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“YOU HAVE TO BE SELF-INTERESTED IN ORDER TO BE SELFLESS. YOU HAVE TO PUT YOURSELF FIRST IF YOU WANT TO BE OF USE TO OTHER PEOPLE.”

-RACHEL BARTHOLOMEW



Joyce Walter took this photo of the sunrise a couple of mornings ago.

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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Gas Pump Prices Pushing Cheaper, Again

August 10, 2020 - On the week, the majority of states saw gas prices decrease minimally - by one to two cents or saw no change at the pump. Though low, the volatility was enough to drive the national average down a penny from last Monday to \$2.17. Today's average is two cents less than last month and 49 cents cheaper than a year ago.

South Dakota Gas Prices

Today	\$2.15
Yesterday	\$2.15
Last week	\$2.14
Last month	\$2.12
Last year	\$2.68

"As we move into the second week of the August, it is pricing out to be the second cheapest start to the month in more than a decade," said Marilyn Buskohl, AAA spokesperson. "Gas prices have high potential to push cheaper, especially with many school districts planning for virtual learning. This could drive demand down in the weeks ahead as school starts at-home."

In the latest Energy Information Administration (EIA) weekly report, gas demand fell from 8.8 million b/d to 8.6 million b/d while stocks held steady at 247 million bbl.

Quick Stats

The nation's top 10 largest weekly changes: Utah (+9 cents), Michigan (+6 cents), Kentucky (-4 cents), Ohio (+3 cents), Florida (-3 cents), Tennessee (-3 cents), West Virginia (-3 cents), Pennsylvania (+2 cents), Texas (-2 cents) and Oklahoma (-2 cents).

The nation's top 10 least expensive markets: Mississippi (\$1.81), Texas (\$1.84), Louisiana (\$1.84), Oklahoma (\$1.86), Arkansas (\$1.86), Alabama (\$1.87), Missouri (\$1.87), South Carolina (\$1.88), Tennessee (\$1.89) and North Carolina (\$1.94).

2020 Hurricane Season

While Hurricane Isaias did not disrupt gas prices, the 2020 hurricane season is far from over. Last week the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA) released the association's annual August update, which revised the May forecast from 13 to 19 storms to 19-25 through the end of November. This year's season could be one of the busiest as it has already produced a record-setting nine named storms.

Major storms and hurricanes that take crude and gasoline infrastructure and refineries offline have the largest impact on gas prices.

One positive factor for this year, U.S. gasoline supply is plentiful sitting at a 17 million bbl year-over-year surplus. If a major storm or hurricane does hit the U.S., it will be a matter of short-term shortages and how quickly gasoline stocks can get to areas of need.

Oil Market Dynamics

At the end of Friday's formal trading session, WTI decreased by 71 cents to settle at \$41.22 per barrel. Domestic crude prices decreased last week due to a weak U.S. dollar and after EIA's weekly report revealed that total domestic inventories decreased by 7.4 million bbl, bringing total domestic stocks to 518.6 million bbl. The decrease in total supply, amid low gasoline demand, could mean that the domestic crude market is rebalancing. Crude prices have the potential to stabilize this week if EIA's report shows continued growth in demand alongside a reduction in supply.

Motorists can find current gas prices along their route with the free AAA Mobile app for iPhone, iPad and Android. The app can also be used to map a route, find discounts, book a hotel and access AAA roadside assistance. Learn more at AAA.com/mobile.

Superintendent's Report to the Groton Area Board of Education

by Superintendent Joe Schwan

Remote Learning. The enrollment period for optional remote learning for the first quarter of the school year closed on Friday, 8/7/2020. We have seven students across the district beginning the school year with remote learning. Keep in mind that there will be elements of remote learning for many students (students in quarantine or isolation, for example).

High School Air Conditioning. Allied Climate Professionals and Locke Electric have completed their work installing the air conditioning for the HS. The units are running and the rooms feel good.

General COVID Plan Clarification.

We will start school on August 19 with regular in-person instruction.

Close contacts will be asked by Department of Health to quarantine for 14 days. Secondary close contacts are not subject to quarantine.

A positive case within a school or school building doesn't necessarily mean that we will need to close.

Symptomatic individuals need to stay home. Exclusion from school will follow the district's communicable diseases policy for non-Covid illnesses.

School Staff as Critical Infrastructure Employees. At the discretion of the employer, school employees can be declared as critical infrastructure employees. This declaration would allow an **asymptomatic** staff member that meets the definition of a "close contact" (within 6' of a COVID positive individual for a minimum of 15 consecutive minutes) to continue working during their 14 day quarantine period provided they 1. Remain asymptomatic, 2. Monitor symptoms, including temperature checks twice daily, and 3. Wear a mask while at work. An email was provided today from School Administrators of South Dakota on this issue indicating that Associated School Board of South Dakota is working on the language for a formal board resolution on this issue.

Department of Health COVID Sentinel Surveillance. Last week the Department of Health announced that it would be rolling out sentinel surveillance testing for adult employees in K-12 schools if districts choose to participate. If we choose to participate, DOH will provide Mrs. Gustafson with the testing supplies and required PPE to test a random sample of our **asymptomatic** adult employees each week. Test kits would be transported by courier to the lab for analysis. Results will be provided to the employee through the district. The program was briefly explained to our teaching staff at our second inservice meeting. At their request, we sent a survey to gauge interest. Results of the 34 respondents indicated support for participation 2:1. There is no cost for participation. Based on the size of our adult staff population, we would test five employees each month or one per week (which is the minimum number of tests/week).

Fall Athletics. Boys and Girls soccer began practicing on Monday, August 3. Football began on Thursday, August 6. Boys golf began today (August 10) and volleyball is scheduled to begin on Thursday, August 13. Our first competition is scheduled for Saturday, August 15 (Boys Soccer @ Freeman Academy [Hutchinson County] and Girls Soccer @ Garretson [Minnehaha County]). Our first home competition is scheduled for Friday, August 21 (Football) and Tuesday, August 25 (NEC Boys Golf).

Athletes are subject to pre-participation symptom monitoring and SDHSAA return-to-play protocols.

Transportation: We're advising parents to take their own kids to and from events.

SDHSAA suggested tiers for fan attendance:

Tier 1 (Open attendance); Steady/Decreasing rates of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations.

Tier 2 (Parents/Student Body Only); Slow/intermittent increase of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations. Isolated cases, no evidence of exposure in large communal settings.

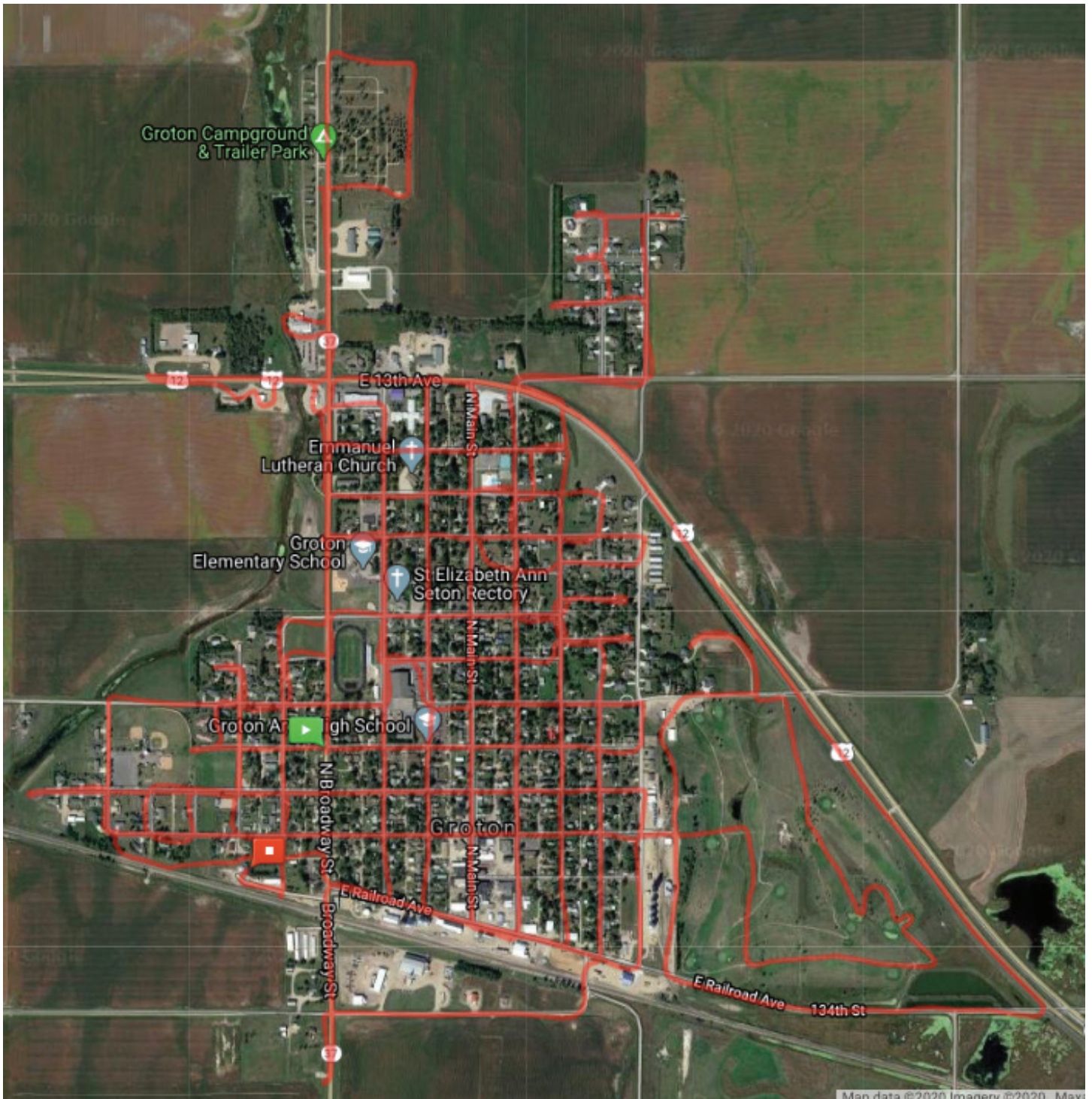
Tier 3 (Student Body or Parents Only); Steady/incremental increase of community active cases, new cases, and hospitalizations. Sustained increases, potential exposures in large communal settings.

Tier 4 (No Fans); Sharp increase of community active cases, new cases, and/or hospitalizations WITHOUT concurrent increase of cases/contacts within the school setting. Confirmed exposures in large communal settings.

School District "heat maps" that we're anticipating having access to are supposed to give us a better idea of infection rates within our school district. Based on the data available today, which is county-level data, Tier 2 best describes our situation.

