir Putin ordered state officials to shorten the time of clinical trials for a variety of drugs, including potential coronavirus vaccines.

According to Russia's Association of Clinical Trials Organizations, the order set "an unattainable bar" for scientists who, as a result, "joined in on the mad race, hoping to please those at power."

The association first raised concern in late May, when professor Alexander Gintsburg, head of the Gamaleya institute, said he and other researchers tried the vaccine on themselves.

The move was a "crude violation of the very foundations of clinical research, Russian law and universally accepted international regulations" the group said in an open letter to the government, urging scientists and health officials to adhere to clinical research standards.

But a month later, the Health Ministry authorized clinical trials of the Gamaleya product, with what appeared to be another ethical issue.

Human studies started June 17 among 76 volunteers. Half were injected with a vaccine in liquid form and the other half with a vaccine that came as soluble powder. Some in the first half were recruited from the military, which raised concerns that servicemen may have been pressured to participate.

Some experts said their desire to perform well would affect the findings. "It's no coincidence media re-

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ports we see about the trials among the military said no one had any side effects, while the (other group) reported some," said Vasily Vlassov, a public health expert with Moscow's Higher School of Economics.

As the trials were declared completed and looming regulatory approval was announced last week, questions arose about the vaccine's safety and effectiveness. Government assurances the drug produced the desired immune response and caused no significant side effects were hardly convincing without published scientific data describing the findings.

The World Health Organization said all vaccine candidates should go through full stages of testing before being rolled out. "There are established practices and there are guidelines out," WHO spokesman Christian Lindmeier said Tuesday. "Between finding or having a clue of maybe having a vaccine that works, and having gone through all the stages, is a big difference."

Offering an unsafe compound to medical workers on the front lines of the outbreak could make things worse, Georgetown's Gostin said, adding: "What if the vaccine started killing them or making them very ill?"

Vaccines that are not properly tested can cause harm in many ways — from a negative impact on health to creating a false sense of security or undermining trust in vaccinations, said Thomas Bollyky, director of the global health program at the Council on Foreign Relations.

"It takes several years to develop any drug," said Svetlana Zavidova, executive director of Russia's Association of Clinical Trials Organizations. "Selling something the Gamaleya (institute) tested on 76 volunteers during Phase 1-2 trials as a finished product is just not serious."

Russia has not yet published any scientific data from its first clinical trials. The WHO's list of vaccine candidates in human testing still lists the Gamaleya product as in Phase 1 trials.

It uses a different virus -- the common cold-causing adenovirus -- that's been modified to carry genes for the "spike" protein that coats the coronavirus, as a way to prime the body to recognize if a real COVID-19 infection comes along. That's similar to vaccines being developed by China's CanSino Biologics and Britain's Oxford University and AstraZeneca.

It's not the first controversial vaccine Russia developed. Putin mentioned earlier this year that Russian scientists delivered an Ebola vaccine that "proved to be the most effective in the world" and "made a real contribution to fighting the Ebola fever in Africa."

Russia's Health Ministry authorized two Ebola vaccines for domestic use -- one in 2015 and another one in 2018 -- but there is little evidence either was widely used in Africa.

In 2019, the WHO considered the 2015 vaccine along with several others for use in Congo, but didn't pick it. It pointed out that it had been approved for emergency use after Phase 1 and 2 trials, but not Phase 3. According to ClinicalTrials.gov, a website maintained by the U.S. National Institutes of Health, a study among 2,000 people in Guinea and Russia was still ongoing last month.

The 2018 Ebola vaccine, according to the WHO, was tested on 300 volunteers in Russia and completed all three phases. The Associated Press couldn't find any records of the studies in the Health Ministry's registry of approved clinical trials. As of 2019, both Ebola vaccines were listed by the WHO as "candidate vaccines."

Russia's Health Ministry did not respond to numerous requests for comment, and the Gamaleya institute referred an interview request to the ministry.

It remains unclear whether Phase 3 trials, said to be carried out after the COVID-19 vaccine receives "conditional approval," will wrap up by October, when health officials plan to start mass vaccinations, and how trustworthy the results will be. The study will supposedly involve 1,600 participants — 800 for each of the two forms of the vaccine; in comparison, a similar Phase 3 trial in the U.S. includes 30,000 people.

According to Dmitriev, countries including Brazil and India have expressed interest in the vaccine.

For Lawrence Gostin, this is another cause for concern.

"There may be many people in the world who don't care about the ethics and just want the vaccine," he said.

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AP Medical Writer Lauran Neergaard in Alexandria, Virginia, contributed.

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## Protesters rally in Portland as mayor decries violence

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Violent clashes this week between protesters and police in Portland, Oregon, have ratcheted up tensions in the city days after an agreement between state and federal officials appeared to bring calm.

More demonstrations were rallying Thursday night, hours after the city's mayor decried the unrest that has roiled Portland since George Floyd was killed.

"You are not demonstrating, you are attempting to commit murder," Mayor Ted Wheeler said Thursday in a hastily called news conference alongside Portland Police Chief Chuck Lovell. Wheeler also warned that the city anticipated more "attacks on public buildings" in the immediate future.

Thursday night, Portland police declared an unlawful assembly outside a precinct and protesters were ordered to leave. They had said earlier that they believed the intent of the crowd was to vandalize and burn the precinct.

Officers worked to clear streets near the precinct of demonstrators, at times running at the crowd to push people away. Smoke canisters were also deployed, news outlets reported. Portland police said some demonstrators in the group laid ties made of rebar in the street that caused damage to police vehicles.

Early Friday, roads near the precinct were closed, police said. "Any persons including members of the press who violate this order will be subject to arrest," the department said in a tweet.

"Don't think for a moment that if you are participating in this activity, you are not being a prop for the reelection campaign of Donald Trump — because you absolutely are," the mayor had said. "If you don't want to be part of that, then don't show up."

The Pacific Northwest Youth Liberation Front, which advertised the Wednesday rally on social media, used Twitter to announce "Round 2" of the same demonstration on Thursday night with the slogan "No cops. No prisons. Total abolition."

The group, which described itself as a "decentralized network of autonomous youth collectives dedicated to direct action towards total liberation," did not immediately reply to a request for comment.

The clashes between thousands of protesters and U.S. agents sent by the Trump administration to guard the Mark O. Hatfield Federal Courthouse stopped after an agreement between Democratic Gov. Kate Brown and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security that called for the agents to begin drawing down their presence in Portland's downtown on July 30.

But after a brief weekend reprieve, protest activity has continued nightly in other parts of the city, with Portland police, local sheriff's deputies and, in some cases, Oregon State Police troopers on the frontlines as demonstrators demand an end to police funding.

Wednesday night's activity was in a residential neighborhood 6 miles (over 9 kilometers) away from the federal courthouse.

Protesters on Wednesday gathered outside a police precinct and shined lasers in officers' eyes, disabled exterior security cameras, broke windows and used boards pulled from the building to barricade the doors and start a fire, authorities said. There were 20 sworn officers inside, as well as civilian employees, said Capt. Tony Passadore, who was the incident commander.

Police used tear gas for the first time since federal agents pulled back last week.

"I don't want people to get confused to think that this was something related to Black Lives Matter," Passadore said of the precinct rally. "I've been the incident commander for 24 nights of the 70-plus events, and I've seen amazing protesting going on in the city of Portland where people gather together."

It was at least the third time since protests broke out in the city in late May that smaller crowds have targeted police precincts with barricades and fire. A precinct in North Portland, a historically Black neighborhood, the downtown police headquarters and the police union headquarters have also all been focal

points for demonstrators who are calling for the defunding of the Portland police.

Protests have gone on unabated in Portland since May 25 following the death of Floyd, a Black man who died after a white Minneapolis police officer pinned him by the neck for nearly eight minutes. Floyd's death prompted national outrage and a reckoning in cities around the U.S. with systemic racism.

In Portland, the civil disobedience prompted Trump to send federal agents from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Marshals Service and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement to guard the federal courthouse, which was increasingly targeted in demonstrations that often turned violent.

It was a move intended to quell the unrest but the presence of federal agents instead reinvigorated demonstrators and created a focal point for the protests each night amid concerns that Trump was overstepping the limits of federal police powers.

Follow Gillian Flaccus on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/gflaccus>

## The Latest: Saudis send two planes filled with aid to Beirut

BEIRUT (AP) — The Latest on the explosion in Beirut (all times local):

1:35 p.m.

Saudi Arabia has sent two planes to Lebanon carrying more than 120 tons of medicine, medical devices, emergency supplies, tents, shelter kits and food items for people in Beirut affected by the massive explosion this week.

The Saudi government said Friday a specialized team from the King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Center will supervise the distribution.

12:45 p.m.

The U.N. human rights office is calling for an independent investigation into the Beirut explosion, insisting that "victims' calls for accountability must be heard."

Spokesman Rupert Colville of the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights cited the need for the international community to "step up" to help Lebanon with both a quick response and sustained engagement.

He said Lebanon is facing the "triple tragedy of a socio-economic crisis, COVID-19 and the ammonium nitrate explosion" that devastated the capital on Tuesday.

Colville also called for the poor and most vulnerable to be respected as Beirut and Lebanon rebuild, and urged Lebanese leaders to "overcome political stalemates and address the grievances of the population." That was an allusion to large protests that broke out in Lebanon in October.

12:10 p.m.

A team of 22 French investigators has started work in Beirut to search for evidence and bodies from Tuesday's deadly explosion and help Lebanese authorities determine what caused it.

Based on information from Lebanon so far, France's No. 2 forensic police official Dominique Abbenanti says the explosion "appears to be an accident" but that it's too early to say for sure.

In an interview with The Associated Press, he predicted that "the death toll will grow" as more bodies are found.

French investigators are involved at the request of Lebanon, and also because one French person died and at least 40 were injured.

Eric Berot, chief of a unit involved in the investigation, says the zone the investigators cover "is enormous. It's a titanic job."

He says the investigation is complicated by the huge scale of the damage and "the Lebanese situation," referring to the political and economic crisis in the country before the explosion.

11:15 am.

Rescue teams are searching the rubble of Beirut's port for bodies, nearly three days after a massive

explosion sent a wave of destruction through Lebanon's capital, killing nearly 150 people and wounding thousands.

French and Russian rescue teams with dogs are searching the area, and at least three more bodies were recovered in the last 24 hours, bringing the death toll to 149.

The government has launched an investigation as it faces mounting criticism, with many Lebanese blaming the catastrophe on negligence and corruption.

The blast was apparently caused by the ignition of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate, a chemical used for explosives and fertilizer, that had been stored at the port since being confiscated from an impounded cargo ship in 2013.

The blast shredded a large grain silo, devastated neighborhoods near the port and left several city blocks littered with glass and rubble.

## The Latest: Hong Kong offers free testing for all residents

By The Associated Press undefined

HONG KONG — Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam says the semi-autonomous Chinese city will offer free coronavirus testing for all its 7.5 million residents beginning in two weeks.

Lam says such universal testing will help gauge the level of transmission in the community, find those who may be carrying the virus but not showing symptoms and reassure the public.

She told reporters, "Put simply, anyone in the community who wants to do a test can take the test. We won't care if they come from high-risk groups or not."

Lam says tests would be carried out in a manner to avoid lines and maintain social distancing. Lam's government has already cited such concerns as the reason for postponing elections for the city's Legislative Council originally scheduled for September in what the opposition camp called a political move.

Hong Kong has been struggling to contain a new outbreak that has seen it adding around 100 new cases per day. The city has registered more than 3,800 cases with 46 deaths.

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

- India hits 2 million cases as health volunteers strike
- July US jobs report is expected to point to hiring slowdown
- Virus talks on brink of collapse, sides still 'far apart'
- Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine has tested negative for COVID-19 after testing positive earlier in the day before he was to meet with President Donald Trump.
- Africa's confirmed coronavirus cases have surpassed 1 million, but global health experts tell The Associated Press the true toll is likely several times higher.
- The Trump administration has rescinded its warning to Americans against all international travel because of the coronavirus pandemic.

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

### HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

LONDON — The vaccines alliance GAVI says it has agreed to a deal with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the world's biggest vaccine producer, India's Serum Institute, to speed the manufacturing and delivery of up to 100 million doses of coronavirus vaccines to developing countries in 2021.

The collaboration will give upfront capital to the Serum Institute so that once any effective COVID-19 vaccine is licensed, the company can mass produce the shots at scale, as early as the first half of 2021.

In a statement on Friday, GAVI CEO Dr. Seth Berkley said the deal was aimed at making sure rich countries would not be the only ones with access to coronavirus vaccines.

He says, "If only the wealthiest countries in the world are protected, then international trade, commerce

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and society as a whole will continue to be hit hard as the pandemic continues to rage across the globe.”

Numerous countries including Britain, France, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and the U.S. have already signed multiple deals with pharmaceuticals for access to COVID-19 vaccines before they have been even licensed. Activists warn that rich countries are essentially hoarding limited vaccine supplies and that few will be left for the developing world.

The Serum Institute says the vaccine candidates from AstraZeneca and Novovax, will be available for about \$3 a dose, a price subsidized by investment from partners including the Gates Foundation. GAVI is heading an international plan to buy vaccines for low and middle income countries and is aiming to raise \$2 billion for the effort.

**BERLIN** — Officials in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania have shut down two schools after new cases of coronavirus were confirmed only days after the northeastern German state became the country’s first to resume classes.

The dpa news agency reported Friday that a high school in Ludwigslust was shuttered after a teacher tested positive for the virus and a primary school in Graal-Mueritz was closed after a student was confirmed to have COVID-19.

The sparsely populated state has been Germany’s least affected by the pandemic, with 910 positive tests for COVID-19 and 20 virus-related deaths among its 1.6 million residents.

Schools fully reopened on Monday with no mask or distancing requirements, but with children divided into fixed groups for classes in an effort to compartmentalize possible outbreaks.

The development raises concerns as Germany’s most populous state, North Rhine-Westphalia, prepares to send its 2.5 million students back to school next week. It has the country’s strictest guidelines, including a mask requirement at all times in school buildings.

**MADRID** -- A group of 20 leading Spanish experts in public health and epidemiology are urging the government to undertake “an independent and impartial evaluation” of why the coronavirus pandemic has hit Spain so hard.

Spain is the western European country with most COVID-19 cases — 309,855, Johns Hopkins University figures show.

The Spanish scientists said in a letter published in the Lancet medical journal Friday that the government should appoint a panel of Spanish and foreign experts to evaluate what has happened.

They said potential explanations include lack of pandemic preparedness, a slow official response, an aging population and funding cuts in the public health system.

**GENEVA** — The Swiss federal government has struck a deal with Moderna to supply Switzerland with 4.5 million doses of COVID-19 vaccine if the U.S. biotech firm successfully develops one.

The Federal Office of Public Health says the agreement aims “to guarantee Switzerland early access to the vaccine of Moderna” and is one of the first such deals by any government with the company.

An office statement on Thursday says the government wants to ensure that the Swiss population has rapid access to a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccine. At the same time, it says Switzerland is supporting multilateral projects for the fair distribution of a future vaccine.

The Moderna deal would make it possible to vaccinate 2.25 million people, because expectations are that two doses would be needed, it said.

The Swiss government is also in talks with other vaccine companies and has already allocated 300 million Swiss francs (nearly \$330 million) for purchases of COVID-19 vaccine. It did not specify the value of the Moderna deal.

**COPENHAGEN**, Denmark — The number of people on a Norwegian cruise ship who have tested positive for the coronavirus has risen to 62.



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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 that during its two journeys last month, a total of 41 crew members and 21 passengers have tested positive. All the infected passengers are registered as living in Norway.

The cruise liner 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.

Norwegian broadcaster NRK said Friday that Bent Martini, the ship owner Hurtigruten's chief operating officer who was traveling on the infected ship when it docked in Tromsø, had been temporarily discharged. It was not clear whether he tested positive.

PARIS — New foreign trade figures released by France for the first half of 2020 reveal the economic devastation the coronavirus pandemic has wreaked on the eurozone's second economy.

French exports of goods are down by 21.5% compared to the first half of 2019. It is a drop greater than that recorded in the first half of 2009, at the height of the Great Recession. It's only partially offset by a decline in imports.

Foreign Trade Minister Franck Riester said that "these figures are unfortunately not a surprise, as the scale of the crisis we are going through is exceptional."

France also experienced a dramatic clump in its goods trade deficit to minus 34.0 billion euros (minus \$40.2 billion) from minus 29.0 billion euros (\$34.3 billion) in the first half of 2019.

ISLAMABAD — Pakistan's daily infection rate has stayed under 1,000 for more than three weeks, occasionally dropping to 300 and prompting the government to further ease restrictions with restaurants, parks and even gyms opening next week.

On Friday, Pakistan recorded 782 new cases in the last 24 hours and just 17 deaths. In all, Pakistan has reported 282,642 confirmed cases and 6,052 deaths.

The government credits the consistently low numbers for the last few weeks to a strategy of smart lockdowns, where businesses and residential areas were shut and quarantined after recording spikes in cases.

Prime Minister Imran Khan defied his critics to ease lockdowns early on saying he needed to open sectors like the construction industry to provide jobs to the country's poorest. Since the pandemic hit, Pakistan's poverty rate has increased from 30% to 40% of the country's 220 million people.

UNITED NATIONS — The United Nations' counterterrorism chief says a 350% increase in phishing web-sites was reported in the first quarter of the year and many of them targeted hospitals and health care systems, hindering their response to the coronavirus pandemic.