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The City of Groton did adult mosquito control Tuesday night. 25.28 miles was driven. 8.2 gallons of Evolver 4x4 was used. Temperature was in the low 70s and wind was SE at 5 mph

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 12
Minnesota	61,839
Nebraska	29,030
Montana	5,104
Colorado	51,441
Wyoming	2,584
North Dakota	7885
South Dakota	9713
United States	5,141,879
US Deaths	164,545

Minnesota	+323
Nebraska	+334
Montana	+87
Colorado	+402
Wyoming	+19
North Dakota	+172
South Dakota	50
United States	+47,314
US Deaths	+1,080

	Aug. 5	Aug. 6	Aug. 7	Aug. 7	Aug. 9	Aug. 10	Aug. 11
Minnesota	57,162	57,779	58,640	59,185	60,101	60,898	61,516
Nebraska	27,178	27,489	27,821	28,104	28,245	28,432	28,696
Montana	4,314	4,429	4,602	4,757	4889	4,952	5,017
Colorado	48,394	48,988	49,436	49,893	50,324	50,660	51,039
Wyoming	2,392	2,424	2,449	2,490	2,498	2,533	2,565
North Dakota	6933	7057	7177	7327	7508	7596	7713
South Dakota	9,079	9168	9273	9371	9477	9605	9663
United States	4,768,083	4,818,328	4,883,657	4,945,795	4,998,802	5,045,564	5,094,565
US Deaths	156,753	157,930	160,104	161,456	162,430	162,938	163,465

Minnesota	+602	+617	+861	+545	+916	+797	+618
Nebraska	+222	+311	+332	+283	+141	+187	+264
Montana	+81	+115	+173	+155	+132	+63	+65
Colorado	+426	+594	+448	+457	+431	+336	+379
Wyoming	+28	+32	+25	+41	+8	+35	+32
North Dakota	+148	+124	+120	+150	+181	+88	+117
South Dakota	+59	+89	+105	+98	+106	+129	+59
United States	+49,834	+50,235	+65,329	+62,138	+53,007	+46,762	+49,001
US Deaths	+1,275	+1,177	+2,174	+1,352	+974	+508	+527

* 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 11th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Three straight days and no deaths in South Dakota. North Dakota reported five deaths today. Bennett County is on the fully recovered list. Positive cases in South Dakota was 50 with 136 recovered. South Dakota's positivity rate today is 3.9 percent, but Brown County's rate today is 10.2 percent with 5 positive cases out of 49 tests conducted.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +5 (451) 10.2%
Recovered: +6 (399)
Active Cases: -1 (49)
Total Tests: +49 (5966)
Ever Hospitalized: No Change (21)
Deaths: 0 (3)
Percent Recovered: 88.5% (+.4)

South Dakota:

Positive: +50 (9713 total) 3.9%
Total Tests: 1,270 (154,777 total)
Hospitalized: +5 (887 total). 57 currently hospitalized (down 6 from yesterday)
Deaths: No Change (146 total)
Recovered: +136 (8507 total)
Active Cases: -86 (1,060)
Percent Recovered: 87.6 +1.0
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 45% Non-Covid, 53% Available
ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 61% Non-Covid, 36% Available
Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 14% Non-Covid, 81% Available

Counties with no positive cases report the following negative tests: Harding (53)

Fully recovered from positive cases (Gained Bennett): Bennett 6-6, Bon Homme 13-13, Jerauld 40-39-1, Jones 2-2, Haakon 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Perkins 4-4, Potter 1-1, Stanley 14-14, 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 cases
Beadle (9): 21 active cases
Bennett: +1 recovered (FULLY RECOVERED)
Bon Homme: Fully Recovered
Brookings (1): +1 positive, +6 recovered (22 active cases)
Brown (3): +5 positive, +6 recovered (49 active cases)
Brule (1): +1 positive (6 active cases)
Buffalo (3): +2 recovered (6 active cases)
Butte: 8 active cases
Campbell: 2 active cases

Charles Mix: +1 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)
Clark: 2 active cases
Clay: +1 positive, +2 recovered (16 active cases)
Codington (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (28 active cases)
Corson: +2 positive (12 active cases)
Custer: +1 recovered (12 active case)
Davison (1): +1 positive, +4 recovered (13 active cases)
Day: 2 active cases
Deuel: 3 active cases

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Dewey: 15 active cases
 Douglas: +2 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Edmunds: +1 positive, +3 recovered (4 active cases)
 Fall River: 5 active cases
 Faulk (1): 3 active cases
 Grant: 7 active cases
 Gregory: 1 active case
 Haakon: Fully Recovered
 Hamlin: 8 active cases
 Hand: 1 active case
 Hanson: +1 recovered (3 active cases)
 Harding: No infections reported
 Hughes (2): +1 recovered (12 active cases)
 Hutchinson: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Hyde: Fully Recovered
 Jackson (1): +1 recovered (2 active cases)
 Jerauld (1): Fully Recovered
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
 Lake (2): +2 recovered (14 active cases)
 Lawrence: +1 positive, +3 recovered (30 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +11 positive, +22 recovered (96 active cases)
 Lyman (1): +1 recovered (8 active cases)
 Marshall: 2 active cases
 McCook (1): +1 recovered (5 active cases)
 McPherson: +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Meade (1): +2 positive, +3 recovered (23 active cases)
 Mellette: 1 active case
 Miner: 2 active cases
 Minnehaha (68): +20 positive, +41 recovered (370

active cases)
 Moody: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (2): +5 recovered (18 active cases)
 Pennington (32): +2 positive, +12 recovered (111 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active cases
 Potter: Fully Recovered
 Roberts (1): +5 recovered (10 active cases)
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: 8 active cases
 Stanley: Fully Recovered
 Sully: 1 active case
 Todd (5): 3 active cases
 Tripp: Fully Recovered
 Turner: 9 active cases
 Union (4): +5 recovered (28 active cases)
 Walworth: 1 active cases
 Yankton (2): +2 positive, +1 recovered (20 active cases)
 Ziebach: 11 active cases

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 11:

- 5,774 tests (2,019)
- 7,885 positives (+174)
- 6,668 recovered (+234)
- 118 deaths (+5)
- 1,099 active cases (-67)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-19 years	1234	0
20-29 years	2136	2
30-39 years	1892	6
40-49 years	1452	7
50-59 years	1433	17
60-69 years	864	25
70-79 years	380	24
80+ years	322	65

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	4789	75
Male	4924	71

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased
Aurora	38	36	378	0
Beadle	594	564	1878	9
Bennett	6	6	538	0
Bon Homme	13	13	762	0
Brookings	140	117	2713	1
Brown	451	399	4466	3
Brule	46	40	739	0
Buffalo	109	100	634	3
Butte	18	9	794	1
Campbell	3	1	97	0
Charles Mix	103	94	1297	0
Clark	16	14	387	0
Clay	131	115	1315	0
Codington	138	109	2843	1
Corson	36	24	449	0
Custer	36	24	799	0
Davison	96	84	2361	1
Day	23	21	633	0
Deuel	11	8	406	0
Dewey	48	33	2247	0
Douglas	19	15	404	0
Edmunds	17	13	410	0
Fall River	22	17	973	0
Faulk	27	23	188	1
Grant	27	20	713	0
Gregory	7	6	391	0
Haakon	2	2	292	0
Hamlin	22	14	643	0
Hand	8	7	286	0
Hanson	21	18	211	0
Harding	0	0	53	0
Hughes	93	79	1731	2
Hutchinson	29	25	896	0

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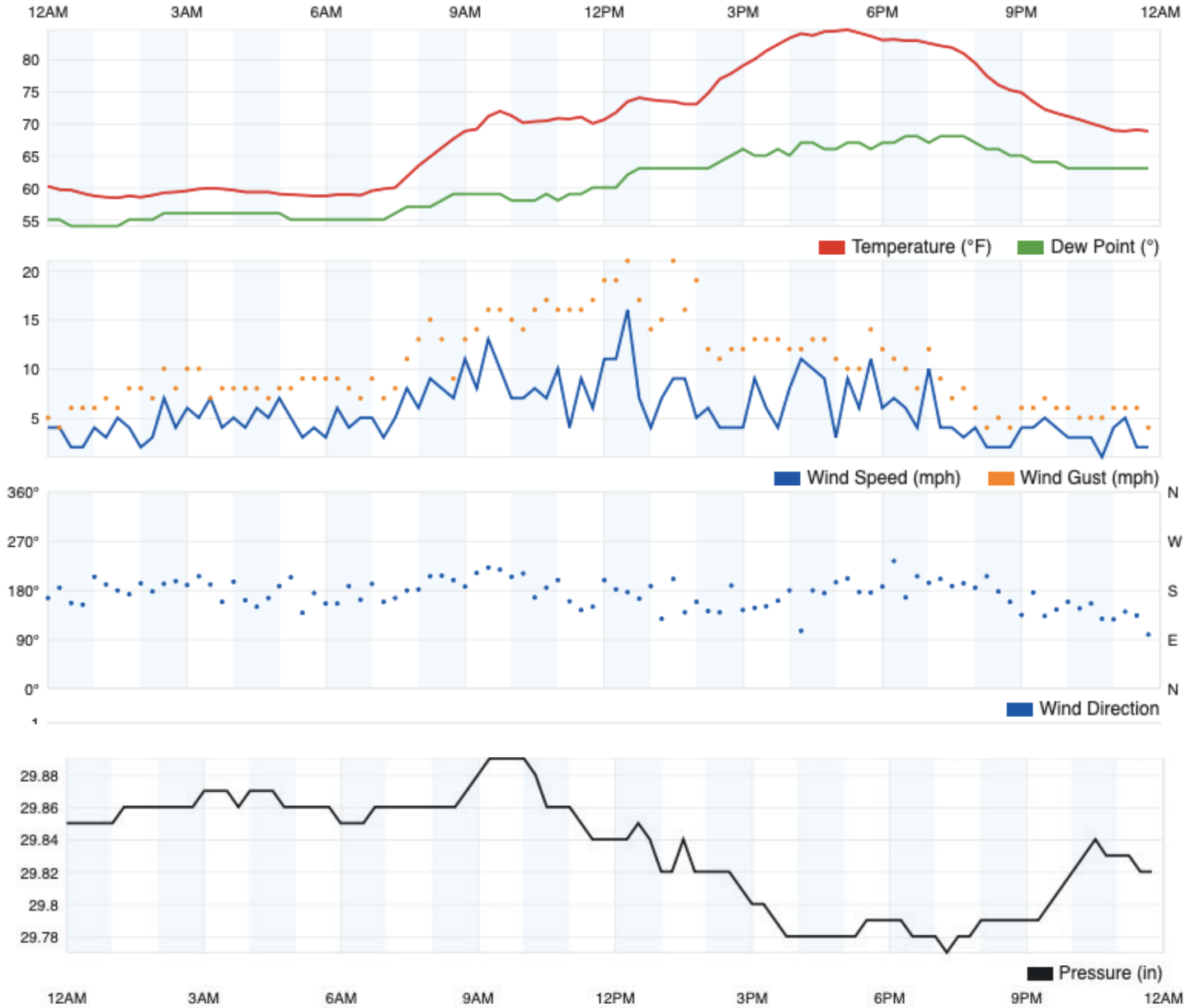
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Hyde	3	3	135	0
Jackson	11	8	482	1
Jerauld	39	38	270	1
Jones	2	2	60	0
Kingsbury	14	12	558	0
Lake	94	78	931	2
Lawrence	61	31	2114	0
Lincoln	653	555	6842	2
Lyman	90	80	954	2
Marshall	9	7	462	0
McCook	29	23	640	1
McPherson	8	7	217	0
Meade	96	72	1991	1
Mellette	24	23	383	0
Miner	15	13	255	0
Minnehaha	4457	4019	27486	68
Moody	32	28	633	0
Oglala Lakota	156	136	2931	2
Pennington	898	754	11009	32
Perkins	6	5	183	0
Potter	1	1	289	0
Roberts	80	69	1805	1
Sanborn	13	13	222	0
Spink	26	18	1151	0
Stanley	14	14	254	0
Sully	3	2	74	0
Todd	69	61	2084	5
Tripp	20	20	611	0
Turner	52	43	921	0
Union	216	184	1914	4
Walworth	18	17	696	0
Yankton	119	97	3072	2
Ziebach	35	24	310	0
Unassigned	0	0	7830	0

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Chance
T-storms then
Mostly Sunny

High: 89 °F

Tonight



Mostly Clear
then Slight
Chance
T-storms

Low: 72 °F

Thursday



Mostly Sunny
then Chance
T-storms

High: 90 °F

Thursday
Night



Chance
T-storms

Low: 67 °F

Friday



Chance
T-storms

High: 83 °F



*Mostly Sunny Today/Hot West
Highs Mid 80s East/Lower to Mid 90s
Missouri River and West*

National Weather Service – Aberdeen, SD
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Showers will end early in the east with mostly sunny skies today. Highs will range from the mid 80s in the east to the lower to mid 90s along and west of the Missouri River.

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Today in Weather History

August 12, 1986: Thunderstorms produced 2.53 inches of rain in twenty minutes in downtown Rapid City. The heavy rain caused street and basement flooding. Golf ball size hail fell in Zeona, in Perkins County, which covered the ground.

1752: The following is from the Journals of the Rev. Thomas Smith, and the Rev. Samuel Deane, published in 1849. "In the evening there was dismal thunder and lightning, and abundance of rain, and such a hurricane as was never the like in these parts of the world." This hurricane struck Portland, Maine.

1778 - A Rhode Island hurricane prevented an impending British-French sea battle, and caused extensive damage over southeast New England. (David Ludlum)

1933 - The temperature at Greenland Ranch in Death Valley, CA, hit 127 degrees to establish a U.S. record for the month of August. (The Weather Channel)

1936 - The temperature at Seymour, TX, hit 120 degrees to establish a state record. (The Weather Channel)

1955 - During the second week of August hurricanes Connie and Diane produced as much as 19 inches of rain in the northeastern U.S. forcing rivers from Virginia to Massachusetts into a high flood. Westfield MA was deluged with 18.15 inches of rain in 24 hours, and at Woonsocket RI the Blackstone River swelled from seventy feet in width to a mile and a half. Connecticut and the Delaware Valley were hardest hit. Total damage in New England was 800 million dollars, and flooding claimed 187 lives. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Early afternoon thunderstorms in Arizona produced 3.90 inches of rain in ninety minutes at Walnut National Monument (located east of Flagstaff), along with three inches of pea size hail, which had to be plowed off the roads. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Fifteen cities in the northeastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date. Youngstown OH reported twenty-six days of 90 degree weather for the year, a total equal to that for the entire decade of the 1970s. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Thunderstorms were scattered across nearly every state in the Union by late in the day. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Fergus Falls MN, and golf ball size hail and wind gusts to 60 mph at Black Creek WI. In the Chicago area, seven persons at a forest preserve in North Riverside were injured by lightning. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

2004: Hurricane Charley was the third named storm and the second hurricane of the 2004 Atlantic hurricane season. Charley lasted from August 9 to August 15, and at its peak intensity, it attained 150 mph winds, making it a strong Category 4 hurricane on the Saffir-Simpson Hurricane Scale. It made landfall in southwestern Florida at maximum strength, making it the most powerful hurricane to hit the United States since Hurricane Andrew struck Florida in 1992.

2005: A tornado strikes Wright, Wyoming, a coal-mining community, killing two and destroying 91 homes and damaging about 30 more in around the town.

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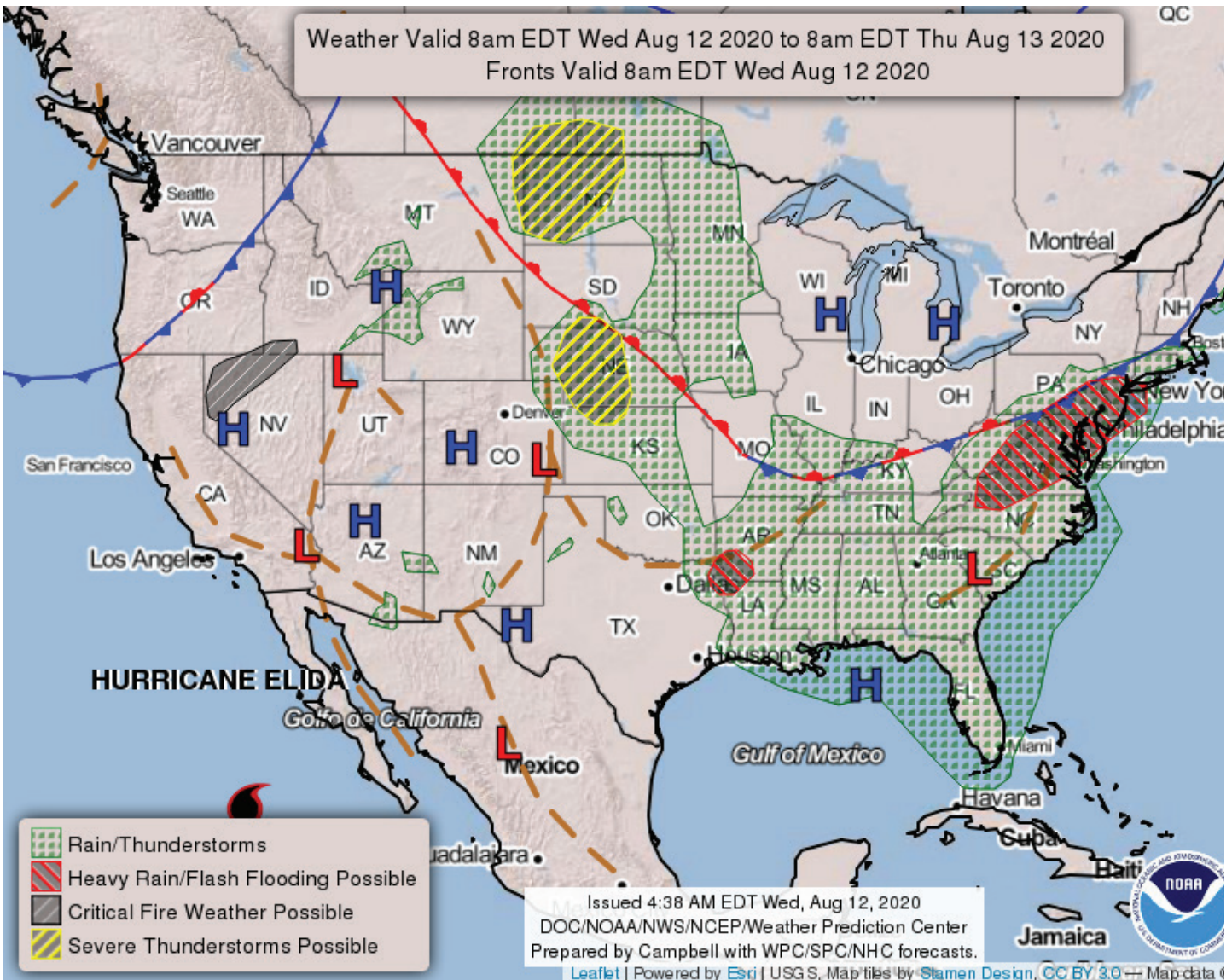
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 85 °F at 5:03 PM
Low Temp: 58 °F at 1:19 AM
Wind: 21 mph at 12:18 PM
Precip: .00 (.79 this morning)

Today's Info

Record High: 102° in 1933
Record Low: 40° in 1898
Average High: 83°F
Average Low: 57°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 0.87
Precip to date in Aug.: 0.45
Average Precip to date: 14.73
Precip Year to Date: 10.96
Sunset Tonight: 8:45 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:33 a.m.



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KNOWING AND DOING

A young, energetic salesman approached a wise, old farmer and offered to sell him a set of newly published books on "Farming: Things You Need to Know."

"If you buy them, read them carefully, and study them thoroughly," said the confident young man, "you'll farm twice as good as you do now."

"Listen, young fellow," said the farmer, "I ain't farming half as good as I know how now!"

It's not what I do not know or understand about the Bible that troubles me; it's what I know about the Bible and often do not apply its teachings as I go about my daily responsibilities.

At the conclusion of one of His lessons about applying His teachings to their lives, Jesus said to His disciples, "You know these things - now do them! This the path to a happy life."

Often we are anxious to purchase a new Bible that promises to provide new insights and knowledge about the teachings of Scripture. And, it seems as though there are more new study Bibles published every month that promise "easy-to-understand" interpretations of difficult passages. Other editions promise to teach the reader how to study the Bible "inductively" or "deductively." Others focus on timelines and prophecies, culture and geography.

What is most helpful, however, is to simply read the Bible every day, think about what we have read, meditate on its content, and ask God, through His Holy Spirit, to teach us His ways.

Prayer: Father, help us to understand the teachings of Your Word. May we look to You for Your guidance and insights that will enable us to live lives that please You. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.

2 Timothy 3:16

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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

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News from the Associated Press

2 killed, 1 injured in motorcycle crash near Sturgis rally

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Two people have died and a third person has been injured in a crash west of Sturgis where the annual motorcycle rally is taking place.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says a 22-year-old man driving a Harley-Davidson motorcycle was westbound on Highway 14A when he missed a curve, crossed the center line and crashed into two eastbound motorcycles about 5 p.m. Monday.

The patrol says a 55-year-old man driving one of the eastbound motorcycles was pronounced dead at the scene.

The 22-year-old was airlifted to a Rapid City hospital where he died. The 60-year-old male driver of the third motorcycle suffered serious non-life threatening injuries.

No one was wearing a helmet, according to the patrol.

The Sturgis Motorcycle Rally runs through Aug. 16.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Tuesday:

Mega Millions

08-22-29-43-56, Mega Ball: 9, Megaplier: 4

(eight, twenty-two, twenty-nine, forty-three, fifty-six; Mega Ball: nine; Megaplier: four)

Estimated jackpot: \$24 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$169 million

Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Madison Daily Leader, Aug. 5

It doesn't get more basic than good food

When it comes to human needs, it doesn't get any more important than good food. And we're glad to see Lake County organizations focusing intently on that basic need.

Recent editions of the Daily Leader had stories about the conclusion of Madison Central School District's summer sack-lunch program, Lake County Food Pantry and the United Methodist Church's Gathering meal.