Vladimir Voronkov told the U.N. Security Council on Thursday that the upsurge in phishing sites was part of "a significant rise in cybercrime in recent months." He said global experts don't yet fully understand "the impact and consequences of the pandemic on global peace and security, and more specifically on organized crime and terrorism."

Voronkov also warned that extremists are taking advantage of the disruption and economic hardship brought by the pandemic to spread fear and division while trying to recruit followers.

MELBOURNE, Australia — The chief health officer for Australia's Victoria state says the coronavirus infection rate in the hard-hit state has been "relatively flat" in the past week.

Victoria registered 450 newly confirmed cases and 11 deaths Friday. The 24-hour case load was down from a record 725 infections reported a week earlier. Chief Health Officer Brett Sutton described the latest tally as "reasonable," adding that "we're kind of sitting at 400 to 500 cases a day" over the past week.

Melbourne University epidemiologist Tony Blakely says mandatory mask wearing has started curbing the

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coronavirus spread. He says the infection rate began to plateau at the end of July, a week after Melbourne residents risked fines if they left home without a mask.

A six-week lockdown order took effect Thursday in the city.

**COLUMBUS, Ohio** — Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine is tweeting that has tested negative for a coronavirus infection after testing positive earlier Thursday before he was to meet with President Donald Trump.

The governor's office says he took the first test as part of standard protocol before meeting Trump at an airport in Cleveland. He had planned to join the president on a visit to the Whirlpool Corp. plant in northwest Ohio.

DeWine has no symptoms but returned to Columbus before Trump landed.

The governor then returned to his home in Cedarville to quarantine for 14 days, but he tweeted Thursday night that he and his wife, Fran, had tested negative.

**BEIJING** — China's capital is reporting its first new case of locally transmitted COVID-19 in a week. State media said Friday the case in Beijing is linked to a recent outbreak in the northern port city of Dalian. Beijing has registered only a few scattered new cases since containing a June outbreak linked to a wholesale food market.

China's northwestern region of Xinjiang has 26 new cases as authorities continue to fight to curb an outbreak through travel restrictions and the lockdown of some residential areas.

The semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong reports 95 new cases and three additional fatalities reported. The city of 7.5 million people has restricted indoor dining and require faces masks to be worn in all public places.

**MEXICO CITY** — Mexico has jumped above 50,000 dead from the coronavirus with the latest daily report of 819 newly confirmed deaths.

The report from the Health Department on Thursday brought the country's accumulated death toll to 50,517. That is the third-highest death toll in the world, behind only the United States and Brazil.

The department also reported 6,590 new confirmed coronavirus cases, putting the accumulated total at 462,690.

Authorities concede the death and case numbers are significant undercounts, in part due to Mexico's extremely low level of testing. Mexico has performed only about 1,050,000 tests to date, far less than one for every 100 residents.

**TOPEKA, Kan.** — A spokesman for Kansas Gov. Laura Kelly says the governor will get a coronavirus test because she met with the speaker of the state House of Representatives who tested positive for an infection last month.

House Speaker Ron Ryckman Jr. is the highest-ranking Kansas official known to have been infected. He notified fellow House Republicans in a letter after Tuesday's primary, saying he had been hospitalized for a week in July but is "on the road to recovery."

Governor's spokesman Sam Coleman says the governor had no idea Ryckman had tested positive until Thursday. He says the governor will be tested "as soon as we can set it up."

Ryckman says he tested positive July 13 and he began experiencing symptoms that led to his short hospitalization. He says he no longer was contagious when he attended a public meeting with other legislative leaders and Kelly on July 29.

**SAN FRANCISCO** — A U.S. federal judge has ordered immigration officials to conduct weekly coronavirus testing for more than 100 men held at a California detention center.

Judge Vince Chhabria in San Francisco issued the temporary restraining order Thursday.

A lawyer tells the San Francisco Chronicle that nearly two dozen inmates and staff members have tested positive for COVID-19 at the Mesa Verde Detention Center in Bakersfield.

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The judge says ICE has deliberately avoided universal testing out of concern that the agency would have to implement troublesome safety measures.

The Chronicle says ICE didn't immediately respond to a request for comment.

JOHANNESBURG — South Africa is reporting more than 8,300 new confirmed coronavirus cases as the country with the world's fifth largest caseload is approaching 10,000 deaths.

The new health ministry figures push the total cases on the African continent past the 1 million mark.

South Africa has more than half the virus cases in Africa, with 529,877.

Health Minister Zweli Mkhize this week expressed cautious optimism as the rate of new cases has slowed. But he warned that vigilance must continue "to prevent a renewed surge."

South Africa's COVID-19 deaths are now at 9,298, with more than 400 new deaths reported.

## 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. **TRUMP MOVES TO BAN TIKTOK, WECHAT** The executive orders take effect in 45 days and could bar the popular apps from the Apple and Google app stores, effectively removing them from distribution in the U.S.

2. **MORE BODIES RECOVERED IN LEBANON** French and Russian rescue teams with dogs are searching the port area, the day after Emmanuel Macron promised aid and vowed to press for Lebanese governmental reforms.

3. **RUSSIA'S RACE FOR VACCINE RAISES CONCERNS** Scientists worldwide are sounding the alarm that the headlong rush for a COVID-19 vaccine could backfire and point to ethical issues that undermine confidence in the Russian studies.

4. **'YOU ARE NOT DEMONSTRATING'** Violent clashes between protesters and police in Portland, Oregon, persist and the city's mayor is decrying the unrest, saying demonstrators are "attempting to commit murder."

5. **SETH ROGEN SPARKS UPROAR IN ISRAEL** The Jewish comedian's comments in podcast about Israel — especially saying the country "doesn't make sense" — infuriated many Israel supporters.

## India hits 2 million cases as health volunteers strike

By EMILY SCHMALL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — As India hit another grim milestone in the coronavirus pandemic on Friday, crossing 2 million cases and more than 41,000 deaths, community health volunteers went on strike complaining they were ill-equipped to respond to the wave of infection in rural areas.

Even as India has maintained comparatively low mortality rates, the disease trajectory varies widely across the country with the burden shifting from cities with relatively robust health systems to rural areas, where resources are scarce or nonexistent.

The Health Ministry reported 62,538 cases in the past 24 hours, raising the nation's total to 2,027,074. Also, 886 people died, for a total of 41,585.

The ministry said that recoveries were also growing. India has the third-highest caseload in the world after the United States and Brazil. It has the fifth-most deaths but its fatality rate of about 2% is far lower than the top two hardest-hit countries. The rate in the U.S. is 3.3%, and in Brazil 3.4%, Johns Hopkins University figures showed.

The caseload in the world's second-most populous country has quickly expanded since the government began lifting a months-long lockdown hoping to jump-start a moribund economy. India is projecting negative economic growth in 2020.

Life cautiously returned to the streets of the capital of New Delhi and financial hub Mumbai, which appear to have passed their peaks.

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In Mayur Vihar, a neighborhood in east Delhi, shopkeeper and chemist Rajiv Singhal described the daily phone calls he received when he tested positive for COVID-19 from officials within the Delhi state government, the Delhi police and the federal government to check on his condition.

"Despite our huge population and rampant illiteracy, if we have only 2 million cases so far, it shows that government has played a big role in reducing the spread," he said.

But authorities elsewhere in India were reimposing lockdowns after sharp spikes in cases, including in Uttar Pradesh, a state of 220 million residents where infections in every district are weighing heavily on the fragile health system. After fully reopening in June, the state reimposed a weekend lockdown in July.

Shachindra Sharma, a 60-year-old graphic designer in the state capital of Lucknow, only leaves his house for a weekly grocery shop.

"I do not fear the disease but I do fear the government system, which has crumbled," he said.

Around 900,000 members of an all-female community health force began a two-day strike on Friday, protesting that they were being roped in to help with contact tracing, personal hygiene drives and in quarantine centers, but weren't given personal protective equipment or additional pay, according to organizer A.R. Sindhu.

The health workers, known as Accredited Social Health Activists, or ASHA, which means 'hope' in several Indian languages, have been deployed in each village on behalf of the Health Ministry. Their work ranges from escorting children to immunization clinics to counseling women on childbirth.

But while their regular work hasn't reduced, they are increasingly being involved by state governments in the fight against the pandemic, said Sindhu.

"But ASHA workers don't have masks or PPEs or even sanitizers," she said.

She added that although the work has increased and become more dangerous, their salaries remain static at roughly 2,000 rupees (\$27) per month. And the families of at least a dozen women who she said died from the virus didn't receive compensation from India's federal insurance for front-line health care workers because their deaths were not recorded as COVID-19 deaths.

Manisha Verma, a spokesperson for the Health Ministry, did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

In Mumbai, the capital of central Maharashtra state, cases had plateaued after months of steady growth. But rural parts were seeing an opposite trend.

Dr. S.P. Kalantri, the director of a hospital in the village of Sevagram in Maharashtra, about 74 kilometers (46 miles) from the city of Nagpur, said that younger people were cavalier about social distancing and masks. Fatigue and increased familiarity with the disease, which has been most fatal to Indians above the age of 60 with comorbidities, had resulted in people not being as vigilant, he said.

"Everyone thinks it won't be them," he said.

Like in much of the rest of the world, many Indians appeared to be counting on a therapeutic treatment or a vaccine to contain the spread of the disease.

India has launched two of the world's dozen and a half prospective vaccines into human trials, with vaccine-maker Zydus Cadila announcing it had completed phase 1 trials of its DNA-based vaccine on Thursday.

The country will be vital to global vaccination efforts, regardless of whether its own attempts work. The world's largest vaccine maker, the Serum Institute in the central city of Pune, has ramped up capacity to manufacture as many as a billion doses in development by AstraZeneca and the University of Oxford, which is in phase 2 trials in India and England, and phase 3 trials in Brazil and South Africa.

Researchers are hoping to launch the Oxford vaccine for emergency use by October.

Associated Press writers Rishabh R. Jain and Aniruddha Ghosal in New Delhi and Biswajeet Banerjee in Lucknow, India, contributed to this report.

## US kids, parents perform DIY tests for coronavirus science

By LINDSEY TANNER AP Medical Writer



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In a comfy suburb just outside Nashville, a young family swabs their noses twice a month in a DIY study seeking answers to some of the most vexing questions about the coronavirus.

How many U.S. children and teens are infected? How many kids who are infected show no symptoms? How likely are they to spread it to other kids and adults?

"The bottom line is we just don't know yet the degree to which children can transmit the virus," said Dr. Tina Hartert of Vanderbilt University, who is leading the government-funded study.

Evidence from the U.S., China and Europe shows children are less likely to become infected with the virus than adults and also less likely to become seriously ill when they do get sick. There is also data suggesting that young children don't spread the virus very often but that kids aged 10 and up may spread it just as easily as adults. The new study aims to find more solid proof.

"If we don't see significant transmission within households, that would be very reassuring," Hartert said.

Some 2,000 families in 11 U.S. cities are enrolled in the DIY experiment, pulled from participants in previous government research. In all, that's 6,000 people. They have no in-person contact with researchers. Testing supplies are mailed to their homes.

They collect their own nasal swabs for COVID-19 tests, and less often blood and stool samples. The specimens are mailed to the study organizers. Participants get text messages asking about symptoms and reminding them to test and they fill out questionnaires.

The study could help determine the safety of in-class education during the pandemic. But results aren't expected before year's end.

For Mendy and Joe McNulty and their two youngest sons in Mt. Juliet, Tennessee, nasal swabbing at home is a family affair. Testing supplies are spread out on a carefully wiped down kitchen counter, where the four gather to perform what has become a ritual. Mendy McNulty helps the boys with their swabbing.

"We were excited to be able to feel like we could contribute somehow," she said, explaining why the family chose to participate. "This virus is so unknown. Any little bit we can do felt like we were doing something to help."

It's hard to pin down the exact number of COVID-19 cases in kids. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention says at least 175,000 cases have been confirmed in those aged 17 and under, accounting for less than 10% of all confirmed cases. But the true number is likely much higher because many kids have silent infections or only vague symptoms and don't get tested.

Data on kids and coronavirus spread is also murky. Hundreds of infections have been reported in children and staff members at U.S. day care centers, but whether kids or adults were the main spreaders isn't known.

The family study is also investigating whether children with asthma or allergies might have some protection against COVID-19. Anecdotal evidence suggests they might but "we don't know what the mechanism of that might be," said Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases. The institute is paying for the research.

As a mom, former school teacher and scientist, Hartert is anxious to help fill in the gaps. She acknowledges it's possible that none of the families will get infected, but given the number of COVID-19 cases around the country, she says that's highly unlikely.

Mendy McNulty says so far her family has remained healthy. She and her husband are both 39 and don't feel overly worried about getting infected.

She's interested in what happens when her kids return to school in mid-August — two classroom days a week with masks and social distancing, three days online.

"Schools are like little petri dishes anyway," said McNulty, also a former teacher.

"I am prepared to bring everyone home" if outbreaks occur, she said.

The boys — 7-year-old Andrew and 9-year-old Hudson — were excited to take part in the study, McNulty said. She helps them do the nose swabbing, and they both say it doesn't really hurt.

"Sometimes it tickles," Andrew said. Other times, "it feels like she's sticking it up super far."

Dr. David Kimberlin says he and other infectious disease specialists have been waiting for the kind of data the study will provide.

"Generally speaking, the virus behaves differently in children than adults," said Kimberlin, a pediatrics professor at the University of Alabama at Birmingham. "Why is that? We just need to know so much more."

Follow AP Medical Writer Lindsey Tanner on Twitter: @LindseyTanner

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## **Virus aid talks on brink of collapse, sides 'very far apart'**

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Washington talks on vital COVID-19 rescue money are teetering on the brink of collapse after a marathon meeting in the Capitol generated lots of recriminations but little progress on the top issues confronting negotiators.

"There's a handful of very big issues that we are still very far apart" on, said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin. He talked of impasses on aid to states and local governments and renewing supplemental unemployment benefits in the Thursday night meetings.

Both sides said the future of the talks is uncertain. President Donald Trump is considering executive orders to address evictions and unemployment insurance, but they appear unlikely to have much impact.

A breakdown in the talks would put at risk more than \$100 billion to help reopen schools, a fresh round of \$1,200 direct payments to most people and hundreds of billions of dollars for state and local governments to help them avoid furloughing workers and cutting services as tax revenues shrivel.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York emerged to give a pessimistic update about the chances for an agreement.

"We're very far apart. It's most unfortunate," Pelosi said.

Both sides have adopted a hard line in the talks, though the Trump team is more open in disclosing a handful of its proposed compromises. Republicans were late to agree to the talks and have become frustrated by the inflexible tactics of Pelosi and Schumer, who have been exuding confidence in a political and legislative landscape that's tilted in their favor.

The Democratic pair say the federal coronavirus aid package needs to be huge to meet the moment: a surge in cases and deaths, double-digit joblessness and the threat of poverty for millions of the newly unemployed.

"We believe the patient needs a major operation while Republicans want to apply just a Band-Aid," Schumer said. "We won't let them just pass the Band-Aid, go home and leave America bleeding."

Senate Republicans have been split, with roughly half of McConnell's rank and file opposed to another rescue bill at all. Four prior coronavirus response bills totaling almost \$3 trillion have passed on bipartisan votes despite intense wrangling. But Trump and McConnell want a bill and discussed the topic at the White House on Thursday morning.

The White House is also promising that Trump will attempt to use executive orders to address elements of the congressional package involving evictions and jobless benefits. But there's no evidence that the strategy would have much impact or be anything close to what's necessary, and Pelosi appeared unimpressed at a morning news conference.

"I don't think they know what they're talking about," Pelosi said dismissively.

Pelosi and Schumer staked out a firm position to extend a lapsed \$600-per-week bonus jobless benefit, demanded generous child care assistance and reiterated their demand for food stamps and assistance to renters and homeowners facing eviction or foreclosure.

"Don't nickel and dime our children," Pelosi said. "Don't say, 'We want to give a tax break to a business lunch and not give more money for children to have food stamps.'"

Pelosi was referring to a GOP proposal to increase the deduction for business meals from 50% to 100%. The idea seems likely to die, along with Trump's efforts to cut the Social Security payroll tax. But Schumer

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and Pelosi continue to push to restore a tax break for state and local taxes paid mostly by wealthier people with high incomes and valuable homes.

McConnell, R-Ky., is likely to have to assume a higher profile if the talks are to come to a successful close, but he issued a grim assessment of the situation Thursday, again complaining that Pelosi and Schumer are not negotiating in good faith.

"Day after day, they've stonewalled the president's team. Day by day, they've tried to invent new euphemisms to create the illusion of progress," McConnell said Thursday.

Frustration was palpable among Republican senators shuttling in and out of a GOP lunch session, some of whom say Schumer is intent on using the situation as a hammer against Republicans. Schumer is desperate to win the Senate majority just as Republicans are in trying to hold on in a terrible political year.

"As long as they calculate that they're better off politically doing nothing, it's going to be hard for us to move forward," said Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla. "And that's the calculation they've made, it appears."

McConnell is sending the Senate home rather than forcing impatient senators to bide their time while Democrats play hardball. That suggests a vote won't come until late next week or even after. Progress has been scant in the talks despite more than a week of negotiation.

White House negotiators made some concessions on jobless benefits and aid to state and local governments in a Tuesday session — and then promptly got scalded by Republicans after details leaked out.

## China sentences fourth Canadian to death on drug charges

BEIJING (AP) — China has sentenced a fourth Canadian citizen to death on drug charges in less than two years following a sharp downturn in ties over the arrest of an executive of Chinese tech giant Huawei.