We applaud all those who support these organizations as volunteers or contributors.

The school district's summer lunch program, new this year as a response to the COVID-19 outbreak, needed volunteers to help with the distribution. The food pantry is managed by a volunteer board, accepts donations of food and money to operate, and uses a portion of the Presbyterian Church as its food storage facility. The Gathering is sponsored by the Methodist Church, which provides the space and volunteers, and is further supported by hundreds of volunteers from dozens of organizations to serve each week.

We see only good things happening with all of these programs: nutrition, satisfaction, fellowship and support. While many people have never been in a position of needing donated meals to survive, we know that many people need exactly what these programs are providing. And they need it every day, week or month.

We recognize that there are other programs sponsored by governments, like SNAP and WIC, that help people. But there is something extra about neighbors helping neighbors that benefits the recipients, volunteers and donors. The person-to-person element, combined with food, makes the connection so valuable.

We're glad to see these organizations succeed in their efforts and thank them for the work they'll do

in the future.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Aug. 10

College football and a deeper impact

Unfortunately, it feels a little like mid-March again when COVID-19 began scrambling our lives. That included the national sports events we enjoy watching, which fell like dominoes back then: the NBA, the NHL, baseball, the NCAA basketball tournaments ...

Five months later, we're starting to see this again with colleges, which are gradually pushing back their fall seasons by several weeks or postponing them altogether to spring.

College football, the billion-dollar elephant in this room, is also facing the reality of COVID America.

Last Friday, the Missouri Valley Football Conference — of which both the University of South Dakota and South Dakota State University are members — announced the postponement of its fall campaign to next spring. The league joined an increasing number of FCS (Football Championship Subdivision) schools, as well as NCAA Division II and others, to announce such a move. As USD athletic director David Herbster said in a social media video, the NCAA declared that postseason competition could happen this fall for the FCS only if at least 50% of the schools agreed to it, but it was clear that was not going to happen.

Technically, there could still be a truncated fall season comprised of a few non-conference games. That's being left up to the schools.

As of this writing, rumors are swirling that the biggest colleges may follow suit. The Big 10 — one of the so-called Power 5 conferences (along with the Big 12, the SEC, the ACC and the Pac-12) at the heart of college football — is reportedly leaning toward postponement. If enough of those FBS (Football Bowl Subdivision) schools go, college football this fall is effectively done.

Yes, the loss of fall football games may seem a minor hindrance compared to other COVID-related pains, but such a move would mean a lot more than un-played games.

It would certainly mean a lot for the student-athletes involved, who had already commenced drills for the fall season. Their work and their careers may be put on hold with no clear path forward.

It would also mean a lot to the colleges and communities that rely on football as an economic driver. College football is a cash cow that generates copious amounts of revenue. The loss of these games means the loss of fans coming to town to buy tickets, to eat at local restaurants or to stay at local hotels/motels. For towns like Vermillion and Brookings, this could be a major hit to their bottom lines. (It could also impact Yankton, which gets some spillover business from Vermillion during the college football season.) And it would also hurt the vendors and others that bank on these games as part of their business.

Should the FBS leagues postpone, imagine what the postponement of a season of University of Nebraska football (a Big 10 member) would do to the bottom lines in Lincoln and Omaha (as well as the state). Imagine the impact it would have on workers at businesses that rely on that fan money each autumn.

It feels like March, to be sure, when so much changed as COVID-19 began strangling the nation. The cost of our inability to contain the novel coronavirus is being felt in many places and on many levels. College football is just one victim, but the economic pain would be felt by many, many people.

South Dakota records 50 new COVID-19 cases

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota on Tuesday recorded 50 more people with COVID-19 amid an uptick in the rolling average number of daily new cases in the last two weeks.

The Department of Health reported no new deaths from COVID-19 and the number of hospitalizations has held mostly constant over the last several days. But over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases has increased by 20, an increase of 28%.

Over the course of the pandemic, 9,713 people have tested positive for COVID-19. Nearly 88% of those people have recovered. But 146 have died, and 1,060 people have active infections.

Masks required for students, staff in Rapid City schools

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Students and staff at Rapid City Area Schools will be required to wear masks when classes resume next month.

The school board voted Monday night in favor of the requirement.

Superintendent Lori Simon said teachers will have to wear a mask when six feet of physical distance isn't possible.

School board member Kate Thomas abstained from voting on the matter saying if there are no repercussions for failing to wear a mask, the mandate looks like a joke.

Assistant Superintendent Mark Gabrylczyk said the board doesn't have a choice to forgo a mask requirement, the Rapid City Journal reported.

"We have a duty to keep everyone safe who's on our campuses," he said.

The Rapid City Education Association held a demonstration outside of the building before the board meeting where more than a dozen teachers held signs in support of masks for students and staff.

Students return to the classrooms Sept. 8.

Minnesota's Omar holds off well-funded primary challenger

By STEVE KARNOWSKI and MOHAMED IBRAHIM Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota survived a stiff Democratic primary challenge Tuesday from a well-funded opponent who tried to make an issue of her national celebrity, the latest in a string of victories by a new generation of emboldened progressive lawmakers.

Omar, seeking her second term in November, easily defeated Antone Melton-Meaux, an attorney and mediator who raised millions in anti-Omar money.

Omar and her allies gained confidence in her reelection chances after primary victories last week by fellow "Squad" member Rashida Tlaib in Michigan and by Cori Bush, a Black Lives Matter activist who ousted a longtime St. Louis-area congressman. They also claimed momentum from the renewed focus on racial and economic justice after George Floyd's death in Minneapolis.

"Tonight, our movement didn't just win," Omar tweeted. "We earned a mandate for change. Despite outside efforts to defeat us, we once again broke turnout records. Despite the attacks, our support has only grown."

Melton-Meaux used the cash to paper the district and flood airwaves with his "Focused on the Fifth" message that portrayed Omar as out of touch with the heavily Democratic Minneapolis-area 5th District, which hasn't elected a Republican to Congress since 1960. He conceded defeat and acknowledged that his efforts weren't enough, while declining to speculate on why.

"I'm also incredibly proud of the work that we did, that garnered at least over 60,000 votes from the district, from people who resonated with our message of effective leadership grounded in the district, and bringing people together to get things done," Melton-Meaux told The Associated Press.

Omar in 2018 became one of the first two Muslim women elected to Congress, building on a national profile that started when the onetime refugee from Somalia was elected to the Minnesota Legislature just two years earlier. Her aggressive advocacy on liberal issues, and her eagerness to take on Donald Trump, made her even more prominent.

Omar rejected Melton-Meaux's attacks, saying they were funded by interests who wanted to get her out of Congress because she's effective. She also downplayed Melton-Meaux's prodigious fundraising before the vote, saying, "Organized people will always beat organized money."

Democratic U.S. Sen. Tina Smith and Republican challenger Jason Lewis easily won their primaries in the only statewide races on the ballot. Elsewhere, in western Minnesota's conservative 7th District, former state Sen. Michelle Fischbach won a three-way Republican race for the right to challenge Democratic Rep. Collin Peterson. Peterson, chairman of the House Agriculture Committee, is one of the GOP's top targets to flip a House seat in November.

After entering Congress with fanfare, Omar hurt herself early with comments about Israel and money

that even some fellow Democrats called anti-Semitic, and found herself apologizing. She also came under scrutiny when her marriage fell apart and she married her political consultant months after denying they were having an affair.

Republicans also raised questions about continuing payments to her new husband's firm, though experts said they aren't necessarily improper.

In the wake of Floyd's death, police reform also emerged as an issue. Omar supported a push by a majority of the Minneapolis City Council to replace the city's police department with something new. Melton-Meaux didn't support that but did support shifting some funding away from police to more social service-oriented programs. Both touched on the issue in personal ways, with Omar saying she wanted her son to grow up safely. Melton-Meaux, who is also Black, told a personal story of being detained while at the University of Virginia by police seeking an assault suspect reported to have run into his apartment building.

Wendy Helgeson, 57, a consultant, backed Omar two years ago, even installing a lawn sign in her yard, and said she was "awfully proud of her being the first Black Muslim woman that we elected." But she said she was concerned about campaign payments to Omar's husband's firm as well as her national presence, and found it easy to vote for Melton-Meaux, whom she said has been her friend for 12 years.

"I admire her as a woman," Helgeson said of Omar. "As a candidate, eh... I have some reservations."

John Hildebrand, a 47-year-old teacher in Minneapolis who voted for Omar, said her national profile is an advantage.

"I think just her presence encourages other Muslims and Somalis to run for office and to seek to be represented," he said. "I think she just engages people in the political system more and more."

Blake Smith, 23, a parks worker who is Black and described himself as a leftist, also backed Omar. He's concerned about climate change, Medicare for all and getting money out of politics, and he sees her as an ally.

"It's more time for radical change than like small — I don't think we have time for incremental change anymore," Smith said.

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

Kamala Harris' selection as VP resonates with Black women

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — China Cochran met Kamala Harris at a campaign event in Detroit last year and was swept away by her ambition, charisma and leadership. She hoped the California senator would advance in politics.

So when Joe Biden named Harris on Tuesday as his running mate — making her the first Black woman on a major party's presidential ticket — Cochran wasn't just struck by the history. It represented a full-circle moment for Black women, who for generations have fought for their voices to be heard and political aspirations recognized.

"It tells Black girls that they can be president," said Cochran, who recently ran for state representative in Michigan. "If you look back at Shirley Chisholm, she ran so that Kamala could lead at this moment. I think it's important for us to look at that and see other young women of color realize that they can go after their dreams and really make change in our world."

Harris' selection is historic in many senses. It also marks the first time a person of Asian descent is on the presidential ticket. Born to a Jamaican father and Indian mother, she often speaks of her deep bond with her late mother, whom she has called her single biggest influence.

Harris' boundary-breaking potential serves as an affirmation of the growing power of voters of color, according to nearly a dozen interviews with political strategists, potential voters and activists.

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"Joe Biden understood this historic moment required a tough, smart and respected public servant," said Donna Brazile, who managed Al Gore's campaign in 2000 and served as Democratic National Committee chair in 2016.

Black women in particular helped rescue Biden's campaign earlier this year by delivering a resounding victory in the South Carolina primary, powering him to the Democratic nomination. As he prepares for the general election, Biden is trying to recreate the multi-racial and cross-generational coalition that twice sent Barack Obama to the White House.

That will hinge on Black voters in battleground states like Michigan to turn out in force in November.

"We've seen from an electoral process what happens if we don't vote, that can mean the difference between winning and losing a state," said Karen Finney, a senior Democratic strategist and spokesperson for Hillary Clinton's 2016 presidential campaign. "We're in this moral inflection point of this country and Vice President Biden is someone who's talked about healing the soul of our country and certainly one of the ways to do that is to uplift the voices of Black women."

Strategists said that Harris will help that effort.

"It sends a strong signal about not only the current state of our party but what the future of our party looks like," said Antjuan Seawright, a veteran political strategist in South Carolina. "And what better way to reward a group of people who have been the political glue in this party than to put an African American woman on the ticket."