Ye Jianhui was sentenced Friday by the Foshan Municipal Intermediate Court in the southern province of Guangdong. Ye had been found guilty of manufacturing and transporting illegal drugs, the court said in a brief statement.

Another suspect in the case was also given the death penalty and four others sentenced to between seven years and life in prison, it said. Death sentences are automatically referred to China's highest court for review.

Ties between Canada and China have nosedived over Canada's late 2018 arrest of Meng Wanzhou, a company executive and the daughter of Huawei's founder, at Vancouver's airport at the request of the U.S., which wants her extradited to face fraud charges over the company's dealings with Iran. Her arrest enraged Beijing, which calls it a political move aimed at constraining China's rise as a global technology power.

Ye's sentencing came a day after fellow Canadian Xu Weihong was given the death penalty by the Guangzhou Municipal Intermediate Court, also in Guangdong province. Convicted Canadian drug smuggler Robert Schellenberg was sentenced to death in a sudden retrial shortly after Meng's arrest, and a Canadian citizen identified as Fan Wei was given the death penalty in April 2019 for his role in a multinational drug smuggling case.

China also detained former Canadian diplomat Michael Kovrig and Canadian entrepreneur Michael Spavor weeks after Meng's arrest, accusing them of vague national security crimes. China has also placed restrictions on various Canadian exports to China, including canola seed oil, in an apparent attempt to pressure China into releasing Meng, who is residing in one of her Vancouver mansions under a form of house arrest.

The court statement gave no further details of the charges against Ye and the others. However, the website of the Yangcheng Evening News based in the neighboring metropolis of Guangzhou said Ye and co-defendant Lu Hanchang conspired with others to manufacture and transport drugs between May 2015 and January 2016.

Police seized roughly 218 kilograms (480 pounds) of white crystals infused with the designer drug MDMA from a room used by the two, and found another 9.84 grams of the drug in bags and residences used by Lu and others, the newspaper said.

China, like many Asian nations, hands out harsh punishments for making and selling drugs, and the

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country's rising wealth and transformation into a center for world trade has attracted growing numbers of foreigners to its domestic market for illegal substances.

In December 2009, Pakistani-British businessman Akmal Shaikh was executed after being convicted of smuggling heroin, despite calls for clemency on the grounds that he was mentally disturbed.

China is believed to execute more criminals each year than all other nations combined. Although the actual figure is a state secret, estimates put it at around 2,000.

Asked Friday about Ye's sentencing, Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said China "is a country under the rule of law and relevant judicial organs handle the case independently in strict accordance with the law."

Wang added that Meng's detention was a "serious political incident" and again called for her release.

"Regarding China-Canada relations, China is not responsible for the difficulties that the current China-Canada relationship is facing," Wang said. "The Canadian side knows very well the crux of the problem."

## Africa passes 1M confirmed virus cases; true number far more

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — Africa's confirmed coronavirus cases have surpassed 1 million, but global health experts say the true toll is likely several times higher, reflecting the gaping lack of testing for the continent's 1.3 billion people.

While experts say infection tolls in richer nations can be significant undercounts, large numbers of undetected cases are a greater danger for Africa, with many of the world's weakest health systems. More than 22,000 people have died of COVID-19.

The World Health Organization calls the milestone a "pivotal point" for Africa as infections in several countries are surging. The virus has spread beyond major cities "into distant hinterlands" where few health resources exist and reaching care could take days.

Immediately knowing they were at a disadvantage, African nations banded together early in the pandemic to pursue badly needed testing and medical supplies and advocate for equitable access to any successful vaccine. Swift border closures delayed the virus' spread.

But Africa's most developed country, South Africa, has strained to cope as hospital beds fill up and confirmed cases are over a half-million, ranking fifth in the world. The country has Africa's most extensive testing and data collection, and yet a South African Medical Research Council report last week showed many COVID-19 deaths were going uncounted. Other deaths were attributed to other diseases as people avoid health centers and resources are diverted to the pandemic.

It's all a warning for Africa's other 53 countries of what might lie ahead. While dire early predictions for the pandemic have not played out, "we think it's going to be here at a slow burn," the WHO's Africa chief, Matshidiso Moeti, said Thursday.

Just two African countries at the start of the pandemic were equipped to test for the virus. Now virtually all have basic capacity, but supplies are often scarce. Some countries have a single testing machine. Some conduct fewer than 500 tests per million people, while richer countries overseas conduct hundreds of thousands. Samples can take days to reach labs. Even in South Africa, turnaround times for many test results have been a week or longer.

"We are fighting this disease in the dark," International Rescue Committee expert Stacey Mearns said. In addition, Africa has just 1,500 epidemiologists, a deficit of about 4,500.

African nations overall have conducted just 8.8 million tests since the pandemic began, well below the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's goal of 13 million per month. Countries would love to increase testing if only supplies weren't being snapped up by richer ones elsewhere.

Africa CDC director John Nkengasong said estimating the true number of cases on the continent is "very tricky." Some 70% of infections are asymptomatic, he has said. Africa's young population also might be a factor. Without a dramatic increase in testing, "there's much we don't know."

But some experts are making their best guesses.



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Africa likely has at least 5 million infections, said Ridhwaan Suliman, a senior researcher at South Africa's Council for Scientific and Industrial Research. He believes the true number in South Africa alone is at least 3 million. The country has conducted far more tests than any other in Africa — more than 3 million — but in recent days about 25% have come back positive. Because of shortages, South Africa largely limits testing to health workers and those showing symptoms.

Experts see South Africa as an indication of what's to come elsewhere.

Sema Sgaier, an assistant professor of global health at Harvard and director of the Surgo Foundation, thinks the number of infections across Africa could be more than 9 million. The U.S.-based Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation puts the number at more than 8 million. And Resolve to Save Lives, led by Tom Frieden, former director of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, estimates it could be 14 million.

For Resolve to Save Lives senior vice president Amanda McClelland, the more worrying number is not the overall cases but the health workers infected across Africa — now about 35,000. That affects care for everyone on a continent whose shortage of workers has been called catastrophic.

Reflecting the pandemic's diverse nature across Africa, just five countries account for 75% of confirmed cases: South Africa, Egypt, Nigeria, Ghana and Algeria. Nigeria alone could have had close to 1 million cases by now if Africa's most populous country hadn't acted quickly, the Africa CDC's Nkengasong said.

Still, with insufficient testing, people live with the fear that loved ones may have had the virus without knowing for sure.

In Burkina Faso, Yaya Ouedraogo lost his uncle and cousin in April. Both were in their 70s with a history of high blood pressure and diabetes, and both had complained of shortness of breath, fever and body pain, he said.

"They had all the symptoms of coronavirus, but in certain areas no one was investigating it and they didn't get tested," he said.

The WHO Africa chief has said officials don't think the continent is seeing a "silent huge epidemic," with thousands dying undetected, but she acknowledged under-reporting of cases.

"What we'd like to see — to be able to be really confident — is higher testing rates," Moeti told reporters last week, and she criticized the "very distorted global market" in which richer countries have the bulk of testing materials while poorer ones scrape by on just hundreds of tests a day.

Moeti also worries about a related danger for which even less data exists: the number of deaths from diseases such as malaria, HIV and tuberculosis as resources are diverted to COVID-19.

Whatever Africa's real coronavirus toll, one South African church has quietly been marking the country's "known" number of deaths by tying white ribbons to its fence. The project's founders say each ribbon really stands for multiple people.

Already, the Rev. Gavin Lock wonders about what to do when the length of fence runs out. Maybe they'll change the ribbons' color to represent 10 people, or 50.

"It's a work in progress," he said.

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Associated Press writer Sam Mednick in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, contributed to this report.

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

## US: Border tunnel appears to be 'most sophisticated'

PHOENIX (AP) — An incomplete tunnel found stretching from Arizona to Mexico appears to be "the most sophisticated tunnel in U.S. history," authorities said.

The tunnel intended for smuggling ran from San Luis, Arizona, to a Mexican neighborhood and had a ventilation system, water lines, electrical wiring, a rail system and extensive reinforcement, federal officials said Thursday.

"This appears to be the most sophisticated tunnel in U.S. history, and certainly the most sophisticated I've seen in my career," said Carl E. Landrum, acting chief patrol agent with the Border Patrol's Yuma Sector.

Homeland Security Investigations found the tunnel in late July. A camera was sent 25 feet (7.6 meters) underground after federal agents discovered a sinkhole in the area of a tunnel investigation, authorities said.

Photos show the tunnel measured 3 feet (about 1 meter) wide and 4 feet (1.2 meters) high, according to a U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement news release.

## Seth Rogen's Israel comments highlight fraught diaspora ties

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — It began as a lighthearted conversation between two Jewish comedians, riffing on a podcast about the idiosyncrasies of their shared heritage. But after talk turned to Israel, it didn't take long for Marc Maron and Seth Rogen to spark an uproar.

Their comments about Israel — especially Rogen saying the country "doesn't make sense" — infuriated many Israel supporters and highlighted the country's tenuous relationship with young, progressive Jewish critics in the diaspora.

Israel has long benefited from financial and political support from American Jews. But in recent years the country has faced a groundswell of opposition from young progressives, disillusioned by Israel's aggressive West Bank settlement building, its perceived exclusion of liberal streams of Judaism and Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's cozy relationship with President Donald Trump.

"What Seth Rogen said is par for the course among our generation and the Israeli government has to wake up and see that their actions have consequences," said Yonah Lieberman, spokesman for If Not Now, an American Jewish organization opposed to Israel's entrenched occupation of the West Bank.

Rogen's remarks follow a dramatic shift by an influential Jewish American commentator who recently endorsed the idea of a democratic entity of Jews and Palestinians living with equal rights on the land between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean Sea. Peter Beinart's argument that a two-state solution — Israel and Palestine — is no longer possible sent shock waves through the Jewish establishment and Washington policy-making circles.

For many Jews, Israel is an integral part of their identity, on religious grounds or as an insurance policy in the wake of the Holocaust and in a modern age of resurgent anti-Semitism. But polls have shown that while most American Jews identify with Israel and feel a connection to the country, that support has waned over recent years, especially among millennials.

Some have even embraced the Palestinian-led movement calling for boycotts, divestment and sanctions against Israel to protest what it says is Israeli oppression of Palestinians. Israel accuses the movement of waging a campaign to delegitimize its very existence.

In the podcast, Rogen, who appeared in such smash comedies as "Superbad" and "Knocked Up," talked about attending Jewish schools and Jewish summer camp while growing up in Vancouver. He said his parents met on an Israeli kibbutz.

As they continued to chat, Rogen appeared to question why Israel was established.

"You don't keep all your Jews in one basket. I don't understand why they did that. It makes no sense whatsoever," Rogen said. "You don't keep something you're trying to preserve all in one place especially when that place has proven to be pretty volatile. I'm trying to keep all these things safe. I'm going to put them in my blender and hope that that's the best place to, that'll do it."

Rogen then said he was "fed a huge amount of lies" about Israel during his youth. "They never tell you that 'oh, by the way, there were people there.' They make it seem like, 'the (expletive) door's open.'"

Maron and Rogen both joked about how frightened they were about the responses they would receive from Israel's defenders. Their concerns were justified.

Rogen's comments immediately lit up "Jewish Twitter." They unleashed a flurry of critical op-eds in Jewish and Israeli media. And they prompted Rogen to call Isaac Herzog, the head of the Jewish Agency, a major non-profit that works to foster relations between Israel and the Jewish world.

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In a Facebook post, Herzog said he and Rogen had a frank and open conversation. He said Rogen "was misunderstood and apologized" for his comments.

"I told him that many Israelis and Jews around the world were personally hurt by his statement, which implies the denial of Israel's right to exist," Herzog wrote.

In an interview with the Israeli daily Haaretz, Rogen said he called Herzog at the urging of his mother and he denied apologizing. He said the comments were made in jest and misconstrued.

"I don't want Jews to think that I don't think Israel should exist. And I understand how they could have been led to think that," he said.

Rogen also said he is a "proud Jew." He said his criticism was aimed at the education he received, and he believed he could have been given a deeper picture of a "complex" situation.

Ironically, Rogen was on the podcast to promote his new movie, "An American Pickle," about a Jewish immigrant to the U.S. at the start of the 20th century who falls into a vat of pickle brine and emerges 100 years later. He called the project a "very Jewish film."

Lieberman, from If Not Now, said the uproar shows "how much the conversation has changed" about Israel among American Jews.

Shmuel Rosner, a senior fellow with the Jewish People Policy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank, said Israel should not be expected to change its "security and foreign policies" based on growing estrangement from Jews overseas.

But he said it can take realistic steps to close the gap, such as establishing a pluralistic prayer site at the Western Wall, long a sticking point between Israel's Orthodox establishment and more liberal Jews in the U.S.

"It's a challenge for Israel. It's inconvenient. We want everyone to love us, especially other Jews," he said. "Israel can do certain things to make it somewhat better."

## Asian shares skid amid virus woes, China-US trade tensions

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares were mostly lower Friday in lackluster trading, as trade tensions between the U.S. and China offset optimism about more fiscal stimulus for the ailing U.S. economy.

Investors were also awaiting a U.S. report on jobs later Friday for another gauge of the economic fallout from the coronavirus pandemic. U.S. shares have been rising as investors also waited for Congress and the White House to reach a hoped-for deal on more aid for the American economy.

Asian benchmarks appeared to be still steeped in worries about the growing number of coronavirus cases in some areas, and the painful impact of lockdowns, especially in Southeast Asia.

"The hope is for a smooth recovery as lockdowns ease, but the fear is that global 'second wave' risks and rising U.S.-China tensions may throw a spanner at ... recovery in the works," said Hayaki Narita at Mizuho Bank in Singapore.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 slipped 0.6% to 22,273.62, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 sank 0.7% to 6,003.20. South Korea's Kospi edged 0.2% lower to 2,338.19. Hong Kong's Hang Seng slipped 1.8% to 24,492.43, while the Shanghai Composite lost 1.2% to 3,347.36.

Toyota Motor Corp. shares gained nearly 2% in morning trading after Japan's top automaker reported that it managed to stay in the black in April-June, despite plunging sales. Nintendo Co. stock also climbed, gaining 2.3%, after the Japanese video-game maker reported healthy profits as people stuck at home snatched up game software.

Overnight, the Dow Jones Industrial Average climbed 0.7%, to 27,386.98 after waffling between smaller gains and losses for much of the day. The Nasdaq composite rose 1%, to 11,108.07 and set another record.

The day's headline economic report showed that nearly 1.2 million workers applied for unemployment benefits last week. It would have been an astounding number before the coronavirus pandemic leveled the economy. But it's a slight slowdown from the prior week's tally, and it was also not as bad as economists were expecting.

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It was also the first drop in jobless claims following two weeks of increases, and economists called it an encouraging step. But the threat of more business closures due to the continuing pandemic means the path remains treacherous.

The price of gold, bought as a hedge against uncertainty, rose further, gaining \$12.00 to \$2,081.40 per ounce.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil dropped 12 cents to \$41.83 a barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. It slipped 24 cents to settle at \$41.95 per barrel Thursday. Brent crude, the international standard, added 10 cents to \$44.90 a barrel.

The U.S. dollar inched up to 105.56 Japanese yen from 105.53 yen. The euro fell to \$1.1840 from \$1.1877.

AP Business writers Stan Choe and Alex Veiga contributed.

## July US jobs report is expected to point to hiring slowdown

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Just how severely has the resurgence of the coronavirus pummeled the U.S. economy? The jobs report for July being released Friday will provide the clearest answer yet.

Economists have forecast that employers added 1.6 million jobs, according to a survey by data provider FactSet. That would normally be a scintillating gain. Yet it would still fall far short of June's 4.8 million increase and May's 2.7 million gain. And it would mean that the economy has regained only about 40% of the jobs that were lost when the pandemic intensified in March and triggered a deep recession and tens of millions of layoffs.

The unemployment rate is expected to have declined from 11.1% to 10.5%, which would still exceed the highest rate during the 2008-2009 Great Recession.

Some economists say Friday's report could even show that the nation lost jobs in July. Others expect the gain to be much larger. The pandemic has so disrupted the economy that the range of predictions by experts has become much wider — and less accurate — than it typically was before.

The economy cratered in the April-June quarter, shrinking at a nearly 33% annual rate, as the viral outbreak shut down businesses and consumers pulled back sharply on dining out, traveling and shopping.

Growth rebounded in May and June. But the viral outbreak re-intensified in late June, doubling the nation's daily confirmed case count to more than 60,000. Case counts have declined somewhat in recent weeks. Yet the new outbreaks have forced most states to pause or reverse their re-openings — closing bars, discouraging travel and limiting shopping and indoor dining for a second time, all of which has likely slowed hiring.

Even when the economy does rebound, it's likely to do so, at least initially, with fewer jobs. Once an economy starts to recover, companies typically try to derive as much production from their existing employees as they can before taking the risk of hiring more people.

The Institute for Supply Management reported in two surveys this week that both manufacturing and service sector companies expanded output and sales faster in July than in June. Even so, companies in both surveys reported that they were still cutting jobs.

Some other recent data points to a weak month for hiring. The Census Bureau has found in weekly experimental surveys that the number of people with jobs fell 6.7 million in July, which points to a huge drop in the official figures. In June, the same set of surveys had shown a gain of 5.5 million, close to the government's official figure.

The Census report isn't adjusted for seasonal trends, though, and many schools typically cut jobs in the summer, which has led economists to say that the Census figures might be exaggerating the losses.

Some reports suggest that businesses still added workers in July, albeit at a slower pace. Kronos, a company that makes work management software for small companies, said the number of shifts worked at its clients rose just 1% in July, indicating that some previously laid-off workers are still being recalled. But that's much smaller than the total gain of 32% in the previous 11 weeks combined.

Two bright spots for the economy, though, have been housing and auto sales. Ultra-low interest rates,



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produced in part by the Federal Reserve's ultra-low interest rates, fueled sharp increases in sales of new and existing homes in June. Lower interest rates have also boosted auto sales, though both home and auto sales remain below pre-pandemic levels.

## **Kim visits North Korea flood zone, orders shelter, food aid**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Leader Kim Jong Un visited parts of southern North Korea where days of torrential rains have flooded hundreds of houses and vast areas of agricultural land, state media reported Friday.

It's rare for Kim to visit a flood-stricken site. The last time state media reported such a visit was in September 2015, when he inspected recovery work at a flood-hit northeast city, according to Seoul's Unification Ministry.

Kim's latest visit could be seen an effort to bolster an image of a leader caring about public livelihoods at a time when the North's economic woes are believed to have worsened due to the coronavirus pandemic. It forced North Korea to close its border with China, its biggest trading partner, in January. Extensive flooding would only add to the North's economic troubles.

The Korean Central News Agency said Friday Kim inspected a town in North Hwanghae province where a water levee gave way following a rainstorm.

The agency said the levee break left more than 730 single-floored houses and 600-odd hectares (1,480 acres) of rice field inundated and 179 housing blocks destroyed in Unpha County. KCNA said no casualties have been reported.

KCNA said Kim visited the scene and ordered shelters to be arranged for displaced people and residents to be supplied with food grain from his own reserves.

Kim also said officials will be dispatched to direct works to build 800 model houses in the town and that the army will be mobilized to rebuild roads and other infrastructure there with local residents.

North Korea often suffers heavy damage from summer rains due to poor drainage, deforestation and dilapidated infrastructure. North Hwanghae province is a main agricultural region in North Korea.

Friday's KCNA dispatch didn't mention possible flood-related damage in other parts of North Korea. It also didn't say when Kim visited the province.

In Seoul, Unification Ministry spokeswoman Cho Hyesil told reporters that South Korea maintains its policy to push for humanitarian cooperation with North Korea on issues that are not political such as natural disasters. She said South Korea is monitoring flood damage in North Korea but didn't say whether South Korea would offer aid.

Relations between the Koreas remain strained amid a protracted deadlock in U.S.-led diplomacy aimed at convincing North Korea to abandon its nuclear program in return for economic and political benefits.

South Korea has also received torrential rains in recent days. The Ministry of the Interior and Safety said in a report Friday that the Aug. 1-6 rainfall left 17 people dead and 10 others missing in landslides, floods and other incidents.

In neighboring China, authorities have issued a flood warning through Saturday for a number of northern provinces, with heavy rain expected over the weekend. The Ministry of Emergency Management also ordered increased monitoring over three of China's biggest river systems — the Yangtze, Huai and Yellow.

Annual flooding across China has been especially destructive this summer, with around 43 million people impacted, according to official figures from last month.

At least 130 people have been killed or gone missing in the floods, with 3 million moved to shelters and some 270,000 homes destroyed. Around 5.6 million hectares (14 million acres) of crops have been inundated, and direct losses are estimated at 117 billion yuan (\$16.7 billion), according to the ministry.

## **DeWine tests negative after positive test before Trump visit**

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and DAN SEWELL Report for America/Associated Press

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COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine tested negative for COVID-19 on Thursday after testing positive earlier in the day before he was to meet with President Donald Trump, according to a statement from his office.

His wife, Fran DeWine, also tested negative, as did staff members. They underwent a different type of test in Columbus; one considered to be more accurate than the rapid-result test which showed DeWine to be positive for COVID-19 just ahead of a planned meeting with Trump in Cleveland.

The conflicting results underscore the problems with both kinds of tests and are bound to spur more questions about them. Many people in the U.S. can't get lab results on the more accurate version for weeks, rather than the few hours it took the governor to find out.

The governor and first lady plan to undergo another test Saturday, according to the statement.

DeWine, an early advocate among Republicans of wearing masks and other pandemic precautions, said he took a test arranged by the White House in Cleveland as part of standard protocol before he was to meet Trump at an airport. He had planned to join the president on a visit to the Whirlpool Corp. plant in northwest Ohio.

Instead, he received the news he tested positive, called his wife, and returned to central Ohio where he took the other test that showed him to be negative.

The positive result from the first test was "a big surprise to our family," DeWine said at a late afternoon news conference broadcast from his porch on his farm in Cedarville in southwestern Ohio, where he planned to quarantine for 14 days.

DeWine, 73, said he didn't know how he would have contracted the coronavirus and that he's already been spending much of his time at his farm, keeping his distance from family members and staff.

DeWine said he feels fine with no symptoms. His only health concern is asthma he's had since he was a teenager, for which he uses an inhaler daily.

He said he'd already received some "not nice texts" Thursday from people claiming the news proves that mask-wearing is pointless.

"The lesson that should come from this is that we're all human, this virus is everywhere, this virus is very tough," DeWine said before the negative result. "And yes you can contract it even when you're being very, very careful and even when you're wearing a mask."

But, the governor said, "the odds are dramatically better" of avoiding a positive test if people wear a mask.

DeWine, in his first term as governor, is one of Ohio's most familiar politicians, previously serving as a U.S. congressman, two-term U.S. senator, Ohio attorney general and lieutenant governor.

Trump offered DeWine his best wishes and said "he'll be fine" in remarks after arriving at the airport, where he was greeted by Lt. Gov. Jon Husted, who tested negative.

"A very good friend of mine just tested positive," Trump said. He added that DeWine "has done a fantastic job."

Husted said he's been talking with DeWine via teleconference for weeks, and doesn't expect changes in that routine or other aspects of DeWine's job.

Trump's visit to Ohio comes amid signs that he faces a tight race with former Vice President Joe Biden in a state he carried by 8 percentage points in 2016.

DeWine was the second U.S. governor to test positive for the coronavirus after Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt announced he contracted the virus last month.

The number of positive cases in Ohio had decreased after the first surge, hitting a low in late May. But numbers again began to rise in mid-June as Ohio began to reopen businesses. More than 3,600 Ohioans have died.

In recent weeks, DeWine has pleaded with Ohioans to take personal responsibility over the virus' spread across the state. He had resisted a statewide mask mandate until July 23. DeWine's first try at a statewide requirement for wearing masks inside businesses — back in April — drew backlash that led him to rescind that directive the following day, a stutter among the aggressive moves that had won him early praise in his efforts to curb the virus.

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Mask-wearing also has been a point of contention at the Statehouse, where many Democratic lawmakers have donned masks while many Republican lawmakers have not. DeWine has often found himself at odds with members of his own party on the policy.

DeWine's key health adviser during the pandemic, Dr. Amy Acton, left government this week. In the early months, she joined DeWine at daily briefings and was a popular figure. However, backlash against state restrictions helped lead to a protest at her home and her decision to step away from the spotlight.

Since early in the pandemic, DeWine has hosted his daily briefings from a room separate from where the press corps gathers at the Ohio Statehouse. He would appear on a television in front of the reporters, who could step up to a microphone and ask questions.

DeWine held one of those briefings Tuesday but no other public events had been announced for this week besides his meeting with Trump. DeWine said he planned to give a previously scheduled coronavirus update Friday.

In at least two briefings, DeWine has shared how several friends had died from the virus, urging the public to think about their loved ones, especially grandparents. The governor has 23 grandchildren.

Notably, DeWine and his wife had avoided political rallies or meeting with members of the White House since the pandemic began. In June, the governor was scheduled to appear at a former General Motors plant in Lordstown but decided against it when Vice President Mike Pence announced he was going. The facility is now occupied by Lordstown Motors, which plans to build electric pickup trucks there.

"Quite candidly, throughout this pandemic, (first lady) Fran and I have avoided crowds," DeWine said. "We have not gone out to be close with a lot of people. So we're not going to do that."

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Sewell reported from Cincinnati. Andrew Welsh-Huggins in Bexley, Ohio, contributed to this report. Farnoush Amiri 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.

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Sewell reported from Cincinnati. Andrew Welsh-Huggins in Bexley, Ohio, contributed to this report. Farnoush Amiri 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.

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## Virus talks on brink of collapse, sides still 'far apart'

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Washington talks on vital COVID-19 rescue money are teetering on the brink of collapse after a marathon meeting in the Capitol Thursday night generated a wave of recriminations but little progress on the top issues confronting negotiators.

"There's a handful of very big issues that we are still very far apart" on, said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin, who depicted a stalemate on aid to states and local governments and renewing supplemental unemployment benefits.

Mnuchin and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said they would return to the White House to brief President Donald Trump to consider next steps. Democratic negotiators pleaded for talks to continue.

Both sides said the future of the negotiations is uncertain. Trump is considering executive orders to address evictions and unemployment insurance in the coming days.

"The President's first choice is to do a deal. We've said that," Mnuchin told reporters. "If we conclude tomorrow that there is not a compromise position on the major issues the president has alternatives."

A breakdown in the talks would put at risk more than \$100 billion to help reopen schools, a fresh round of \$1,200 direct payments to most people, and hundreds of billions of dollars for state and local governments to help them avoid furloughing workers and cutting services as tax revenues shrivel.

Failure would also bring political consequences that may be difficult to predict, but among those most invested in reaching an agreement are Senate Republicans facing difficult reelection races this fall. Trump, whose drop in the polls has coincided with the continued spread of the virus, had been seen as keen to get a deal as well. But his top negotiators signaled they are ready to walk away.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., said she would consider ways to curb the overall cost of the legislation, but cast the impasse as a deeper philosophical dispute between the two sides.

"We're very far apart. It's most unfortunate," she said.

Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York urged Trump's team to return to the Capitol for another round of talks Friday, calling a bipartisan deal the "only good way to help the American people."

Both sides have adopted a hard line in the talks, though the Trump team is more open in disclosing a handful of its proposed compromises. Republicans were late to agree to the negotiations and have become frustrated by the inflexible tactics of Pelosi and Schumer, who have been exuding confidence in a political and legislative landscape that's tilted in their favor.

The Democratic pair say the federal coronavirus aid package needs to be huge in order to meet the moment: a surge in cases and deaths, double-digit joblessness, and the threat of poverty for millions of the newly unemployed.

"We believe the patient needs a major operation while Republicans want to apply just a Band-Aid," Schumer said. "We won't let them just pass the Band-Aid, go home and leave America bleeding."

Senate Republicans have been split, with roughly half of McConnell's rank and file opposed to any new rescue bill at all. Four prior coronavirus response bills totaling almost \$3 trillion have passed on bipartisan votes despite intense wrangling. Trump and McConnell discussed the state of the negotiations at the White

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House Thursday morning.

Trump may try to use executive orders, but there's no evidence that strategy would have much impact, and Pelosi appeared unimpressed at a morning news conference.

"I don't think they know what they're talking about," Pelosi said dismissively.

Pelosi and Schumer staked out a firm position to extend a lapsed \$600-per-week bonus jobless benefit, demanded generous child care assistance and reiterated their demand for food stamps and assistance to renters and homeowners facing eviction or foreclosure.

"Don't nickel and dime our children," Pelosi said. "Don't say 'we want to give a tax break to a business lunch and not give more money for children to have food stamps.'"

Pelosi was referring to a GOP proposal to increase the deduction for business meals from 50% to 100%. The idea seems likely to die, along with Trump's efforts to cut the Social Security payroll tax. But Schumer and Pelosi continue to push to restore a tax break for state and local taxes paid mostly by wealthier people with high incomes and valuable homes.

McConnell, R-Ky., issued a grim assessment of the situation Thursday, again complaining that Pelosi and Schumer are not negotiating in good faith.

"Day after day, they've stonewalled the president's team. Day by day, they've tried to invent new euphemisms to create the illusion of progress," McConnell said Thursday.

Frustration was palpable among Republican senators shuttling in and out of a GOP lunch session, some of whom say Schumer is intent on using the situation as a hammer against Republicans. Schumer is desperate to win the Senate majority just as Republicans are desperate to hold on in a terrible political year.

"As long as they calculate that they're better off politically doing nothing, it's going to be hard for us to move forward," said Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla. "And that's the calculation they've made, it appears."

McConnell sent the Senate home rather than forcing impatient senators to bide their time while Democrats play hardball. The move suggests a vote won't come until late next week, or even later.

## Playing electoral defense, Trump claims Biden opposes God

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — President Donald Trump billed his trip to Ohio Thursday as a chance to promote economic recovery, but he quickly pivoted to a deeply personal attack on Joe Biden, even questioning without foundation the former vice president's faith in God.

Even for a president known for his blunt criticism, Trump's remarks stood out and they signaled how contentious the campaign may get over the coming months.

"He's following the radical left agenda, take away your guns, destroy your 2nd Amendment, no religion, no anything, hurt the Bible, hurt God. He's against God. He's against guns. He's against energy, our kind of energy. I don't think he's going to do too well in Ohio," Trump said.

Biden called the remarks beneath the office he holds. "For President Trump to attack my faith is shameful," Biden said.

Trump also used his trip to Ohio to talk trade, telling workers at a Whirlpool plant, "I will stand up to the foreign trade cheaters and violators that hate our country."

Barely one month after a new North America trade agreement went into effect, Trump announced his intention to reimpose 10% tariffs on aluminum imported from Canada, saying that United States Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer has advised him the step was necessary to defend the U.S. aluminum industry. However, the move also sets up the possibility of retaliation against U.S. companies and producers.

"Canada was taking advantage of us as usual," Trump said.

The administration said the president had exempted Canada last year from tariffs he had imposed as long as imports of steel and aluminum from Canada remained at historical levels. But there has been a surge that has intensified in recent months despite a contraction in U.S. demand.

Trump also sought to remind voters of the economic prosperity that much of the nation enjoyed before the coronavirus pandemic and said that he is best suited to rebuild a crippled economy. But his handling

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of the outbreak has weakened his bid for a second term, causing Trump to spend time and resources in a state he won easily in 2016 but now could be in danger of slipping away.

The virus already altered the trip even before Trump landed, with word that GOP Gov. Mike DeWine had tested positive for the coronavirus. DeWine had planned to meet with Trump and join the president on a visit to the Whirlpool Corp. plant in northwest Ohio. DeWine's office said the 73-year-old governor had no symptoms and was returning to Columbus; later, it said a second COVID-19 test on the governor turned up negative.

Shortly after landing in Ohio, Trump addressed supporters awaiting him. It was at that event where he veered from his economic message and attacked Biden personally.

Biden's campaign issued a statement from the former vice president in which he said his faith has been the bedrock foundation of his life and provided him comfort in moments of loss and tragedy.

"Like the words of so many other insecure bullies, President Trump's comments reveal more about him than they do about anyone else," Biden said. "They show us a man willing to stoop to any low for political gain, and someone whose actions are completely at odds with the values and teachings that he professes to believe in."

For Trump, the Ohio trip kicked off a long weekend of fundraising that comes as Biden has chipped away at Trump's financial advantage with the race entering its final three months.

The virus upended Trump's plan to run on the back of a strong economy, and Biden has charged that the president has pushed to reopen states too soon in hopes of jump-starting the markets and lifting his standing in the polls. But several states have had to slow down the pace of their reopening, and officials are warily watching a rise in coronavirus cases in the Midwest, including Ohio.

When Trump swept through the region in 2016, his economic populism argument was one of the factors that led him to narrowly capture Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. He handily won Ohio, which had been a swing state for decades, by eight percentage points.

He promised a manufacturing renaissance, but that has failed to materialize. Manufacturers added jobs during the first two years of his presidency, but the gains effectively stalled in 2019 as industrial Midwestern states such as Michigan and Ohio began to shed factory workers.

The import taxes charged by his administration hampered manufacturing companies' supply lines and created uncertainty. The economy had roughly 12.85 million factory jobs at the start of the election year, compared with the 14 million before the 2008 financial crisis, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

The pandemic only compounded the pain. Manufacturers cut 1.36 million jobs between February and April as the economy went on lockdown. Hiring in May and June has pointed to a slight recovery. But even if factories add 267,500 jobs expected in the July employment report being released Friday, the sector would still have 500,000 fewer jobs than it did before the outbreak.

Trump now finds himself severely tested in battleground states, and campaign aides have privately all but written off Michigan. The president now has been forced to spend time in states that his campaign once thought he had locked up. The Ohio trip comes a week after he visited once deeply Republican Texas.

"We're going to win Ohio by even more this time," Trump claimed.

In Ohio, Trump signed an executive order requiring that the federal government purchase certain drugs from U.S. manufacturers rather than from foreign companies. The order would instruct the government to develop a list of "essential" medicines and then buy them and other medical supplies solely from U.S. manufacturers.

The administration has long looked to reduce U.S. dependency on drugs made overseas, particularly in China. The new order invokes the Defense Production Act to procure essential medicines and other equipment from the United States, but does not stipulate precisely which drugs would fall under the requirements.

Trump has said he wants to prepare for future pandemics by replenishing the national stockpile and bringing manufacturing of critical supplies and equipment back to the U.S. His critics have suggested that his administration was woefully unprepared for coronavirus, which has killed more than 157,000 Americans, and that Trump has faltered in mobilizing the nation's resources to battle the virus.

After his trip to Ohio, Trump plans a long weekend at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, with a high-dollar fundraiser in the Hamptons on New York's Long Island and a second near the Jersey shore.