Ravi Perry, Howard University's political science chair, said Harris' elevation also represents the first time that a graduate of a historically Black college or university will be represented on the ticket. Harris graduated from the Washington-based university and is a member of the storied Black sorority Alpha Kappa Alpha.

While Harris' selection has largely been applauded among the Democratic Party and voters, some have raised concerns. She joins the ticket at a time of immense racial tensions and crises in the nation. The coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately affected Black Americans and other people of color. Protests against systemic racism and brutality are top of mind for potential voters.

And Harris' record as California attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco could make it difficult for Biden to galvanize support among younger Black and Latino voters.

Lindsey Roland, a 31-year-old Black woman and Michigan real estate agent, said that background gave her pause.

"While I fully appreciate her scope of responsibilities while she was in that role, I still think she was empowered to stand up more for minorities, and I think it was just a really missed opportunity," she said. "But I absolutely will be voting. We have far too much at stake. And for me, as a mother, I'm frightened and I just feel like another four years with this administration will be catastrophic."

Some of the nation's leading activists who have long fought for criminal justice reform see Harris as a potential ally in their push for change. Color of Change President Rashad Robinson said Harris has evolved over time and declared herself a "progressive prosecutor" who backs reform.

"What I appreciate about her is that she's been willing to listen and willing to evolve, and she's been willing to put legislation behind that evolution and policy platforms behind that evolution," Robinson said. "Yes, I think there will be very real things that people will raise, but I think that she has been listening and working to address those things."

Alicia Garza, the co-founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, said the nation is in a moment where "deep and profound change is needed."

"For some activists, it is important that a Black woman is represented on this ticket, and for other activists, substance is going to be much more important than symbolism," Garza said. "The trick of getting people out to vote will be a successful combination of the two. This is an incredible moment of opportunity, it's a moment that is rife with possibility and I'm still hopeful that this newly announced ticket will rise to meet the moment."

It's also not lost on many that the selection comes nearly 100 years after the 19th Amendment was

ratified, giving women the right to vote.

But for Black women, the freedom to vote didn't come until much later, part of a historical pattern of being denied justice offered to others.

And for Nse Ufot, CEO of the New Georgia Project, that's a call for action and a reminder how much more work needs to be done. Ahead of the election, her organization is working to register more than 1 million Black, Latino and Asian American voters. So far they've registered 425,000 in the state.

"It took an additional 45 years of organizing to secure the rights to vote for Black women and other women of color," Ufot said. "And so, you know, there is a long history of, sort of, uncredited work. I think the Biden-Harris ticket is going to make it easier for us to have conversations, particularly in places like Georgia's rural Black Belt about why they need to vote."

Melanie Campbell, president and CEO of the National Coalition on Black Civic Participation, was overcome with emotion after the announcement.

She wished her late mother could have lived to see the historic moment. She also wished that Black women who came before Harris — civil rights activists Fannie Lou Hamer, Dorothy Height, Ella Baker and many others — could know how their legacy and hard work culminated into this powerful moment.

"I thought about my mother, my grandmother. I thought about my sisters. I thought about in this moment that as a Black woman, we are seen," Campbell said. "This moment is more than about the VP slot. It affirms Black women and all we did for this country. I'm glad I lived to see it."

How Biden chose Harris: Inside his search for a running mate

By JULIE PACE, DAVID EGGERT and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gretchen Whitmer wanted out.

The Michigan governor had caught the interest of Joe Biden and his vice presidential vetting committee, who were drawn to her prominence in a crucial battleground state and her aggressive response to the coronavirus outbreak there. But by late spring, the nation was in the midst of a reckoning over race and inequality following the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a white police officer pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes.

Whitmer sent word to Biden's team that while she was flattered, she no longer wanted to be considered for the running mate slot, according to a high-ranking Democrat familiar with the process. She recommended Biden pick a Black woman.

But Biden still wanted Whitmer in the mix, and he personally called her in mid-June to ask if she would continue on to the second, more intensive round of vetting, according to the official. Whitmer agreed.

But forces in the country, and within the Democratic Party, were indeed pushing Biden toward a history-making pick. As protests over the death of Floyd and other Black Americans filled the streets across the country, an array of Democrats urged Biden to put a Black woman on the ticket — a nod to this moment in the nation's history, to the critical role Black voters played in Biden's ascent to the Democratic nomination, and to their vital importance in his general election campaign against President Donald Trump.

On Tuesday, Biden tapped California Sen. Kamala Harris to be his running mate, making her the first Black woman to serve on a major party presidential ticket. This account of how he made that decision, the most important of his political career, is based on interviews with 10 people with direct knowledge of the vetting and selection process. Most spoke on condition of anonymity to disclose private conversations and deliberations.

Biden, well aware of the potential pitfalls of being a 77-year-old white male standard-bearer of a party increasingly comprised of women, people of color and young voters, made clear even before he had clinched the Democratic nomination that his running mate would be a woman.

His initial list of possible contenders was sprawling: roughly 20 governors, senators, congresswomen, mayors and other Democratic stalwarts. They were young and old; Black, Hispanic, white, Asian; straight and gay. Some, including Harris, had competed against Biden for the Democratic nomination.

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From the start, some Biden advisers saw Harris as a logical choice. She was among the party's most popular figures, a deft debater and a fundraising juggernaut. She had been thoroughly vetted during her own campaign and Biden's team expected there would be few surprises if she was the pick.

Indeed, Harris' potential downsides were well-known to Biden advisers. Her record as a prosecutor in California was already viewed skeptically by some younger Democrats during the primary and would face even more scrutiny against the backdrop of a national debate over inequality in the criminal justice system.

There were also nagging questions about Harris' most high-profile moment of the primary campaign — a harsh and deeply personal broadside against Biden over his position on school busing in the 1970s. Though Biden would later brush the moment aside as campaign tactics, the attack was said to have stunned the former vice president, who had considered his relationship with Harris strong. It also raised concern among a small cadre of Biden advisers that Harris would be eyeing the Oval Office herself from the start, a particular worry given that Biden has not firmly committed to serving two terms if elected in November.

And so, as spring turned to summer, a string of other Black women would take a turn in the spotlight as Biden weighed his options. Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and Florida Rep. Val Demings impressed Biden's team with their leadership during the police brutality protests.

Some House Democrats — including South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn, a close Biden confidant — advocated for Rep. Karen Bass, a Californian who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus. Biden also took a strong interest in Susan Rice, with whom he worked closely when she served in the White House as President Barack Obama's national security adviser.

The leading contenders, who also included Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth, submitted reams of financial records, texts of speeches and other personal information. Biden's selection team canvassed a vast array of Democrats to ask for their views on the candidates' temperament and families, then grilled the candidates on much of the same.

Biden, too, regularly discussed his potential pick with his sprawling network of friends and advisers. He used Obama in particular as a sounding board, though confidants to both men say the former president was careful not to tip his hand in those conversations as to whom he preferred.

But in private, Obama suggested to others that he believed Harris was the favorite.

In one of Harris' conversations with the vetting committee, Chris Dodd — a longtime Biden friend who served alongside him in the Senate — asked if she had remorse for her debate stage attack on his bus-ing record.

Harris, as she had previously done so publicly, brushed it aside as simply politics. Dodd, a member of the running mate selection committee, was put off and let that be known. The incident was first reported by Politico and confirmed to The Associated Press by a person with direct knowledge.

The public disclosure of Dodd's comments angered some of the highest-ranking women on Biden's campaign team. Some of Harris' allies also mobilized to defend her, including California Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis, who organized a call with Biden's vetting team about two weeks ago to assuage any doubts about whether the senator was the right choice for the ticket.

On the 45-minute call, Kounalakis and other statewide officials, labor and business leaders took turns sharing their personal histories with Harris and their impressions of her as a leader.

"Speaking out as strongly as we did, collectively, helped them understand how supported she is and why," Kounalakis said on Tuesday.

The call ended with Biden's vetting team telling the Harris supporters that they had all recommended her as one of the top candidates for the job.

The pandemic had largely grounded Biden in his home state of Delaware throughout the summer, and also upended some of the ways he had expected to build a rapport with the running-mate contenders. There were no joint rallies or carefully orchestrated, yet casual-looking, outings to local restaurants in battleground states. Biden was also accepting few in-person visitors at his home.

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But he did want to speak one-on-one with the women who had made it through the vetting process and interviews with his selection committee. He would hold conversations with 11 women in the final nine days before he made his pick — a mixture of in-person meetings and video teleconferences.

Whitmer was among those who flew to Delaware for an in-person audience. She boarded a private plane in Lansing, Michigan, on Aug. 2, spending just a few hours on the ground before returning to Michigan.

Rice, who had perhaps the closest personal relationship with Biden of all the contenders, spoke twice with Biden in recent days. Duckworth also had a formal interview over the weekend, as did Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams, who was initially viewed as a leading contender for the job.

On Tuesday, in the hours before his campaign announced Harris as the pick, Biden would call each of those women to inform them that they had not been selected. Warren, whose relationship with Biden has deepened in recent months through regular policy discussions, was also among those to receive a personal call from the former vice president.

In some of the conversations, Biden left open an opportunity. Please consider joining me in another role in the administration, he said.

Eggert reported from Lansing, Mich., and Ronayne from Sacramento, Calif. Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Atlanta, Will Weissert in Wilmington, Del., and Laurie Kellman in Washington contributed to this report.

Women say they will fight sexism, 'ugly' attacks on Harris

By SARA BURNETT and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

CHICAGO (AP) — In the weeks before Joe Biden named Sen. Kamala Harris his running mate, women's groups were readying a campaign of their own: shutting down sexist coverage and disinformation about a vice presidential nominee they say is headed for months of false smears and "brutal" attacks from internet haters.

The groups put the media on notice in recent days that they will call out bias — one campaign is dubbed "We Have Her Back" — and established a "war room" to refute sexist or false attacks as they happen.

They didn't have to wait long. Within minutes of the presumptive Democratic nominee's announcement Tuesday, false information was circulating on social media, claiming that Harris had called Biden a "racist" and that she is not eligible to be president.

The women's groups say their efforts are informed by the sexism Hillary Clinton faced from Donald Trump, some of his supporters and the media during the 2016 campaign.

"This time we understand the patterns, and this time we have the organizational infrastructure to push back," said Shaunna Thomas, executive director of the women's advocacy group UltraViolet, which released a 32-page guide for media along with a coalition of groups including Color of Change PAC, Planned Parenthood Votes and Women's March.

While the groups have primarily been led by Democrats, their efforts are backed by nonpartisan groups and some Republicans.

The war room will call out bias and disinformation against women in both parties up and down the ballot, said Tina Tchen, CEO of Time's Up Now, which fights sexual harassment in the workplace.

The groups say intense scrutiny of a vice presidential nominee is to be expected, but women are often unfairly criticized as overly emotional, weak or unqualified, or for their appearance or demeanor in a way that men are not. The attacks, which include false smears and threats of violence online, not only hurt campaigns but also dissuade women from seeking office.