Associated Press writers Josh Boak in Baltimore and Kevin Freking in Washington contributed to this report.

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## 'Worst nightmare': Laid-off workers endure loss of \$600 aid

By SARAH SKIDMORE SELL and PAUL WISEMAN AP Business Writers

An unemployed makeup artist with two toddlers and a disabled husband needs help with food and rent. A hotel manager says his unemployment has deepened his anxiety and kept him awake at night. A dental hygienist, pregnant with her second child, is struggling to afford diapers and formula.

Around the country, across industries and occupations, millions of Americans thrown out of work because of the coronavirus are straining to afford the basics now that an extra \$600 a week in federal unemployment benefits has expired.

"My worst nightmare is coming true," said Liz Ness, a laid-off recruiter at a New Orleans staffing agency who fears she will be evicted next month without the added help from Washington. "Summer 2020 could be next year's horror movie."

Lawmakers on Capitol Hill are struggling to work out an agreement that would restore some federal jobless aid. A marathon meeting in the Capitol on Thursday night generated lots of recriminations but little progress on the top issues confronting negotiators. Even if they do reach a deal, the amount is likely to be less than \$600. And by the time the money starts flowing, it could be too late for many Americans who are already in dire straits.

"Members of Congress may have the luxury to come to an agreement this week and vote next week and then roll it out over several weeks," said Brian Gallagher, CEO of United Way Worldwide. "Families don't have that luxury — they are out of money tomorrow."

In the meantime, up to 30 million Americans, their jobs lost or income slashed by an outbreak that has paralyzed the economy and killed close to 160,000 people in the U.S., are trying to get by solely on state unemployment benefits, which on average are less than \$400 a week.

On Thursday, the government said nearly 1.2 million laid-off Americans applied for unemployment last week. That is a decline from the previous week. Still, it was the 20th straight week that at least 1 million people sought jobless aid. Before the coronavirus, the number had never surpassed 700,000 in a single week.

The rescue package being worked out in Washington would contain more than \$100 billion to help reopen schools, another round of \$1,200 direct payments to most people, and hundreds of billions of dollars for state and local governments to help them avoid furloughing workers and cutting services as tax revenues shrivel.

Some Republicans in Congress argue that the extra \$600 in unemployment benefits is so generous that it is discouraging people from going back to work. Several university studies have cast doubt on that. Economists and labor experts say that the benefits certain jobs carry, such as health care, can be enough for people to go back to work even if the pay is low.

Bethany Racobs-Ashford, the makeup artist with two small children, said the \$600 had been a "lifeline."

The 32-year-old Dallas resident was just entering the busy wedding season, when she typically earns the bulk of her income, when the outbreak struck, and she lost her job. Her state unemployment aid amounts to only about \$828 a month.

"I don't know what we're going to do now," she said.

Fearing eviction from their home, Racobs-Ashford and her family moved in with her 70-year-old mother. She worries about taking on a new job that could compromise her family's health.

Jackilyn Lopez of Tucson, Arizona, said the \$600 had been a "godsend" for her family since she lost



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her job as a hygienist in March, when most dental practices shut down. She and her husband have an 18-month old daughter, and Lopez is due to give birth in three weeks.

Her employer has reopened but has yet to recall Lopez. She feels fortunate that her husband has kept his job as an assembly worker at a laser manufacturer. But Lopez, 30, just received her first weekly unemployment check without the \$600, and it was only \$213.

"Our groceries are more than that each week, with the diapers and formula," she said.

Food banks, pantries and other safety net organizations report soaring demand from people in need. Charitable groups worry the problem will worsen with the end of the \$600 and the expiration of coronavirus-era moratoriums on evictions.

Up to 23 million renters nationwide are at risk of being evicted by the end of September, according to COVID-19 Eviction Defense Project, a coalition of economic researchers and legal experts.

"We are going to have tens of millions of families not just in desperate need, but they are going to be out of their home, and it's going to be catastrophic," the United Way's Gallagher said.

United Way, which runs the 211 network, a service that connects the needy with help, typically receives 11 million calls a year. This year, it foresees 20 million calls.

The Greater Boston Food Bank, one of the nation's largest food banks and a supplier for hundreds of pantries, soup kitchens and senior centers, said it is seeing the highest demand in its 40-year history. Many people are seeking help for the first time.

So far, food banks and pantries that rely heavily on donations say giving has been strong since the outbreak hit.

In Florida, whose tourism industry has been pummeled, 38-year-old John Brenner of Plantation lost his position as a hotel manager and has been out of work for four months. Florida's weekly unemployment aid is capped at \$275 a week, so "I'm quite reliant on that extra \$600," he said.

"The anxiety the Senate is giving me isn't helping much," Brenner said.

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This story has been corrected to show that Lopez is expecting her second child, not her third.

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AP writers Christopher Rugaber in Washington; Candice Choi in New York; Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; and Suman Naishadham, Sophia Tulp and Sudhin Thanawala in Atlanta contributed to this report.

## Commission rejects Trump push to add debate against Biden

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates has rejected a request from the Trump campaign to either add an additional general election debate or move up the calendar for the contests.

In a letter to Trump private attorney Rudy Giuliani, his liaison to the commission, the commission wrote that it is committed to its existing schedule of three debates between Trump and his Democratic challenger, Joe Biden, saying it would consider adding a fourth debate only if both sides agree to it. Both major party nominees have agreed to participate in the three scheduled debates, the commission said.

"If the candidates were to agree that they wished to add to that schedule, the Commission would consider that request but remains committed to the schedule of debates it has planned as reflected in the attached release," the commission wrote in a letter obtained by The Associated Press.

Giuliani wrote to the debate commission Wednesday requesting that the schedule be moved up on account of expanded early and mail voting because of the coronavirus pandemic. Trump's campaign has highlighted that 16 states will have started voted by the time of the first scheduled debate on Sept. 29.

"There is a difference between ballots having been issued by a state and those ballots having been cast by voters, who are under no compulsion to return their ballots before the debates," the commission responded.

"While more people will likely vote by mail in 2020, the debate schedule has been and will be highly

publicized," the commission said. "Any voter who wishes to watch one or more debates before voting will be well aware of that opportunity."

In a Thursday evening letter, Giuliani called on Biden to join the Trump campaign in calling for an earlier debate, and insisted that Biden appear in person at the three scheduled contests.

"We must insist on a commitment that the two candidates will definitely appear on stage, in person — whether in a television studio without an audience or elsewhere — and not through separate, online transmissions where Mr. Biden could rely on notes, teleprompter, or handlers," he said.

Biden campaign spokesman TJ Ducklo said in a statement that Biden would appear at the scheduled debates. "As we have said for months, the commission will determine the dates and times of the debates, and Joe Biden will be there," he said. "Now that Donald Trump's transparent attempt to distract from his disastrous response to the virus is over, maybe now he can focus on saving American lives and getting our economy back on track."

Giuliani, in his initial letter, supplied a list of suggested moderators for the debates. The commission wrote that it will "adhere to our longstanding procedure of selecting the debate moderators. It will do so with great care, as always, to ensure that the selected moderators are qualified and fair."

## Macron promises help, Beirut residents vent fury at leaders

By BASSEM MROUE and SARAH EL DEEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Residents of Beirut vented their fury at Lebanon's leaders Thursday during a visit by French President Emmanuel Macron, blaming them for the deadly explosion that ravaged the capital. Shouting "Revolution!" they crowded around the visiting leader who promised to press the politicians for reform.

A military judge leading the investigation into Tuesday's blast said 16 employees of Beirut's port, where the explosion took place, had been detained. He said 18 had been questioned, including port and customs officials, according to the state news agency.

But while investigators focus on port officials, many Lebanese put the blame squarely on the political elite and the corruption and mismanagement that even before the disaster had pushed the country to the brink of economic collapse.

The Cabinet was previously warned by a security agency that a stockpile of explosive chemicals stored at the port was dangerous, Lebanon's customs chief told the Associated Press — a report that could raise questions of high-level neglect.

That stockpile of 2,750 tons of ammonium nitrate set off the massive blast, apparently when touched off by a fire at the port. The chemical had been left sitting in a warehouse ever since it was confiscated from an impounded cargo ship in 2013.

The explosion, powerful enough to be felt in Cyprus across the Eastern Mediterranean, killed more than 130 people, wounded thousands and blasted buildings for miles around. Two days later, some 300,000 people — more than 12% of Beirut's population — can't return to their homes, officials estimate. Damaged hospitals are still struggling to deal with the wounded. Dozens are still missing. Officials have estimated losses at \$10 billion to \$15 billion.

Furthermore, the disaster struck at a time when people's savings have melted away, and unemployment and poverty have mounted in the financial crisis. Few have capacity to rebuild homes and businesses, and the government is scraping for dollars.

After talks with Lebanese leaders, France's Macron announced his country will organize a conference in the next few days with European, American, Middle Eastern and other donors to raise money for food, medicine, housing and other urgent aid.

But he warned Lebanon's political elite that he wouldn't give "blank checks to a system that no longer has the trust of its people." He called on them to create a "new political order."

He promised a "clear and transparent governance" so that the aid goes directly to the population and aid groups.

In startling scenes, Macron — whose country once was Lebanon's colonial ruler — presented himself as

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a champion for the Lebanese to push change on their leadership.

After visiting the devastated port, Macron walked through one of the worst-hit neighborhoods, Gemmayzeh, down a street lined with wrecked buildings.

On the narrow street, a crowd gathered around him and shouted their anger, chanting, "Revolution!" and "The people want to bring down the regime!" — slogans used at mass protests last year.

Macron told them he would propose "a new political pact" when he met the government later. Then, he added, "I will be back on the first of September and if they can't do it, I will keep my responsibility toward you." He also promised that French aid would be given out with transparency and "will not go into the hands of corruption."

One woman shouted at Macron, "You are sitting with warlords. They have been manipulating us for the past year." He replied, "I'm not here to help them. I'm here to help you." They then hugged.

Notably, none of Lebanon's top politicians have toured residential areas damaged by the blast, though President Michel Aoun and others did visit the port. Hours after Macron left Gemmayzeh, Justice Minister Marie-Claude Najm tried to visit, only to be driven out by protesters.

"Resign, you criminal! Would you accept anything less if your sister were among those killed?" one protester shouted at her. As she was about to respond, another sprayed her with a water hose. She left as protesters chanted, "Revolution!" and "Resign."

By Thursday evening, after Macron left Lebanon, dozens of protesters held an angry rally in central Beirut, on the roads leading to the government building and the parliament — pelting security forces with stones, setting tires on fire and shouting against the political elite. The security forces pushed them back, eventually firing a few rounds of tear gas to disperse the crowd.

Beirut's hospitals remained overwhelmed by the wounded, and there were fears of a spike in coronavirus cases.

In one hospital, 4-month-old Sophie Ajoury, perhaps the smallest survivor of Tuesday's blast, was fighting for her life. She suffered head injuries while breastfeeding from her mother near a window with the shock wave hit.

Her nurse said external bleeding had stopped, and the baby girl was awake and eating, and they were monitoring her condition for internal bleeding.

Emergency aid was starting to come into Lebanon, with European, Arab and Asian countries sending doctors, medical supplies or field hospitals. The United Nations said Thursday it was releasing \$9 million from its emergency fund for Lebanon to strengthen hospitals and intensive care units.

However, the international community has been reluctant in past years to offer support to the notoriously dysfunctional government.

The same factions — and in most cases the same figures — have ruled Lebanon since the 1975-1990 civil war, including Iranian-backed Hezbollah. Almost all public institutions are divided up among the factions, which use them as patronage generators for themselves and their supporters. That means they tend to turn a blind eye to corruption, petty or major, and little actual development is put into the institutions. Even basic services like electricity and trash collection are a shambles.

For more than a decade, officials, watchdog groups and Lebanon's media have reported on widespread corruption at the Port of Beirut, including bribery and hiding of merchandise from custom duties or taxes. One former finance minister has said corruption at the port cost the state more than \$1 billion a year in revenues.

The investigation into the blast is focusing on how the chemical stockpile came to be stored in the port's Warehouse 12 and why it was never dealt with. Authorities have promised to issue results within days, and President Michel Aoun promised whoever was responsible would be punished.

Lead investigator, military judge Fadi Akki, said 16 port employees have been detained and 18 people have been questioned so far, all port and customs officials as well as those in charge of maintenance at the warehouse where the ammonium nitrate was stored.

The investigators on Friday will interview the port's general manager, Hassan Koraytem, and Ghazi Aridi,

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who was public works and transport minister in 2013, when the ship was impounded, a person familiar with the investigation said. The Central Bank also froze the bank accounts of several figures, including Koraytem and the head of the customs department, Badri Daher.

Daher told the AP that State Security, one of Lebanon's main security agencies, had been investigating the stockpile over the past year. During that investigation, State Security sent reports to the Cabinet, state prosecutor and other state institutions about the danger of the material.

Security officials were not immediately available for comment. But if correct, it would be the first evidence that top level officials were notified of the danger so close to residential areas.

Daher confirmed to the AP that he had sent a letter in 2017 to a judge warning of the danger from the ammonium nitrate and asking for guidance on what to do with the material. He said he and his predecessor sent six letters but never got a response.

"I don't know who they answered but we did not get any answers," he said, adding that it wasn't his job to deal with the stockpile but that he sent the letters out of safety concerns.

He said the port is run by an agency known as the Management and Investment of Port of Beirut. Asked if it took any measures, he said, "No, because had they done anything the problem would have had been solved."

Associated Press writers Thomas Adamson in Paris and Joseph Krauss in Jerusalem contributed.

## Republicans push Kanye 2020. But will it really hurt Biden?

By WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kanye West's unlikely White House bid is getting help qualifying for presidential ballots in key states from Republicans around the country, fueling suspicions he's being pushed to run by allies of President Donald Trump hoping to siphon support away from Joe Biden.

The rapper qualified for Colorado's presidential ballot on Thursday, after the Secretary of State's office verified that nine electors he submitted are all registered to vote in that state. One of those was Matthew Zielinski, is a former Republican congressional candidate who served as an officer with a county Republican Party in suburban Denver.

Zielinski tweeted that he believed in "fair ballot access" but declined further comment.

A similar pattern has played out in Wisconsin, Ohio, Vermont and Arkansas, where lawyers or activists with GOP ties have been involved in securing the star's place on the ballot. The successful effort in battleground states Wisconsin and Ohio in particular raised red flags for Democrats, who are braced for a close race and anxious about any third-party candidate drawing voters.

Trump's reelection campaign has denied involvement, with spokesman Tim Murtaugh saying, "We have no knowledge of what Kanye West is doing or who is doing it for him."

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Trump said, "I like Kanye very much" but added: "I have nothing to do with him being on the ballot. I'm not involved."

West himself has hinted he may be in the race to detract from Biden. When an interviewer from Forbes suggested as much in a text message Thursday, West responded, "I'm not denying it."

The Biden campaign did not respond to messages seeking comment Thursday. Still, the former vice president enjoyed strong support among African American voters during the Democratic primary and is counting on topping Trump by wide margins with them, as well as young voters, in November. Having West, who is Black and a hip-hop icon, on the ballot could be a ploy to hurt Biden with both sets of voters.

A third-party candidate with name recognition as high as West could undoubtedly influence a close election. In Wisconsin in 2016, there were 36,460 write-in votes for president — exceeding Trump's statewide margin of victory of 22,748, said David Jackson, a political science professor at Bowling Green State University whose research focuses on the links between young people's entertainment and political preferences.

But African Americans tend not to vote for candidates solely because they are Black, while West's status with Americans age 18 to 29 is actually more unfavorable than favorable, Jackson said. That means Republicans working to ensure he competes with Biden may not be able to peel many of their target voters



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away from the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee.

"It proves that people from the opposite party really know nothing about the appeal of the other party," Jackson said.

It's also possible West could actually draw support away from Trump, since he's been an outspoken supporter of the president in the past.

The Republicans involved include Lane Ruhland, a lawyer with longstanding ties to the Wisconsin Republican Party, who was captured on video dropping off signatures on West's behalf to the election board there. The Ohio attorney who filed a ballot access form on West's behalf in that state, Matthew Aumann, an associate at a Columbus law firm that has been paid thousands of dollars in legal consulting fees by the state House and Senate Republican campaign committees, campaign finance records show.

West's ballot paperwork in Arkansas lists as a point of contact Gregg Keller, the former executive director of the American Conservative Union. In Vermont, Charles H. Wilton is a West elector despite previously being chosen as a delegate to the Republican National Convention.

West, meanwhile, missed qualifying for New Jersey's ballot and also failed to file in South Carolina — despite holding a recent rally there where he railed against Harriet Tubman and sounded far from someone seriously preparing to seek the presidency.

West has yet to make enough ballots to have a mathematical chance of winning the 270 Electoral College votes needed to clinch the White House. That makes him ineligible for the part of the race where he might have the most visible effect, participating in debates, according to rules set by the nonpartisan Commission on Presidential Debates.

West has nonetheless insisted that his bid is serious. But his wife, Kim Kardashian, has noted that he has been diagnosed with bipolar disorder and asked the public show him compassion.

"Those who are close with Kanye know his heart and understand his words some times do not align with his intentions," Kardashian posted on her Instagram Live feed.

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Associated Press Writer Farnoush Amiri in Columbus, Ohio, and Nicholas Riccardi in Denver contributed to this report.

## New York attorney general seeks to dissolve NRA

By MICHAEL R. SISAK, LARRY NEUMEISTER and LISA MARIE PANE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — New York's attorney general sued the National Rifle Association on Thursday, seeking to put the powerful gun advocacy organization out of business over claims that top executives illegally diverted tens of millions of dollars for lavish personal trips, no-show contracts for associates and other questionable expenditures.

Attorney General Letitia James' lawsuit, filed in Manhattan state court, highlighted misspending and self-dealing claims that have roiled the NRA and its longtime leader, Wayne LaPierre, in recent years — from hair and makeup for his wife to a \$17 million post-employment contract for himself.

"It's clear that the NRA has been failing to carry out its stated mission for many, many years and instead has operated as a breeding ground for greed, abuse and brazen illegality," she said at a news conference. "Enough was enough. We needed to step in and dissolve this corporation."

Simultaneously, Washington D.C. Attorney General Karl Racine — like James, a Democrat — sued the NRA Foundation, a charitable arm of the organization that provides programs for marksmanship and fire-arm safety, accusing it of diverting funds to the NRA to help pay for lavish spending by top executives.

In a statement, NRA President Carolyn Meadows labeled James a "political opportunist" pursuing a "rank vendetta" with an attack on its members' Second Amendment rights.

"You could have set your watch by it: the investigation was going to reach its crescendo as we move into the 2020 election cycle," said Meadows, who announced a countersuit in federal court in Albany that could set the stage for a drawn-out legal battle lasting well past November's election.

The New York lawsuit made only civil claims, but James said the investigation was ongoing and any criminal activity discovered would be referred to prosecutors and the Internal Revenue Service.

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The NRA's financial troubles, James said, were long cloaked by loyal lieutenants but became public as deficits piled up. The organization went from a nearly \$28 million surplus in 2015 to a \$36 million deficit in 2018.

The organization's prominence and cozy political relationships, James said, enabled a culture where non-profit rules were routinely flouted and state and federal laws were violated. Even the NRA's own bylaws and employee handbook were ignored, she said.

Though headquartered in Virginia, the NRA was chartered as a nonprofit in New York in 1871 and is incorporated in the state.

Republican Arkansas Gov. Asa Hutchinson defended the NRA, tweeting that if New York doesn't want it, the organization should "move south, where people respect and value the Second Amendment. Arkansas would be a natural home."

The Washington, D.C., attorney general has been investigating the NRA Foundation for more than a year. It said its investigation determined that low membership and lavish spending left the NRA with financial problems and so it exploited the tax-exempt foundation to remain afloat.

"Charitable organizations function as public trusts — and District law requires them to use their funds to benefit the public, not to support political campaigns, lobbying, or private interests," Racine said in a statement.

His lawsuit sought not to have the NRA destroyed, but to have a court-appointed monitor supervise its finances and a trust created to recover money diverted from the foundation.

The New York lawsuit also named LaPierre — the NRA's CEO — and three other current and former executives as defendants, including general counsel John Frazer, retired treasurer and chief financial officer Wilson Phillips, and LaPierre's former chief of staff Joshua Powell. The lawsuit accuses all four men of wrongdoing and seeks fines and remuneration.

LaPierre, who has been in charge of the NRA's day-to-day operations since 1991, is accused of spending millions of dollars on private travel and personal security, accepting expensive gifts such as African safaris and use of a 107-foot (32-meter) yacht from vendors and setting himself up with a \$17 million contract with the NRA, if he were to exit the organization, without board approval.

The lawsuit said LaPierre, 70, spent NRA money on travel consultants, including luxury car services, and private jet flights for himself and his family, including more than \$500,000 on eight trips to the Bahamas over a three-year span.

Some of the NRA's excess spending was kept secret, the lawsuit said, under an arrangement with the organization's former advertising agency, Ackerman McQueen.

The advertising firm would pick up the tab for expenses for LaPierre and other NRA executives and then send a lump sum bill to the organization for "out-of-pocket expenses," the lawsuit said.

The lawsuit comes at a time when the NRA is trying to remain relevant and a force in the 2020 presidential election as it seeks to help President Donald Trump secure a second term.

An ongoing schism within the organization is pitting some of its most ardent gun-rights supporters against one another.

The internal battles reached a pitch in 2019, when NRA President Oliver North was ousted amid a tussle with LaPierre as he sought to independently review the NRA's expenses and operations. He accused LaPierre of exerting "dictatorial" control.

James' lawsuit portrayed the NRA as the victim of its leaders, and she was asked during a news conference why she would victimize it further by shutting it down, rather than removing or fining its officers.

James said the "breadth and the depth of the corruption and the illegality" justified the organization's closure.

She took similar action to force the closure of Trump's charitable foundation after alleging he used it to advance business and political interests.

The appearance of a Democrat trying to bring down the NRA for good could create "a sense of 'Is this politics or is this real?'" said Philip Hackney, a University of Pittsburgh law professor and former IRS attorney.

But Hackney added: "I think it's more real and I think she was right to bring this complaint. ... In a strange way, the NRA's behavior almost forces her hand. There's essentially a fraud on all its members."

Pane reported from Boise, Idaho. Tom Hays contributed to this report from New York.

## **AP Explains: Is a Trump White House acceptance speech legal?**

By DEB RIECHMANN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump instantly ignited new controversy when he said recently that he may deliver his nomination acceptance speech during the Republican National Convention at the White House.

But using the Rose Garden, the Executive Mansion or even the Oval Office as the backdrop for his speech capping the Aug. 24-27 convention would mark an unprecedented use of federal property for partisan political purposes.

Critics allege it would violate ethics laws, such as the Hatch Act, which limits political activity by federal workers, although few have faced penalties.

Trump says the idea is well within the law. "It is legal. There is no Hatch Act because it doesn't pertain to the president," Trump said Wednesday.

While the president is exempt from the act, ethics experts said, presidential staffers working to pull off the event would be in jeopardy.

"The rule prohibiting political activity on government property still applies, regardless of the Hatch Act's exception for the president," according to Kedric Payne, ethics director at the Campaign Legal Center. "Any federal employee who helps facilitate the acceptance speech risks violating the Hatch Act."

Here is an overview of the controversy:

### **WHY IS THE SPEECH VENUE AN ISSUE**

Presidents typically hold their nominating conventions in large arenas in states critical to victory, but the coronavirus pandemic has forced candidates to change the way they campaign.

All four days of the Republican National Convention were planned for Charlotte, North Carolina, until Trump feuded with the state's Democratic governor over coronavirus health restrictions. Trump then moved the speech and some other elements of the convention to Jacksonville, Florida, a decision welcomed by the state's Republican governor. But the president later canceled those plans because of a resurgence of the coronavirus in Florida.

Trump says delivering the speech at the White House would save travel costs of flying the entire presidential entourage to the convention, though he hadn't made cost an issue until now.

"If I use the White House, we save tremendous amounts of money for the government in terms of security, traveling. ... I think it would be a very convenient location," Trump said.

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden says he'd accept his party's nomination in a speech delivered in his home state of Delaware instead of the planned convention in Milwaukee.

### **CRITICS POUNCE ON IDEA**

Presidents historically have avoided using the White House for strictly political events, though Trump has shown disregard for traditional efforts to separate governing and campaigning. Trump turned a recent Rose Garden speech on China into a lengthy attack on Biden, saying his opponent's "entire career has been a gift to the Chinese Communist Party."

The No. 2 Senate Republican, John Thune of South Dakota, noted that even though Trump and Vice President Mike Pence are exempt from the Hatch Act, federal government employees must refrain from participating in partisan political activity.

"I think anything you do on federal property would seem to be problematic," according to Thune.

Sen. John Cornyn, R-Texas, a former justice on the Texas Supreme Court, expressed similar concern.

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"I would have to have somebody show me where it says he could do that. I would think on government property would be problematic," Cornyn said.

## WHAT IS THE HATCH ACT?

Congress approved the Hatch Act in 1939 to limit partisan activity by federal employees to ensure the government functions fairly and effectively.

The act prohibits: running for office in partisan elections, sending or forwarding a partisan political email while on duty or in a federal workplace, engaging in political activity while wearing an official uniform or while using a government vehicle, using official authority to interfere with or influence an election, soliciting or receiving political contributions, wearing or displaying partisan political buttons, T-shirts or signs.

It applies to all civilian employees in the executive branch of the federal government, except the president and the vice president. There are some exceptions. Certain executive officials, such as presidential advisers or Cabinet officers, can engage in political activities during official working time as long as federal funds are not used. Any such official must reimburse the U.S. Treasury for federal resources used in campaign activities.

Career government officials found to have violated the Hatch Act can be fired, suspended or demoted, and fined up to \$1,000 though few penalties are ever levied against federal employees.

## FEW FACE PUNISHMENT

The Office of Special Counsel, an independent government watchdog, has cited the president's top advisers on multiple occasions for violating the Hatch Act. In 2018, the watchdog found six White House officials in violation for tweeting or retweeting the president's 2016 campaign slogan "Make America Great Again" from their official Twitter accounts.

On Thursday, the Washington-based Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics sent a complaint to the Office of the Special Counsel against U.S. Ambassador to Brazil Todd Chapman, alleging that he violated the Hatch Act when he lobbied Brazilian officials for tariff agreements by arguing that it would help Trump get re-elected.

CREW has filed complaints against at least a dozen other Trump administration officials. After a complaint against White House counselor Kellyanne Conway, the OSC recommended last year that she be removed from federal service, although she never lost her job.

But the idea of the president turning the White House into the venue for a partisan celebration of his nomination, is even more overt. Robert Weissman, president of Public Citizen, said the White House is not a political convention hall.

"The White House is the people's house — not the headquarters of the Republican Party or the office of the re-election campaign of Donald Trump," Weissman said, although he acknowledged that presidents and their top aides have long conducted political and partisan activities from the White House.

"The idea of denigrating the White House by turning it into a partisan backdrop for a party nomination acceptance speech should be anathema to all Americans," he said.

## Seeking refuge in US, children fleeing danger are expelled

By NOMAAN MERCHANT Associated Press

HOUSTON (AP) — When officers led them out of a detention facility near the U.S.-Mexico border and onto a bus last month, the 12-year-old from Honduras and his 9-year-old sister believed they were going to a shelter so they could be reunited with their mother in the Midwest.

They had been told to sign a paper they thought would tell the shelter they didn't have the coronavirus, the boy said. The form was in English, a language he and his sister don't speak. The only thing he recognized was the letters "COVID."

Instead, the bus drove five hours to an airport where the children were told to board a plane.

"They lied to us," he said. "They didn't tell us we were going back to Honduras."



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More than 2,000 unaccompanied children have been expelled since March under an emergency declaration enacted by the Trump administration, which has cited the coronavirus in refusing to provide them protections under federal anti-trafficking and asylum laws. Lawyers and advocates have sharply criticized the administration for using the global pandemic as a pretext to deport children to places of danger.

No U.S. agents looked at the video the boy had saved on his cellphone showing a hooded man holding a rifle, saying his name, and threatening to kill him and his sister, weeks after the uncle caring for them was shot dead in June. And even though they were expelled under an emergency declaration citing the virus, they were never tested for COVID-19, the boy said.

Three weeks after their uncle was killed, the children fled Honduras, crossing the U.S.-Mexico border alone. Under the normal process set out by U.S. law, they would have been referred to a government facility for youth and eventually placed with their mother. Instead, they were expelled on July 24 after three days in U.S. detention and now live in Honduras with another uncle who is looking to leave the country himself.

U.S. Customs and Border Protection declined multiple requests for comment on the boy's story, and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement also declined, saying the children had been in Border Patrol custody until they boarded a deportation flight operated by ICE.

Spokesmen for both agencies have refused to answer most questions about how they treat roughly 70,000 adults and children expelled under the emergency declaration issued in March. They have refused to say how they decide whether to expel children or where to detain them before expulsion, including in hotels where at least 150 unaccompanied children as young as 1 year old have been held.

Much of what's known about expulsions has come from the accounts of children like the 12-year-old boy, who recounted his experience to The Associated Press last week with a recall of details that makes him seem older.

The AP is not identifying the boy, his sister, their mother or where their mother lives in the U.S. because of fears the children are still targeted by the people who killed their uncle.

Dr. Amy Cohen, executive director of the advocacy group Every Last One, interviewed the boy several times and said she found him credible based on her conversations with hundreds of other immigrant children.

"When he has an opportunity to exaggerate or embroider his story, he absolutely does not," Cohen said. "And he is consistent with everyone he has talked to. There's no sense that the story is rehearsed."

Six children have died since 2018 after being detained by the Border Patrol, several in conditions that raised questions about how the agency treats children. The agency says it has instituted new medical checks and takes anyone determined to need additional care to a hospital.

Mark Morgan, the acting Customs and Border Protection commissioner, said Thursday that expulsions conducted under a section of U.S. public health law known as Title 42 were necessary to protect his agents. Morgan said 10 CBP employees have died after contracting COVID-19.

"There's no doubt that Title 42 has prevented more tragic loss among our own workforce," he said.

In court, meanwhile, the Trump administration has argued children it is seeking to expel are not entitled to protections under the Flores settlement, a 2-decade-old court agreement that sets standards for the detention of immigrant children.

The children's uncle took them in three years ago after their mother fled with their older sister due to gang threats, according to the family.

It's not clear who killed the uncle. But the boy said he remembers family members deciding not to have his uncle taken to the hospital because they feared they wouldn't be able to afford to get his body out of the morgue.

The killing frightened the family. According to the boy, he was left alone in his uncle's home with his sister to fend for themselves. The boy said he cooked meals for them with the beans and eggs left in the house.

Then, one day, he said, a man approached him outside the house, asked to see his phone and gave it back with a video saved on it. In the video, viewed by the AP, a masked man said the siblings' names and warned: "You either join us and start working with us," or end up like your uncle. The same day, someone left a note outside their home threatening them, he said.

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"It reminded me of my uncle's death," he said. "I felt a lot of fear."

They joined a large group of migrants leaving Honduras in hopes of reaching the U.S, he said. After the group split up in Guatemala, a man took him and his sister through Mexico and to the border.

Experts say MS-13 and other gangs often deliver death threats verbally, and migrant groups and routes through Mexico and Central America are known to be controlled by human smugglers who charge thousands of dollars per person. The boy's mother says she doesn't believe her son or any other relative paid a smuggler.

The siblings crossed the border around July 21 and were apprehended by Border Patrol agents, the boy said. Based on his description, it appears he and his sister were detained at the Border Patrol's central processing center in McAllen, Texas, where children and adults are separated into large cages of chain-link fencing. Opened during the Obama administration, the same processing center was used two years ago to detain hundreds of parents and children separated by the Trump administration's zero-tolerance policy.

The boy said he was held in a cage with about 20 other boys his age and older. He was separated from his sister but could see her from a distance in another enclosure.

Once a day, someone took their temperatures, but the boy says he was never given a medical exam or a test to see if he had the virus. He said he wore a mask he brought with him from Honduras.

He was able to call his mother from custody once before he and his sister were expelled. The phone call she received was from a number in McAllen.

The next call the mother received was from an official in Honduras, a few days later, asking her to send a relative to pick her kids up from a shelter for deported children. That was how she learned they had been expelled, she said.

She sat recently in the trailer where she lives with family, including her elder daughter, now 16.

"I wanted something to be done and to be able to be calm, to know that my children are safe with me," she said, crying. "No part of Honduras is safe."

## AP Analysis: Will Beirut's blast be a catalyst for change?

By ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The massive explosion and devastation triggered by thousands of tons of chemicals improperly stored in Beirut's port is the culmination of decades of corruption that has driven one of the Middle East's most spirited countries to ruin.

The staggering destruction, with losses in the billions of dollars, will compound Lebanon's multiple humanitarian catastrophes. Its people are seething with rage as they are pushed into even more poverty and despair by an accident that appears to have been completely avoidable.

But it remains to be seen whether it will serve as the long-awaited catalyst to dislodge an entrenched political class responsible for years of graft and mismanagement. Even if it does end up being the spark for change, it will likely take years of instability and unrest, spurred by dismal economic conditions, to get there.

Lebanon's rulers, many of them warlords and militia holdovers from the days of the 1975-90 civil war, have proven to be extremely resilient. They hang on to their seats from one election to the next, largely because of the country's sectarian power-sharing system and an antiquated electoral law that allows them to behave with virtual impunity while guaranteeing their political survival.

The Lebanese people rose up many times before, including 15 years ago when former Prime Minister Rafik Hariri was assassinated in a truck bombing; in 2015's "You Stink" protest movement during the garbage-collection crisis; and most recently in October, at the onset of the economic crisis. Each time, they eventually became disillusioned and beset by divisions as political parties hijacked and co-opted their protests.

Fawaz Gerges, professor of Middle Eastern politics at the London School of Economics, said the interests of Lebanon's politicians were far too deeply entrenched in the system.

"Even though historically speaking, such national catastrophes or ruptures serve as a catalyst for transformative change, I am deeply skeptical about the governing and ruling elite in Lebanon instituting change on their own. This is delusional," he said.

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Some say this time could -- and should — be different.

The gigantic explosion that ripped through Beirut on Tuesday was the apparent result of an accident that ignited 2,750 tons of an ammonium nitrate stockpile that had been stored for six years in a seaside warehouse, apparently with the knowledge of port officials as well as political and judicial authorities. More than 135 people were killed and more than 5,000 injured. Many are still missing and around quarter of a million people are now without homes.

As the nation mourned, a collective feeling has taken hold that this time, its leaders must be held accountable for committing a crime and rendering the capital unlivable. On Thursday, the shock gave way to fury as Beirut residents realized the full scale of the disaster and scattered protests erupted.