Christine Todd Whitman, a former New Jersey governor and Republican, said Biden's running mate will be at the center of an "ugly" social media campaign from online bullies.

"This is going to be brutal because these platforms allow people to do things anonymously, saying things anonymously," Whitman said.

If elected, Harris would be the country's first Black vice president. Her mother is from India and her

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father is from Jamaica. That has invited not only sexist but also racist commentary and misinformation around her candidacy.

Harris, who was born in Oakland, California, has been the victim of online falsehoods for more than a year that say she is not eligible to become president because her parents were not born in America. More recently, Facebook users added a new twist to the misinformation: that since Harris is not eligible to be president, if Biden didn't finish his term, the presidency would automatically default to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, a Democrat.

There is no truth to that — Harris is a natural-born U.S. citizen who's eligible to be president — yet the misinformation has been shared by thousands of Facebook users. Facebook has labeled the posts as false but has not removed them from its platform.

The misinformation harkens back to the conspiracy theories in 2008 around Democrat Barack Obama, the first Black U.S. president, that claimed he was born in Kenya, not the United States. Those claims were amplified by Donald Trump, then a reality TV star, and gained so much traction during the campaign that Obama produced a birth certificate showing he was born in Honolulu.

The latest attacks on Harris' citizenship were highlighted in a letter from more than 100 female lawmakers from across the world that was sent to Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Chief Operating Officer Sheryl Sandberg. It called on them to remove misinformation, as well as posts or accounts that threaten women.

"Much of the most hateful content directed at women on Facebook is amplified by your algorithms which reward extreme and dangerous points of view with greater reach and visibility," said the letter, which was spearheaded by Democratic Rep. Jackie Speier of California.

Cindy Southworth, Facebook's head of women's safety, said the company will work with the lawmakers to "surface new solutions."

"Abuse of women on the internet is a serious problem, one we tackle in a variety of ways — through technology that identifies and removes potentially abusive content before it happens, by enforcing strict policies, and by talking with experts to ensure we stay ahead of new tactics," she said.

But mere minutes after Harris was announced as Biden's running mate, pro-Trump social media personalities and conservative news outlets claimed Harris called Biden a racist during a televised Democratic debate last year. In reality, she said, "I do not believe you're a racist," before criticizing his past opposition to policies around school desegregation.

The road to becoming Biden's running mate had been littered with misleading online attacks on women under consideration.

Former national security adviser Susan Rice was accused of committing crimes in office, and Democratic Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who authorized strict stay-at-home orders in Michigan this year, was pelted with memes and images likening her to Adolf Hitler or an "evil queen."

Harris is likely prepared for the onslaught ahead after watching how 2016 unfolded on social media, said Sarah Oates, a political communications professor at the University of Maryland.

"She is going to be vilified, no matter who she is," Oates said. "In 2020, people are much more attuned and aware of it. That doesn't mean it's going to make it better, but at least you can be more aware of the toxicity."

Outcry in Somalia as new bill would allow child marriage

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

JOHANNESBURG (AP) — An outcry is rising in Somalia as parliament considers a bill that would allow child marriage once a girl's sexual organs mature and would allow forced marriage as long as the family gives their consent.

The bill is a dramatic reworking of years of efforts by civil society to bring forward a proposed law to give more protections to women and girls in one of the world's most conservative countries.

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The new Sexual Intercourse Related Crimes Bill “would represent a major setback in the fight against sexual violence in Somalia and across the globe” and should be withdrawn immediately, the United Nations special representative on sexual violence in conflict, Pramila Patten, said in a statement Tuesday.

The bill also weakens protections for victims of sexual violence, she said.

Already more than 45% of young women in Somalia were married or “in union” before age 18, according to a United Nations analysis in 2014-15.

Somalia in 2013 agreed with the U.N. to improve its sexual violence laws, and after five years of work a sexual offenses bill was approved by the Council of Ministers and sent to parliament. But last year the speaker of the House of the People sent the bill back “in a process that may have deviated from established law” asking for “substantive amendments,” the U.N. special representative said.

The new bill “risks legitimizing child marriage, among other alarming practices, and must be prevented from passing into law,” U.N. human rights chief Michelle Bachelet said this week, warning that its passage would “send a worrying signal to other states in the region.”

Thousands of people in Somalia are circulating a petition against the bill, including Ilwad Elman with the Mogadishu-based Elman Peace center.

As Somalia prepared to mark International Youth Day on Wednesday, Elman tweeted this week: “I don’t wanna see any Somali officials participating online to celebrate ... when you’re trying to steal their childhood away from them RIGHT NOW with the intercourse bill legalizing child marriage.”

Somalia’s presidency and health ministry had no immediate comment Wednesday. It was not clear when the bill would be put up for a vote.

“We want to make sure it goes in line with Islamic law and traditions,” the deputy parliament speaker, Abdweli Mudey, said after the new bill emerged.

The U.N. mission to Somalia in a separate statement has called the new bill “deeply flawed” and urged parliament to re-introduce the original one. That original bill “will be vital in preventing and criminalizing all sexual offenses,” the Somalia representative for the U.N. Population Fund, Anders Thomsen, said.

“Big moment for MPs to decide Somalia’s future values,” the British ambassador to Somalia, Ben Fender, has tweeted.

The contentious new bill comes as women’s rights groups openly worry that the coronavirus pandemic and related travel restrictions in Somalia have worsened violence against women and female genital mutilation. Nearly all Somali women and girls have been subjected to that practice.

Some 68% of more than 300 service providers across the country have reported an increase in gender-based violence, including rape, since the pandemic began, UNFPA said in a report last month.

Nearly a third of respondents, including more than 750 community members, said they believed child marriages had increased in part because of economic pressures and in part because schools have been disrupted.

And in some cases, health facilities have closed, limiting access to care.

Abdi Guled in Nairobi, Kenya contributed.

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. **INSIDE BIDEN’S SEARCH FOR A RUNNING MATE** He started with a list of roughly 20 contenders, including governors, senators, mayors, House members and other Democratic leaders before narrowing the list to 11 finalists and then selecting Kamala Harris.

2. **WHAT’S NEXT IN COVID-19 TREATMENT** Pharmaceutical companies are rushing to test drugs that deliver antibodies to fight the virus right away, without having to train the immune system to make them.

3. **‘IT FEELS LIKE I’M EXPENDABLE’** The coronavirus has impacted Latino efforts to make inroads politically, whether it be running for office or heading to the ballot box.

4. AFTER BLAST, TRAUMA FOR CHILDREN OF BEIRUT Some refuse to return to homes that were damaged or go near glass windows or doors. One 3-year-old is jumpy, is not eating well and refuses to talk to anyone. A 6-year-old boy has recurring bursts of anger.

5. 'I'VE NEVER DONE THIS BEFORE' Boisterous rallies against Benjamin Netanyahu bring out a new breed of protesters — young middle-class Israelis who feel his scandal-plagued rule has robbed them of their future.

He set out to mobilize Latino voters. Then the virus hit.

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

GRAHAM, N.C (AP) — Like many Americans, Ricky Hurtado had different plans for his summer.

He formally announced his first bid for public office in March and expected to spend sweltering days knocking on doors, clenching glossy campaign literature and making his case directly to voters. This was the summer he was going to prove that a 31-year-old son of Salvadoran immigrants could give Latinos a say — even in North Carolina, even in part of Donald Trump's America.

But this is a story about waiting — and the detours on the path to power.

The novel coronavirus upended the Democrat's campaign for statehouse in an exurban district. Hurtado stopped door-knocking. The closest he came to potential voters was standing 6 feet (1.8 meters) or more away while volunteering at food banks or a virus testing site. And, still, he contracted the virus himself.

Across the U.S., the coronavirus outbreak is disrupting Latinos' long and difficult climb up the political ladder. The disease has disproportionately sickened Latinos, destabilized communities and impeded voter registration ahead of the November presidential election. In North Carolina, only 5,000 Latinos have been added to the voter rolls since mid-March, less than half the number added during the same period four years ago.

The virus and the economic fallout it triggered is crashing down on Latinos just as they hit an electoral milestone. For the first time, there will be more Latinos eligible to vote than any other minority group — 32 million, the Pew Research Center projects.

Latinos have long seemed on the cusp of realizing their potential at the ballot box, only to see their impact undermined by disappointing turnout and an Electoral College that favors heavily white states. In 2016, fewer than half of eligible Latinos cast ballots, as the country elected a president who promised to build a wall at the U.S.-Mexico border and repeatedly used Latin American immigrants as a foil in the debate over it.

But if states such as California, Florida and Nevada were the proving grounds in elections past, North Carolina represents the future. The state has 1 million Latino residents, many immigrants being drawn to work in manufacturing and agriculture. Yet two-thirds are not eligible to vote because they are either under age 18 or not citizens — the second-highest rate in the nation, just behind neighboring Tennessee.

In Alamance County, among the housing tracts and thick forests reaching between Raleigh and Greensboro, there are three Latinos who cannot vote for every one who can.

For decades, those numbers meant one thing: Latinos' growing population in the state didn't translate into political power. Rather, it had the opposite effect of animating resentment and grievance, as politicians seized on immigration as a potent issue.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Americans are preparing to choose a leader and a path through a time of extraordinary division and turmoil. Associated Press journalists tell their stories in the series "America Disrupted."

Now the children of immigrants are coming of age, finding their voice and their leaders. Hurtado and his generation are acutely aware of the weight demography and politics have placed on their shoulders.

"It really all depends on me," said John Paul Garcia, a 20-year-old Hurtado campaign volunteer and the only member of his family of six who can vote. "I'm my sister's voice, my brother's voice, my parents' voice."

Trump won North Carolina by less than 4 percentage points. Hurtado's Democratic predecessor lost the

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statehouse seat by 298 votes in 2018.

Hurtado knows it would be easier for him to focus on white voters, still the overwhelming majority in the district. But he wants his campaign to be about more than just winning the seat, flipping the legislature or even putting a Democrat in the White House.

"It's actually engaging people," he said this spring, as he drove his Volkswagen Jetta to knock on doors in one of the many trailer parks tucked behind auto body shops and in forested river bottoms across the county.

"I want the 21,000 Latinos in Alamance County to know they're very much part of the conversation here." It would be the last time Hurtado door-knocked before the pandemic hit.

Hurtado's parents arrived in the United States in the trunk of a car.

The two were fleeing the civil war in El Salvador in 1980 when they were driven across the Mexican border and into California. Hurtado was born in Los Angeles, but when he was 7 his family moved to rural North Carolina, hoping the cleaner air would be better for his asthma.

Hurtado's mother worked at a chicken plant, and when he was in high school Hurtado would rub her sore hands after picking her up from the plant at the end of her shift, close to midnight.

The poultry-processing, agricultural and textile industries that were the traditional foundations of the state's economy all recruited as far south as Mexico, trying to draw cheap labor to the state.

"1996-1998, those were the years that changed everything," said Paul Cuadros, a professor at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill, who wrote a book on Latino immigrants in a rural area near Alamance County. "Once the children started showing up, that's when you had the backlash."

Hurtado grew up in a mostly Black neighborhood and he was conscious he was viewed as different. He tried not to speak Spanish in public. He'll never forget when a fellow seventh grader, a girl he considered a friend, called him "just another Mexican by the side of the road."

"No somos ni de aquí, ni de allá," is how he describes his feeling of alienation, using a common phrase that translates to: "We're from neither here nor there."

Hurtado was accepted at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill. A high school calculus teacher lent him \$2,000 to help him pay for a laptop. But it wasn't until his senior year that he began to feel comfortable with his identity as a Southerner and a Latino.

Out of school, Hurtado went to work at a consulting firm focusing on racial equity. He won a scholarship and earned a master's degree in public affairs from Princeton. He was ready to take a job in Oakland in 2014 when he abruptly decided California could wait.

North Carolina's governor at the time, Republican Pat McCrory, had declared he wouldn't take any more of the thousands of unaccompanied children who were crossing the border to flee violence in Central America.

"I just felt like, 'That's not the North Carolina I know,'" Hurtado said.

He moved back to the state and began running a program for first-generation students at his alma mater and plunged into the local activist scene, where he met Yazmin Garcia. They spent one of their first dates picketing a Trump rally.

After they married, Hurtado and Garcia settled in Alamance County in one of the commuter suburbs outside of Chapel Hill. But their neighborhood wasn't far from the old industrial strips that are punctuated with Salvadoran food trucks and Mexican groceries. Hurtado moved his parents there, too.

"Help your parents buy a house — that's the American dream, isn't it?" Hurtado said. He now has a different way of describing his roots: "Soy de aquí y de allá."

"I'm from both here and there."

The work of finding Latino voters — the 1 in 4 — was always going to be difficult. Fear of immigration authorities is ever-present. Families members hold a patchwork of legal status. Doors don't just open for anyone.

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That's partly due to the enduring power of Alamance County Sheriff Terry Johnson, a Republican who first came to office in 2002 when he ran TV ads that warned of "aliens" in the county and played music from the old TV series "The Twilight Zone."

Johnson was the only sheriff in the country other than Arizona's notorious Joe Arpaio to be sued by the Obama administration's Justice Department for civil rights violations against immigrants.

A federal judge dismissed the case accusing Johnson's agency of targeting Latinos in searches and seizures. But the sheriff's department reached an out-of-court settlement with the federal government to avoid a government appeal.

Johnson believes the government merely "wanted a Southern sheriff to make an example out of," he said in an interview in his office, lined with photos of his family and official travels, including one of a recent trip to the White House.

Johnson says he has no animus against immigrants. "I have several friends that own restaurants here that are here illegally," he said. "I could care less as long as they follow laws of our land."

Still, Johnson remains a menacing figure to many Latinos. His agency has an agreement with Immigration and Customs Enforcement to house detained immigrants, which has drawn continued protests over the years. Just a reference to Johnson's name can feel like a deportation threat to many Latinos. When a Latina clerk at cell phone store recently asked a white customer to put on a mask, the man said he was going to "call Terry Johnson" on her, said Tyra Duque, another clerk who witnessed the incident.

To be sure, Latinos in Alamance County and across the U.S. are politically diverse. About 3 out every 10 Latino voters supported Republicans in the 2018 congressional races, according to AP VoteCast, a survey of the electorate.

Omar Lugo, a 42-year-old Venezuelan immigrant, doesn't blame Johnson for what he observes is a clear sense of fear in the county's Latino community. He blames liberal activists. "By accusing the sheriff of being racist, that doesn't take us anywhere," Lugo said.

Lugo says he see evidence that Latinos in North Carolina are turning to the GOP in these turbulent times — particularly after the violence that accompanied protests over the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died after being pinned to the ground by Minneapolis police. Latinos are repelled by scenes of chaotic demonstrations and the debate over defunding police departments, he said.

Other Republicans argue Hurtado isn't the right person to represent Alamance County, where Johnson routinely runs for reelection unopposed and the GOP holds every county office. But the county's politics are shifting. As North Carolina's population has boomed in recent years with migrants from the north, attracted by cheaper housing and a growing technology and banking industry, Alamance County has seen an influx of suburbanites. Many are leaving liberal Chapel Hill in search of affordable housing.

Hurtado's Democratic views will only change "the policies that attracted people to Alamance County to begin with," said Stephen Wiley, political director for the North Carolina House Republican Caucus.

But the Democrat sees himself as a good match for Alamance. Round-faced and smooth-voiced, with black-framed glasses, Hurtado has a low-key, easy demeanor. He sees himself as a representative of a modern, diversifying North Carolina.

On Facebook, he sometimes confronts old high school friends who support Trump and post harsh anti-immigrant sentiments, gently reminding them they grew up together. He says the exchanges end amicably.

But Hurtado notes that hasn't happened lately, not since the Floyd protests boiled over into a full-on debate over racial justice and identity.

At the center of a square in Graham, the county seat, stands a monument to the county's fallen Confederate soldiers. Johnson's deputies have watched the square since the national demonstrations started, forbidding protests without permits under a city law swiftly and emergency declarations by the mayor.

When Aranza Sosa, 22, went to the square holding Black Lives Matter signs in early June, Johnson's deputies turned her away. She angrily began researching local politics, looking for help, and was stunned to find Hurtado was running for office against Stephen Ross, a Republican incumbent.

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She called him in tears.

There have been a lot of tears for Sosa lately. Her uncle died of COVID-19 in late May, and her family members in North Carolina and Mexico regularly gather on video chat to say a rosary for him. She works in a retirement home that just had its first case. Some days her anxiety over catching the virus — and passing it onto vulnerable family members — is so intense she can't go to work. On most days, Sosa goes in. She needs the money.

"My job, I'm lucky to have it, but under the circumstances it breaks a lot of people," Sosa said. "It feels like I'm expendable, at this point, to the government."

The Pew Hispanic Center found that 59% of Latinos say they or someone in their household has lost a job or wages due to the virus, well above the 43% of U.S. adults reporting the same.

The Latino unemployment rate was just under 13% in July, still well above the white rate. Disproportionately clustered in the service industry, Latinos are more likely to see their jobs eliminated because of dangers of face-to-face transmission and to be asked to go to work.

In Alamance County, where Latinos are 13% of the population, they account for 62% of the county's 2,500 COVID cases.

It's unclear whether the dual hardship of the virus and economy will leave Latinos too busy worrying about their survival to focus on the election or will galvanize them.

Antonio Arellano, whose group, JOLT, tries to expand Latino power in Texas, noted they regularly cite health care, not immigration, as its top issue in polls.

"We're seeing our grandmothers, grandfathers and aunts and uncles die from lack of health care," Arellano said. "We believe this pandemic has the potential to drive voter turnout more than ever before."

Hurtado and his wife both know how disruptive the illness can be. In mid-June they came down with the virus. They were shocked at the news; they rarely left their house, they said. Hurtado's asthma had made them terrified about the disease.

But their bout was relatively mild, high fevers and a few days of chest pain for Hurtado followed by several days of fatigue and exhaustion. They recovered by early July.

The pandemic has shut down the sort of face-to-face interactions that are especially critical among Latinos, who are less likely than African Americans and whites to be registered even when they are eligible to vote. With college campuses, street festivals and DMVs closed, registration plummeted 70% nationally during the first two months of the pandemic compared to 2016, according to a study from the Center for Election Innovation and Research.

While Republicans have revived some of their door-to-door canvassing, Democrats, including Hurtado, have largely refrained, arguing it's too risky. Hurtado has turned to online meetings and fundraisers. Earlier this month he was one of dozens of candidates endorsed by former President Barack Obama.

Still, he knows he's losing critical face-to-face encounters.

When he canvassed in the spring he often connected with the younger Latinos over shared experiences.

"I was the first in my family to go to college," Hurtado told Evelyn Lara, 18, in the doorway of her trailer.

"I am, too," Lara responded, proud, as her 7-year-old brother Iker leaned by her side, playing "Minecraft" on a portable device.

"You know how hard it can be," Hurtado said. "When I go to Raleigh, I'm trying to make it easier for families like ours."

Hurtado has been heartened by the influx of calls from young people like Sosa since the Black Lives Matter demonstrations began, which gives him hope Latinos will turn out despite all the obstacles in November.

But there's another disappointment weighing down his household.

Garcia was nearing the end of the yearslong slog to become a U.S. citizen. She would joke about how she would be able to cast her first vote for her husband — if he earned it.

One of her final steps, an in-person interview, was postponed in March due to the pandemic.

Garcia may not be able to vote for her husband after all.

Associated Press writer Angeliki Kastanis in Los Angeles contributed to this report.

Children in Beirut suffer from trauma after deadly blast

By DALAL MAWAD Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — When the huge explosion ripped through Beirut last week, it shattered the glass doors near where 3-year-old Abed Itani was playing with his Lego blocks. He suffered a head injury and cuts on his tiny arms and feet, and he was taken to the emergency room, where he sat amid other bleeding people.

In the days since then, Abed has not been the same. Like thousands of others in Lebanon, he is grappling with trauma.

"When I got to the hospital, I found him sitting in a corner in the emergency room, trembling at the sight of badly injured people around him, blood dripping all over the floor," said his mother, Hiba Achi, who was at work when the blast hit on Aug. 4 and had left him in the care of his grandmother.

"He hates red now. He refuses to wear his red shoes," Achi said, adding that Abed insists that she wash them.

The massive explosion of nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate in Beirut's port killed more than 170 people, injured about 6,000 others and caused widespread damage. The U.N. children's agency UNICEF said three children were among the dead and at least 31 were hurt seriously enough to need hospital treatment.

As many as 100,000 children were displaced from their homes according to Save the Children, with many of them traumatized.

"Any noise makes him jump now. He is not eating well anymore," Achi says. "He was a happy boy, very sociable. Now, he doesn't talk to anyone."

Joy Abi Habib, a mental health expert with Save The Children, says young people who are traumatized can react differently.

"Headaches, nausea, bed-wetting, digestive problems are physical symptoms parents tend to overlook," she said. "They become clingy and extremely on edge."

Zeinab Ghazale's daughters, Yasmine, 8, and Talia, 11, have refused to sleep alone in their bedroom since the explosion, which broke windows in their apartment and sent glass flying around their room.

"We miraculously survived," said Ghazale, who had to move her daughters out of their home for a few days until the windows were fixed. "But my daughter Yasmin keeps asking, 'Why don't I have a normal childhood? Why do I have to go through all this when I am only 8?'"

Psychologist Maha Ghazale, who is no relation, has been treating many children after the explosion. She said many are experiencing uncertainty "and they keep asking if this will happen again."

"Many children are refusing to go back home, to get close to a glass door or window," Ghazale added.

Ricardo Molaschi was visiting his grandparents' apartment in Beirut with his Italian father and Lebanese mother. When the blast hit, the 6-year-old was cut by flying glass, requiring stitches. His grandfather, Kazem Shamseddine, was killed.

The youngster has been having recurrent bursts of anger toward whoever caused the explosion.

"I want to put them in a volcano and let them explode," he said.