"Hang them from the gallows in the streets," someone etched in the layer of pulverized debris covering a wrecked car in a devastated street.

The pent-up emotions erupted when French President Emmanuel Macron came to Lebanon to show support, visiting the epicenter of the blast and then touring some of the worst hit neighborhoods. He was quickly accosted by anxious and emotional residents pleading with him to help free the nation from its rulers. France is the former colonial power in Lebanon and maintains historically good ties with the country.

Macron made it a point to say he was not here to support Lebanese leaders and would make sure that any assistance from France would go to the people. He reiterated that no financial assistance would be given to the government to help ease a deepening financial crisis without substantial reforms.

"There is a need to create a new political order in Lebanon," Macron said after meeting with political leaders, calling for a complete overhaul of the system and urgent reforms in all sectors.

He did not address the steep challenges of doing this in a broken and divided country that's nearly bankrupt as a result of an unprecedented financial and economic crisis along with the coronavirus pandemic. At this point, the state is barely able to provide any electricity, collect garbage or provide basic security and food needs.

The scale of the national destruction is sure to further weaken Prime Minister Hassan Diab's government. It has struggled to implement any significant reforms since coming to power in January because of a lack of will on the part of political parties in ending the corruption from which they profit.

He has assigned an investigative committee that he said should submit its findings within a few days. But it is highly unlikely that any senior leaders will be punished. Instead, officials were shifting blame about who was responsible for the catastrophe.

"What was destroyed in 15 years of war, was re-destroyed in one second," said Tony Sawaya, who heads an insurance brokerage firm. He had little to no hope that anything would change.

"Nothing will change. It will be business as usual," he said, adding that all corrupt politicians are supported by their followers and the international community.

Others have called for a resumption of the "thawra" — Arabic for revolution.

Gerges said the main question is whether the Lebanese people will collectively rise up and say "enough is enough," which would mean implementing a new electoral process, a new government and a new system of governance.

All those raise massive challenges.

Sustained mass protests must continue, Gerges said, even if it takes years to force out the elites and change the system.

"It's a choice between death, or renewal through struggle," he said.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: Zeina Karam, the news director for Lebanon, Syria and Iraq, has covered the Middle East since 1996. Follow her on Twitter at [www.twitter.com/zkaram](http://www.twitter.com/zkaram).

## Former President Bush pays tribute to immigrants in new book

By HILLEL ITALIE AP National Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A new book by former President George W. Bush will highlight an issue which now sets him apart from many of his fellow Republicans — immigration.

Crown announced Thursday that Bush's "Out Of Many, One: Portraits of America's Immigrants" will be published March 2. The book includes 43 portraits by the 43rd president, four-color paintings of immigrants he has come to know over the years, along with biographical essays he wrote about each of them.

Bush, who served as president from 2001-2009, has often praised the contributions of immigrants, a notable contrast to President Donald Trump's rhetoric and policies. As president, Bush supported a bipartisan immigration reform bill that narrowly failed to pass in 2007, with opposition coming from both liberals and conservatives.

"While I recognize that immigration can be an emotional issue, I reject the premise that it is a partisan issue. It is perhaps the most American of issues, and it should be one that unites us," Bush writes in the new book's introduction, noting that he did not want it to come out during the election season. Bush has not endorsed Trump or his presumptive Democratic opponent, former Vice President Joe Biden.

"My hope is that this book will help focus our collective attention on the positive impacts that immigrants are making on our country."

The book will serve as a companion to an upcoming exhibition at the George W. Bush Presidential Center in Dallas.

"Both 'Out of Many, One' and the exhibition of the same name will include bold, principle-based solutions that comprehensively address the current debate on immigration," according to Crown. "At the heart of the recommendations is the belief that every year that passes without reforming the nation's broken system means missed opportunities to ensure the future prosperity, vitality, and security of our country."

Bush has become a dedicated portrait painter and best-selling author since leaving the White House. His memoir "Decision Points" has sold more than 3 million copies, and his other books include "41," about his father, former President George H.W. Bush; and a collection of paintings of military veterans, "Portraits of Courage."

He will donate a portion of his "Out Of Many, One" proceeds to organizations that help immigrants resettle. Financial terms were otherwise not disclosed. Bush was represented by Robert Barnett, the Washington attorney whose other clients have included former President Barack Obama and former President Bill Clinton.

The book will be released as a standard trade hardcover and in an autographed deluxe edition, listed for \$250, that will be clothbound and contained within a slipcover.

## In devastated Beirut, French leader offers comfort and a hug

BEIRUT (AP) — It was one of the most powerful moments of Emmanuel Macron's lightning visit to devastated Beirut: confronted by a distraught woman in a sea of enraged residents, the French leader stopped and offered her a hug.

On a tour of the destruction, Macron got a first-hand glimpse of the public fury toward the Lebanese leadership, who are widely blamed for corruption and neglect that allowed 2,750 tons of highly explosive ammonium nitrate to ignite in a massive blast that killed more than 130 people and left tens of thousands homeless.

A large crowd gathered around Macron and began chanting anti-government slogans.

"You are sitting with warlords. They have been manipulating us for the past year," shouted the woman, wearing a mask.

Macron, also wearing a mask, assured her he understood her concerns. "I'm not here to help them. I'm here to help you," he said.

The crowd cheered as moments later, Macron comforted the woman with a warm embrace.

The gesture was characteristic of Macron, who is known at home for engaging the public and even giving strangers handshakes and polite kisses on the cheek.



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France once governed Lebanon as a protectorate and maintains close ties with the tiny Mideast country. During his visit, Macron promised the crowd he would speak to Lebanon's political leaders and vowed to protect against corruption as aid money is delivered.

## Hurricane Alpha? Amped up season forecast, names may run out

BY SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

Already smashing records, this year's hyperactive Atlantic hurricane season is about to get even nastier, forecasters predict. In the coming months, they expect to run out of traditional hurricane names and see about twice as much storm activity as a normal year.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on Thursday upped its seasonal forecast, now predicting a far-above-average 19 to 25 named storms — seven to 11 of them to become hurricanes and three to six of those to become major hurricanes with winds of at least 111 mph (178 kph). That's a few more storms than the agency's May forecast. The agency increased the chance of an above average hurricane season from 60% to 85%.

"It looks like this season could be one of the more active in the historical record," but it's unlikely to be beat 2005's 28 named storms because the oceans were warmer and other conditions were more conducive to storm formation 15 years ago, said NOAA lead forecaster Gerry Bell.

This year's forecast of up to 25 is the highest number NOAA has ever predicted, beating the 21 predicted for 2005, Bell said.

Colorado State University, which pioneered hurricane season forecasts decades ago, on Wednesday amped its forecast to 24 named storms, 12 hurricanes and 5 major hurricanes — all higher than their June forecast.

An average year, based on 1981 to 2010 data, is 12 named storms, six hurricanes and three major hurricanes. Lead Colorado State forecaster Phil Klotzbach said all the factors that cause hurricane seasons to be busy are dialed up, including increased storminess in Africa that seeds the biggest hurricanes, warmer water that fuels storms and reduced high level winds that kill storms.

"Everything looks ready to be a pretty huge year," said University of Miami hurricane researcher Brian McNoldy, who said it's likely that there will be more storms than names. There are 21 names assigned to a hurricane season. If there are more than 21 storms, meteorologists turn after Wilfred to the Greek alphabet — Alpha, Beta, Gamma and so on.

In a normal year, about 90% of storm activity comes after August 6, with mid-August to mid-October as peak season. So far this year, there have been nine named storms, with most setting a record for being early. The most destructive so far has been this month's Hurricane Isaias which killed at least nine people and left millions of people without power.

"Nine storms to this date is crazy," Klotzbach said. Since 1995, when the Atlantic started a more active period for hurricanes, the average season has seen 12 named storms forming after August 5, he said.

The number of storms don't matter as much as where they go, MIT meteorology professor Kerry Emanuel said, noting the busy 2010 hurricane season that barely touched the United States.

While the predictions are about the number of storms and don't say where they strike, Klotzbach's forecast says more storms increases the chance of another U.S. landfall. It says there's a 74% chance that yet another storm will hit the U.S. coastline somewhere, with a 49% chance of a hit on the East Coast and Florida peninsula and a 48% chance of a hit on the Gulf Coast.

Most of this year's storms so far have been weak, decapitated by high level winds and dry air, but Klotzbach said that's about to change.

Sea surface temperatures in the eastern Atlantic are nearly 2 degrees (1 degree Celsius) warmer than normal. That not only provides more fuel for storms but changes air pressure and winds to make favorable conditions for storms to form and strengthen, he said.

Emanuel of MIT pointed to an extra quiet Pacific storm season as another indicator for an active Atlantic. When the Pacific is quiet, the Atlantic tends to be much busier as they tend to balance out.

Also, water temperatures near the equator in the Pacific are cooling, with a brewing La Nina, which is

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the flip side of El Nino. Research shows there are usually more Atlantic storms during a La Nina.

Even though studies predict that a warmer world means generally stronger and wetter hurricanes, NOAA's Bell and Emanuel said there are so many complicated factors in an individual season they can't say either way whether man-made climate change is a factor in active years like 2020.

Bell said the biggest climatic factor "that dominates the hurricane trend" is a 25-to-40-year natural cycle of busy and weak hurricanes connected to large-scale Atlantic ocean and air patterns. The current active cycle started in 1995 "and we don't know how long it's going to last," Bell said.

Follow Seth Borenstein on Twitter at @borenbears .

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

## 1.2 million seek jobless aid after \$600 federal check ends

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Nearly 1.2 million laid-off Americans applied for state unemployment benefits last week, evidence that the coronavirus keeps forcing companies to slash jobs just as a critical \$600 weekly federal jobless payment has expired.

The government's report Thursday did offer a smidgen of hopeful news: The number of jobless claims declined by 249,000 from the previous week, after rising for two straight weeks, and it was the lowest total since mid-March.

Still, claims remain at alarmingly high levels: It is the 20th straight week that at least 1 million people have sought jobless aid. Before the pandemic hit hard in March, the number of Americans seeking unemployment checks had never surpassed 700,000 in a week, not even during the Great Recession of 2007-2009.

Rubeela Farooqi, chief U.S. economist at High Frequency Economics, called the drop in weekly claims "a move in the right direction." But in a research note, she added:

"Repeated shutdowns for virus containment remain a threat to the labor market, which is already weak. The possibility of mounting layoffs that could become permanent is high. Without effective virus containment, the recovery remains at risk from ongoing job losses that could further restrain incomes and spending."

The pandemic, the lockdowns meant to contain it and the wariness of many Americans to venture back out to eat, shop or travel have delivered a devastating blow to the economy despite the government's emergency rescue efforts. The nation's gross domestic product, the broadest measure of economic output, shrank at an annual rate of nearly 33% from April through June. It was by far the worst quarterly fall on record, though the economy has rebounded somewhat since then.

On Friday, the government is expected to report a sizable job gain for July — 1.6 million. Yet so deeply did employers slash payrolls after the pandemic paralyzed the economy in March that even July's expected gain would mean that barely 40% of the jobs lost to the coronavirus have been recovered.

And the pace of hiring is clearly slowing. A resurgence of cases in the South and the West has spread elsewhere and upended hopes for a speedy economic recovery as bars, restaurants and other businesses have had to delay or reverse plans to reopen and rehire staff.

All told, 16.1 million people are collecting traditional unemployment benefits from their state. For months, the unemployed had also been receiving the \$600 a week in federal jobless aid on top of their state benefit. But the federal payment expired last week. Congress is engaged in prolonged negotiations over renewing the federal benefit, which would likely be extended at a reduced level.

In the meantime, millions of the unemployed suddenly have less money to pay for essentials. Many of them are among the 23 million people nationwide who are at risk of being evicted from their homes, according to The Aspen Institute, as moratoriums enacted because of the coronavirus expire.

Last week, an additional 656,000 people applied for jobless aid under a program that has extended

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eligibility for the first time to self-employed and gig workers. That figure isn't adjusted for seasonal trends, so it's reported separately.

The Labor Department said Thursday that a total of 31.3 million people are now receiving some form of unemployment benefits, though the figure may be inflated by double-counting by some states.

A study released Monday by Cornell University found that 31% of those laid off or furloughed because of the pandemic had been laid off a second time. An additional 26% of people who were called back to work reported being told that they might lose their jobs again.

After the springtime lockdowns, restaurants and bars had begun to reopen. Yet many soon had to close as viral cases surged, especially in the Sun Belt. In Texas, for instance, just 26% of bars were closed on June 21. Two weeks later, the figure had shut up to 74%, though it has since come down slightly, according to the data firm Womply.

In Florida, whose tourism industry has been pummeled by the pandemic, John Brenner has lost his position as a hotel manager. A 38-year-old from Plantation, Florida, Brenner has now been out of work for four months.

Florida's weekly unemployment aid is capped at \$275 a week, so "I'm quite reliant on that extra \$600," Brenner said.

"That extra \$600 put me at just about what I was making when I was working," he said. "And I'd much rather be working. I'm going very stir-crazy."

The stress, fear and sadness over prolonged unemployment, Brenner said, have diminished everything from his diet to his ability to sleep. He said he's angry that the U.S. Senate has balked at extending the extra unemployment aid at its current level.

"The anxiety the Senate is giving me isn't helping much," Brenner said.

Clover Williams, a teacher in Gallup, New Mexico, said she was laid off "right when the thing runs out — the extra \$600 runs out."

She received one unemployment check that included the \$600 payment. Without it, Williams, 63, worries that she won't be able to pay her utility bills or medical expenses.

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AP writers Christopher Rugaber and Kelli Kennedy in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, contributed to this report.

## Weekly poems elevate New Hampshire city's virus newsletters

By HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Valerie Rochon is eager to read her email every Monday morning, even when it makes her cry.

In addition to the endless Zoom meeting invitations, each week brings a new poem tucked into otherwise matter-of-fact messages about the coronavirus pandemic from the Portsmouth city manager. Tammi Truax, the city's poet laureate, has been contributing to the newsletters since early April, elevating the collection of public health updates and community resources with a layer of emotion and introspection.

"I think she's absolutely brilliant," said Rochon, who leads the Portsmouth chamber of commerce. "I look forward on Monday mornings to getting my week started with the wisdom and beauty that she shares."

When she was named poet laureate last year, Truax planned multiple projects around the theme "Poetry as a Bridge," including using poetry to cultivate a more meaningful relationship between the residents of Portsmouth and its sister city of Nichinan, Japan.

But after a planned trip there with high school students was scrapped in April due to the pandemic, she instead she wrote a poem honoring the nursing students whose graduation they were supposed to attend. And she has been highlighting Japanese forms of poetry, such as haiku — "Some nights are so dark/that the moon alone is sure/morning will come" — and tanka, which she described as more personal and metaphorical — "The bramble extends/a thorny cane offering/perfect raspberries/while everywhere else I look/an imperfect world festers.

Having long believed in the power of poetry to help people through difficult times, Truax said she gladly took on the challenge of composing poems weekly, even though that's different from her usual process.

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Often she doesn't write the poem until the day she submits it.

"Sometimes things are percolating all week long, and sometimes on Saturday morning I have no idea," she said. "But we are living through extraordinary times, and every week seems to provide ample material for me to respond to."

One poem evokes the toppling of monuments — a nod to the Black Lives Matter movement — while another describes police in Madrid delivering bouquets of tulips to hospital workers.

For the July 4 holiday weekend, she produced a "found poem" by extracting words from an Alexander Hamilton essay. The following week she marked the birthday of Frida Kahlo with a poem questioning what the artist, who was bedridden for months due to illness and later injury, would make of "those of us bemoaning isolation" and unwilling "to forego what we want, think we need, do desire."

The Portsmouth public library is including the poems in a "community diary" documenting the pandemic, and the poem about the Nichinan nurses will be read at their delayed graduation ceremony in October.

"This really does have ripples that extend out," said Stephanie Seacord, Portsmouth's public information officer, who compiles the newsletter and came up with the idea of asking Truax to contribute, starting April 5.

"I thought, maybe we can offer a moment of calm in this sea of craziness," Seacord said. "But now, to me, it has a life in that it's part of the new normal. It's part of the archive of what we're all living through."

Rochon said she was particularly touched by Truax's latest poem, "Transitions," in which she grieves a fellow poet's impending death, hiding her tears behind her face mask and finding solace in harvesting a zucchini from her garden and baking it into bread for the young man who fixed her car.

"We all do that, don't we? Whether we go into work, or go on a 20-mile bike ride, whatever it is, we all do that, just to be able to absorb that grief," Rochon said. "It puts you in touch with something that's real, and there's a lot to be said for that."

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While nonstop news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, have tales of kindness. "One Good Thing" is a series of AP stories focusing on glimmers of joy and benevolence in a dark time. Read the series here: <https://apnews.com/OneGoodThing>

## Survivors mark 75th anniversary of world's 1st atomic attack

By MARI YAMAGUCHI Associated Press

HIROSHIMA, Japan (AP) — Survivors of the world's first atomic bombing gathered in diminished numbers near an iconic, blasted dome Thursday to mark the attack's 75th anniversary, many of them urging the world, and their own government, to do more to ban nuclear weapons.

An upsurge of coronavirus cases in Japan meant a much smaller than normal turnout, but the bombing survivors' message was more urgent than ever. As their numbers dwindle — their average age is about 83 — many nations have bolstered or maintained their nuclear arsenals, and their own government refuses to sign a nuclear weapons ban treaty.

Amid cries of Japanese government hypocrisy, survivors, their relatives and officials marked the 8:15 a.m. blast anniversary with a minute of silence.

The United States dropped the world's first atomic bomb on Hiroshima on Aug. 6, 1945, destroying the city and killing 140,000 people. It dropped a second bomb three days later on Nagasaki, killing another 70,000. Japan surrendered Aug. 15, ending World War II and its nearly half-century of aggression in Asia.

But the decades since have seen the weapons stockpiling of the Cold War and a nuclear standoff among nations that continues to this day.

Amid the solemn remembrances at Hiroshima's peace park, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe was confronted Thursday by six members of survivors' groups over the treaty.

"Could you please respond to our request to sign the Nuclear Weapons Prohibition Treaty?" Tomoyuki Mimaki, a member of a major survivors' group, Hidankyo, implored Abe. "The milestone 75th anniversary of the atomic bombing is a chance" to change course.



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Abe insisted on Japan's policy not to sign the treaty, vaguely citing a "different approach," though he added that the government shares the goal of eliminating nuclear weapons.

"Abe's actions don't seem to match his words," said Manabu Iwasa, 47, who came to the park to pray for his father, a bombing survivor who died at age 87 in March. "Japan apparently sides with the United States, but it should make more efforts to eliminate nuclear weapons. It's frustrating, but there is not much we individuals can do."

Even though Tokyo renounces its own possession, production or hosting of nuclear weapons, Japan is a top U.S. ally, hosts 50,000 American troops and is protected by the U.S. nuclear umbrella. This complicates the push to get Tokyo to sign the treaty adopted in 2017, especially as it steps up its military role amid North Korea's continuing pursuit of a stronger nuclear program.

Abe, in his speech at the ceremony, said a nuclear-free world cannot be achieved overnight and it has to start with dialogue.

"Japan's position is to serve as a bridge between different sides and patiently promote their dialogue and actions to achieve a world without nuclear weapons," Abe said.

Earlier, Hiroshima Mayor Kazumi Matsui urged world leaders to more seriously commit to nuclear disarmament, pointing out Japan's failures.

"I ask the Japanese government to heed the appeal of the (bombing survivors) to sign, ratify and become a party to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons," Matsui said in his peace declaration. "As the only nation to suffer a nuclear attack, Japan must persuade the global public to unite with the spirit of Hiroshima."

Thursday's peace ceremony at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Park was scaled down because of the coronavirus pandemic. The fewer than 1,000 attendees was one-tenth of those attending in past years.

Some survivors and their relatives prayed at the park's cenotaph before the ceremony. The registry of the atomic bombing victims is stored at the cenotaph, whose inscription reads, "Let all the souls here rest in peace, for we shall not repeat the mistake."

"The only way to totally eliminate nuclear risk is to totally eliminate nuclear weapons," U.N. Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in a video message from New York for the occasion. Guterres' expected visit to Hiroshima had to be cancelled because of the coronavirus.

"Seventy-five years is far too long not to have learned that the possession of nuclear weapons diminishes, rather than reinforces, security," he said. "Today, a world without nuclear weapons seems to be slipping further from our grasp."

An aging group of survivors, known as hibakusha, feel a growing urgency to tell their stories, in hopes of reaching a younger generation.

Many peace events, including their talks, leading up to the anniversary were canceled because of the coronavirus, but some survivors have teamed with students or pacifist groups to speak at online events, sometimes connecting with international audiences.

The bombing's survivors lamented the slow progress of nuclear disarmament and expressed anger over what they said was the Japanese government's reluctance to help and listen to those who suffered. They want world leaders, especially those from nuclear-weapons states, to visit Hiroshima and see the reality of the atomic bombing.

Pope Francis sent a message to organizers of the anniversary commemoration, recalling that he had prayed at the Hiroshima peace memorial during his 2019 visit to Japan and met with bombing survivors.

He repeated what he said Nov. 24 at the peace memorial: "The use of atomic energy for purposes of war is immoral, just as the possessing of nuclear weapons is immoral."

The Holy See was among the first countries to sign and ratify the U.N. nuclear prohibition treaty.

Keiko Ogura, 84, who survived the atomic bombing at age 8, said she wants non-nuclear states to pressure Japan into signing the treaty.

"Many survivors are offended by the prime minister of this country because he does not sign the nuclear weapons prohibition treaty," she said.

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

## Joe Biden launches new national ad aimed at Black Americans

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Joe Biden's Democratic presidential campaign has launched a new national ad focused on Black Americans, urging them to stand up to President Donald Trump the way their ancestors stood up to "violent racists of a generation ago."

The one-minute ad, which was shared exclusively with The Associated Press before its digital and television release on Thursday, is meant to drum up support among Black Americans, a key constituency for Biden, ahead of November's general election. The ad, titled "Better America," also takes a direct swipe at Trump, without mentioning the Republican president by name.

"We must choose to fight for that better America," the narrator states. "And just like our ancestors who stood up to the violent racists of a generation ago, we will stand up to this president and say, 'No more,' because America is better than him. So we choose to be bigger. We choose to be bolder. We choose to bring back justice, respect and dignity to this country. We choose Joe Biden to lead us all towards that American promise together."

African Americans have largely supported Biden's presidential bid and have been credited with single-handedly transforming the Democratic presidential race and cementing his status as front-runner after his decisive primary win in South Carolina.

But Black Americans, who form one of the party's most loyal voting blocs, have been hit doubly hard by the COVID-19 pandemic — they have died from the virus at disproportionate rates across the country, and they've borne the brunt of its economic fallout. And in recent months, historic protests against police brutality and systemic racism have changed the national discourse around race, thrusting it into a national spotlight and at the heart of the presidential campaign.

The ad is part of the Biden campaign's planned \$280 million digital and television ad buy that was announced Wednesday and will run through the fall.

The buy reflects the Biden campaign's improved fundraising machine. But this ad also signals the former vice president's continued effort to connect with African Americans during a time of immense turmoil across the nation. A campaign spokesman said in a statement that the ad is the start of a series of content aimed at Black voters.

"Our robust paid media strategy, which will include the largest general election investment in African American paid media by a presidential campaign, will allow us to disseminate Vice President Biden's policy proposals and targeted initiatives that speak directly to Black communities across the United States," the statement said.

The ad is set against a backdrop of jarring images from protests held in the civil rights era, showing how protesters then were met with police dogs and excessive force. It shows images of protesters today, many of whom are younger African Americans, some carrying Black Lives Matter posters and wearing shirts that say "I can't breathe," a sobering reminder of George Floyd, a Minnesota man whose death at the hands of police sparked a global movement.

It also pays homage to civil rights legends U.S. Rep. John Lewis and the Rev. C.T. Vivian, who both died on July 17, and Shirley Chisholm, the first Black woman to be elected to Congress. But it also appears to link Trump to the white nationalist protest in 2017 that drew hundreds to Charlottesville, Virginia, by flashing images of both, with the words "no more."

"The story of Black America is the story of America," the narrator states. "It's the story of a people who have pushed this country to live up to its stated ideas, but Black people have always believed in the promise of a better America."

Biden is reserving airtime in 15 states, which includes a number of traditional swing states — Pennsylvania, Michigan, Wisconsin and Florida — as well as a number of historically Republican states, including Arizona, Georgia and Texas, and a few traditional swing states that seemed to be moving away from

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Democrats in recent years, such as Ohio and Iowa.

This ad will air in every state and target specific audiences on networks with high African American viewership, like BET, TV One and more.

In Wednesday's announcement, Biden's aides also said advertising efforts will be aimed at Latino, Asian American and Pacific Islander potential voters.

Kat Stafford is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at [https://twitter.com/kat\\_\\_stafford](https://twitter.com/kat__stafford).

AP writer Alexandra Jaffe contributed to this story.

## VP contender Karen Bass' Cuba baggage a burden in Florida

By ADRIANA GOMEZ LICON and BOBBY CAINA CALVAN Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Until recently, Robert Lewis had never heard of Karen Bass, the California congresswoman in contention to be Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden's running mate. But the recent college graduate had long heard stories from his grandfather recounting the days of oppression in Cuba under Fidel Castro.

When he learned that Bass had called Castro's death "a great loss," the 22-year-old considered it a disregard for the plight of those who suffered at the hands of Castro's government.

"Through the stories from my grandparents and because of my upbringing, it makes me feel like their experiences were my own," said Lewis, a political independent who is still weighing his choices ahead of the presidential election.

Lewis' reaction is a blow to Democrats who in recent years have tried to pull young Cubans in Florida away from the Republican Party, the political home of many of their parents and grandparents. The next generation is less focused on the past and open to change, Democrats argued, as President Barack Obama embraced engagement with Cuba and in 2014 declared he would "bury the last remnant of the Cold War."

But Bass' comments provide fresh evidence to the contrary. While polling shows young Cubans in Florida open to new policies, they also remain skeptical of the Cuban government and, experts note, wary of politicians who aren't. Even for some young Cubans, the congresswoman's remarks are troubling — and a reminder that Castro still stirs strong passions.

"Say it ain't so, Joe," said one poster on a Facebook community called "Cubanos Con Biden," a 6,000-member group partially run by the Biden campaign. It has been dominated by discussion about Bass in recent days.

Hispanics account for one-fourth of the population of Florida, a critical presidential battleground, and 1 in every 5 of its 13.8 million voters. The Pew Research Center estimates that nearly a third of Florida's Hispanic voters have roots in Cuba.

Republicans have long dominated with those voters, in part by taking a hard line on maintaining the embargo meant to isolate the island and its now-deceased leader. But shifting views on the embargo have given Democrats hope.

A 2018 poll of Cuban Americans in Miami-Dade County showed a massive generational and age divide in the county in their views about U.S.-Cuba policy. The poll by Florida International University poll found that among those who migrated to the United States before 1980, about 3 in 5 opposed establishment of diplomatic relations, while about 70% of those who were born in the U.S. or arrived after 1980 were in favor.

But the same poll found evidence that Trump, who opposes the Obama-era policies, may have hardened views. Support for the embargo has grown among those who migrated before 1980 with 68% in support in 2018, up from 57% in 2016.

That's not necessarily evidence that Bass and her comments would hurt Biden's chances in Florida, noted Guillermo Grenier, the poll's lead researcher. Rather, he said, it's likely that many Cuban American voters have already solidified around Trump.

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"The folks who are pro-Trump are going to stay pro-Trump. There is a small number of undecided, but if they are swayed by the selection of Bass as VP, they really weren't undecided," he said.

Still, Democrats are clearly worried about the risks.

Bass has walked back her remarks made after Castro's death in 2016 — that "the passing of Comandante en Jefe is a great loss to the people of Cuba."

No offense was intended, Bass said on NBC's "Meet the Press" on Sunday.

"Lesson learned. Wouldn't do that again," she said. "Talked immediately to my colleagues from Florida and realized that that was something that just shouldn't have been said."

She didn't consider herself a Castro sympathizer, she added. "My position on Cuba," she said, "is really no different than the position of the Obama administration."

The apology wasn't helped by trips Bass took to Cuba as a member of Congress to learn about the country's health care system and as a young activist in the 1970s.

Republican Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida, a Cuban American, has called the congresswoman a "Castro sympathizer."

Bass is hardly the only Democrat to be hit with the charge. Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., earlier this year came under fire for a television interview in which he lauded Castro for a literacy program and asserted that it was "unfair to simply say everything is bad" in Cuba. Sanders lost Florida by nearly 40 percentage points in the Democratic presidential primary in March, with Biden garnering 62% of the vote.

Such comments are not just a problem with Cuban Americans, said Fernand Amandi, a Miami political consultant who is a Democrat and is of Cuban descent.

Bass' comments could peel away support among other Latinos, especially those from Nicaragua and Venezuela, who fled the oppressive conditions of their native countries.

"The litmus test in Florida is: Do no harm, because it's a state that is always decided by the thinnest of margins. Just taking off the table any segment of the Florida electorate could prove fatal," he said.

If chosen as Biden's running mate, Bass could become the first woman and first African American elected vice president. She is on a short list of women, including U.S. Rep. Val Demings of Orlando, who are said to be finalists for the job.

For some Democrats of Cuban descent, Bass' past remarks aren't enough to determine their vote.

"I would still support Biden regardless of who he chooses as the VP," said Adam Schwartzbaum, a 35-year-old attorney in Coral Gables whose father and grandparents arrived in Miami after the Cuban revolution in 1961.

"We celebrated when Fidel Castro passed away. We still see him as a dictator who really impoverished the island," he said. But his real worry is that Republicans would use Bass' remarks as distraction from what he called the more important goal of electing Biden.

"Right now the focus is to move Trump out of office," he said.

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Calvan reported from Tallahassee, Fla. Associated Press writer Emily Swanson in Washington contributed to this report.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Friday, Aug. 7, the 220th day of 2020. There are 146 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 7, 1964, Congress passed the Gulf of Tonkin resolution, giving President Lyndon B. Johnson broad powers in dealing with reported North Vietnamese attacks on U.S. forces.

On this date:

In 1782, Gen. George Washington created the Order of the Purple Heart, a decoration to recognize merit in enlisted men and noncommissioned officers.



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In 1789, the U.S. Department of War was established by Congress.

In 1912, Theodore Roosevelt was nominated for president by the Progressive Party (also known as the Bull Moose Party) in Chicago. New Jersey Gov. Woodrow Wilson accepted the Democratic presidential nomination at his summer home in Sea Girt.

In 1942, U.S. and other allied forces landed at Guadalcanal, marking the start of the first major allied offensive in the Pacific during World War II. (Japanese forces abandoned the island the following February.)

In 1957, Oliver Hardy, who starred for decades in popular film comedies with partner Stan Laurel, died in North Hollywood, California, at age 65.

In 1959, the United States launched the Explorer 6 satellite, which sent back images of Earth.

In 1971, the Apollo 15 moon mission ended successfully as its command module splashed down in the Pacific Ocean.

In 1989, a plane carrying U.S. Rep. Mickey Leland, D-Texas, and 14 others disappeared over Ethiopia. (The wreckage of the plane was found six days later; there were no survivors.)

In 1990, President George H.W. Bush ordered U.S. troops and warplanes to Saudi Arabia to guard the oil-rich desert kingdom against a possible invasion by Iraq.

In 1998, terrorist bombs at U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania killed 224 people, including 12 Americans.

In 2000, Vice President and Democratic presidential candidate Al Gore selected Connecticut Sen. Joseph Lieberman as his running mate; Lieberman became the first Jewish candidate on a major party's presidential ticket.

In 2017, medical examiners said the remains of a man who'd been killed at the World Trade Center on 9/11 had been identified, nearly 16 years after the attacks.

Ten years ago: Elena Kagan was sworn in as the 112th justice and fourth woman to serve on the U.S. Supreme Court. A healthy-looking Fidel Castro appealed to President Barack Obama to stave off global nuclear war in an address to parliament that marked his first official government appearance since emergency surgery four years earlier. Jerry Rice, Emmitt Smith, John Randle, Dick LeBeau, Rickey Jackson, Russ Grimm and Floyd Little were inducted into the Pro Football Hall of Fame.

Five years ago: Colorado theater shooter James Holmes was spared the death penalty in favor of life in prison after a jury in Centennial failed to agree on whether he should be executed for his murderous attack on a packed movie premiere that left 12 people dead. Former Food and Drug Administration employee Dr. Frances Kelsey, credited with preventing the U.S. distribution of thalidomide, a drug blamed for serious birth defects in the early 1960s, died in London, Ontario, Canada at age 101. Louise Suggs, 91, an LPGA founder and Hall of Famer, died in Sarasota, Florida.

One year ago: President Donald Trump and his wife visited the Dayton, Ohio hospital where many of the victims of a weekend shooting attack had been treated; they then flew to El Paso, where a shooting at a Walmart had killed 22 people. Cyntoia Brown was released early from the Tennessee Prison for Women, where she'd been serving a life sentence for killing a man who had picked her up for sex at the age of 16; Brown, who was now 31, had been championed by celebrities as a symbol of unfair sentencing. In his most aggressive attack yet on the character of the man he hoped to replace, Joe Biden accused President Donald Trump of "fanning the flames of white supremacy." Puerto Rico's Justice Secretary Wanda Vázquez became the island's new governor, just hours after Puerto Rico's Supreme Court declared that the swearing-in of Pedro Pierluisi a week earlier had been unconstitutional.

Today's Birthdays: Magician, author and lecturer James Randi is 92. Singer B.J. Thomas is 78. Singer Lana Cantrell is 77. Former FBI Director Robert Mueller is 76. Actor John Glover is 76. Actor David Rasche is 76. Former diplomat, talk show host and activist Alan Keyes is 70. Country singer Rodney Crowell is 70. Actor Caroline Aaron is 68. Comedian Alexei Sayle is 68. Actor Wayne Knight is 65. Rock singer Bruce Dickinson is 62. Marathon runner Alberto Salazar is 62. Actor David Duchovny is 60. Country musician Michael Mahler (Wild Horses) is 59. Actor Delane Matthews is 59. Actor Harold Perrineau is 57. Jazz musician Marcus Roberts is 57. Country singer Raul Malo is 55. Actor David Mann is 54. Actor Charlotte Lewis

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is 53. Actor Sydney Penny is 49. Actor Greg Serano is 48. Actor Michael Shannon is 46. Actor Charlize Theron (shar-LEES' THEHR'-en) is 45. Rock musician Barry Kerch is 44. Actor Eric Johnson is 41. Actor Randy Wayne is 39. Actor-writer Brit Marling is 38. NHL center Sidney Crosby is 33. MLB All-Star Mike Trout is 29. Actor Liam James is 24.