Ghazale said that allowing children to process the trauma is crucial — letting them be angry but also encouraging them to tell the story orally or through art and play.

"My son, Fares, keeps playing a game where there is a fire, and he needs to escape," says Rania Achkar, a mother of two. Her 4-year-old daughter Raya has turned the Lebanese national anthem into a song about the blast.

"The whole world has exploded," she sings, "there is a fire everywhere, everyone is talking about us on television."

The trauma can repeat itself if children are exposed to the news and adult conversations about it, says Ghazali, who advises isolating them from that and seeking help.

"Children are resilient, but unprocessed trauma can lead to increased anxiety, behavioral problems, it

becomes part of their life and can lead later to negative coping mechanisms," she says.

Restoring a sense of safety, normalcy and routine will help, Ghazale says.

Hiba Achi says she has decided to leave Lebanon with her son and join her husband who works in Dubai. It's a sentiment echoed by many.

"This place is not safe for Abed, it never was, never will be," she says, "I don't want to stay here anymore, that's it."

Her guilt is shared by many parents, particularly those who have lived through Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war and feel like they have failed their children.

"Our generation is traumatized forever," says Achkar, the mother of two, referring to those who grew up in Lebanon after the war. "But why do our children have to go through this as well?"

Belgian beach brawl fuels virus, political, climate tension

By LORNE COOK and VIRGINIA MAYO Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — It started as a Saturday trip to Belgium's coast, a chance to escape a heat wave and coronavirus restrictions for a while. As the tide came in, the beach got crowded. Someone complained about the music being too loud. The mood quickly turned ugly.

Within minutes, dozens of people were battling it out on the sands. Some beach-goers threw bottles and umbrellas at police officers who intervened.

By Sunday, a "gang of outsiders" was being blamed, and two coastal communities had banned day trippers from the city. Officers stood ready at railway stations and blocked traffic, turning away people who can't afford to live, work, or pay for hotel reservations in the area. Three teens, shirtless, still in their swimming gear, were charged with "armed rebellion."

On Tuesday, Belgium's interior minister was trying to explain how it all happened, summoned to a tetchy hearing by the main populist party and a far-right nationalist faction. Civic groups called for action, urging people from poorer neighborhoods — among the hardest-hit by the virus — to find lawyers if they felt harassed by police "racial profiling," or by zealous officials protecting wealthy holiday-makers at well-to-do beach communities.

Welcome to Belgium; a country that still has no full-time government 18 months after the last cabinet resigned; a country with one of the highest COVID-19 mortality rates in the world per population where restrictions are testing peoples' patience; a country that just doesn't get much really hot weather. It's a simmering political soup on the verge of boiling over.

At the seaside resort of Knokke-Heist, where golf carts with license plates ply well-kept streets, there was ample room to stretch out on the beach early this week. Local authorities have banished day-trippers, who include many minorities, from Belgian cities or France from its 15-kilometer (10-mile) stretch of sands until the heat wave — which saw temperatures of up to 36 degrees Celsius (97 Fahrenheit) — is over.

Down a tree-lined street, at a home that he says dates from Napoleonic times, the mayor — Count Leopold Lippens — told The Associated Press that Knokke-Heist is an exclusive area prized for its many shops, restaurants and art galleries, and that only law-abiding people should bother to come.

"We are here in a country called Belgium, where the law is the law," Lippens said. "We want the rules to be followed and if the rules are not followed, well, we will use our police force to have them followed."

"People who don't do that, they will be eradicated from this place," he said.

Asked whether he worried that banning ordinary people from spending the day might tarnish the image of his town, the mayor said: "People come because they like it, and they like it because it's quality. We don't want quantity, we want quality."

That view grates with Thierry Dupiereux, information officer with Belgium's League of Families, a social organization aimed at helping families in need, and which lobbies for policy change. He says that the beach bans deprive people of "a safety-valve that helps them unwind."

Almost 10,000 people have died from the coronavirus in Belgium — a country of just 11.5 million — and Dupiereux said the travel restrictions are "a social injustice" aimed at a part of society that has been hard-

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est hit by the disease and the job losses that followed; people “who have little money, who can’t afford a week’s vacation at the beach or holidays abroad.”

The coast is just a 90-minute train ride from the capital Brussels. Other places where people without cars could get away and cool off are poorly served by public transport. Many youths boarded trains in Brussels on Tuesday, but the Knokke-Heist station was almost empty.

At first, the national rail service SNCB resisted calls to cut the number of beach-bound trains, but caved in as political pressure mounted and will now provide fewer this coming weekend. A number of lawmakers urged Interior Minister Pieter De Crem to rein in the SNCB, notably Bjorn Answeeuw, from the populist N-VA party.

Belgium’s last government collapsed when the N-VA pulled out. The party is too big to ignore and has been central in talks to form a new administration over the 14 months since the last election. During that time, the N-VA has routinely criticized the interim government installed to manage the COVID-19 crisis. Fears over migration have proved a vote winner for the party.

“Going freely to the coast is a right that we all have. Being beach day-trippers does not make us terrorists for a day,” De Crem said. For people like those involved in Saturday’s beach riot in Blankenberge, De Crem suggested setting up a register — similar to ones used for soccer hooligans — and banning those on it from going to the coast.

Other parliamentarians expressed concern about the way police have acknowledged stopping people who merely look like the youths involved in the riot. “It wasn’t a night club bouncer who said this, it was a police officer,” said Socialist lawmaker Herve Rigot.

At the League of Families, Thierry Dupiereux said it’s difficult to work out who to believe these days, when the coronavirus, the lack of a full-time government and even a heat wave weigh on everyone’s minds and make for strange times.

“We’re in a political situation in Belgium today where a lot is at stake. We don’t always know who is acting on behalf of whom. There are lots of political games being played,” he said.

In a surprising about-face a few hours after speaking to AP, and after the parliamentary hearing — which might underline the pressures involved — Mayor Lippens announced that day-trippers could return to Knokke-Heist as of Wednesday.

Mayo reported from Knokke-Heist, Belgium. Mark Carlson in Brussels contributed to this report.

Political novices drawn to anti-Netanyahu protests in Israel

By JOSEF FEDERMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — In a summer of protests against Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the accusations of corruption and calls for him to resign could be accompanied by another familiar refrain: “I’ve never done this before.”

The boisterous rallies have brought out a new breed of first-time protesters — young, middle-class Israelis who have little history of political activity but feel that Netanyahu’s scandal-plagued rule and his handling of the coronavirus crisis have robbed them of their futures. It is a phenomenon that could have deep implications for the country’s leaders.

“It’s not only about the COVID-19 and the government’s handling of the situation,” said Shachar Oren, a 25-year-old protester. “It’s also about the people that cannot afford to eat and cannot afford to live. I am one of those people.”

Oren is among the thousands of people who gather outside Netanyahu’s official residence in Jerusalem several times a week, calling on the longtime leader to resign. The young demonstrators have delivered a boost of momentum to a movement of older, more established protesters who have been saying Netanyahu should step down when he is on trial for corruption charges.

The loose-knit movements have joined forces to portray Netanyahu as an out-of-touch leader, with the country’s most bloated government in history and seeking hundreds of thousands of dollars of tax benefits

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for himself at a time when the coronavirus outbreak is raging and unemployment has soared to over 20%.

Many of the young protesters have lost their jobs or seen their career prospects jeopardized. They have given the protests a carnival-like atmosphere, pounding on drums and dancing in the streets in colorful costumes while chanting vitriolic slogans against the prime minister.

Netanyahu has tried to dismiss the protesters as "leftists" or "anarchists." Erel Segal, a commentator close to the prime minister, has called the gatherings "a Woodstock of hatred."

Despite such claims, there are no signs that any opposition parties are organizing the gatherings. Politicians have been noticeably absent from most of the protests.

Israel has a long tradition of political protest, be it peace activists, West Bank settlers or ultra-Orthodox Jews. The new wave of protesters seems to be characterized by a broader, mainstream appeal.

"The partisan issue is totally missing, and the party organizations are not present," said Tamar Hermann, a researcher at the Israel Democracy Institute, a Jerusalem think tank and expert on protest movements.

Hermann said the protesters resemble many other protest movements around the world. "They are mostly middle class," she said. "And they were kicked out of work."

Oren, for instance, said he used to survive on a modest salary as a software analyst thanks to training he received in an Israeli military high-tech unit. Then he moved into tutoring — offering lessons in English, computers and chess to schoolchildren.

He said things weren't easy, but he was "too busy surviving" to think about political activity. That changed when the coronavirus crisis began in March.

Oren's business crashed.

With unemployment soaring, Netanyahu and his rival, Benny Gantz, formed a coalition with 34 Cabinet ministers, the largest government in Israel's history. Beyond the generous salaries, these ministers, many with vague titles, enjoy perks like drivers, security guards and office space, and can hand out jobs to cronies.

A Netanyahu ally dismissed reports that people were having trouble feeding their families as "BS."

Oren said he became "furious," and about two months ago, he went to his first protest against the nation's leaders. "They are there because we gave them the power and want them to help us. And they're not doing anything," he explained.

Oren now treks to Jerusalem from his home in the city of Kfar Saba in central Israel, about an hour away, three times a week. He is easily recognizable with his poster that says "House of Corruption," depicting Netanyahu in a pose similar to Kevin Spacey's nefarious "House of Cards" character, Frank Underwood.

Oren says he does not belong to any political party or any of the movements organizing the rallies, but that the diverse group of activists all want similar things. "No to the corruption, the poverty, the detachment. We're just saying enough," he said.

University student Stav Piltz went through a similar evolution. Living in downtown Jerusalem near Netanyahu's residence, she quickly noticed the demonstrations in her neighborhood when they began several months ago. She talked to protesters as well as local residents at the cafe where she waitressed before she was laid off.

She said she noticed a common theme. "They feel that something is very critical now in the political climate and no one is listening to the citizens and the pain we are experiencing," she said.

But Piltz said the spark that drew her to protest was a national strike last month by the country's social workers.

Piltz, herself a social work student, said she has a history of social activism but has never been involved with party politics. The collection of women, coming from different religious, political, ethnic and racial backgrounds, was a powerful sight. "This is where I saw how much power we have when we are together," she said.

The demonstrations, which have gained strength in recent weeks, are the largest sustained wave of public protests since hundreds of thousands of people took to the streets in 2011 to draw attention to the country's high cost of living. While those protests ultimately fizzled, two of their leaders entered parliament, and one, Itzik Shmuli, is now the country's welfare minister.

Both Piltz and Oren said they are determined to keep up their activities in the long term.

"People have nothing to lose. So it's very easy to go demonstrate these days, especially if you're young and you see no future here," Piltz said.

Hermann, the political analyst, said too many Israeli youths have been "politically ignorant" and that it is a "very good sign" for the country's democracy that people are becoming involved.

The leaders, however, may not be so pleased to face a politically aware young generation.

"They are much more difficult to be controlled while they gain political views and confidence," she said.

Companies test antibody drugs to treat, prevent COVID-19

By MARILYNN MARCHIONE AP Chief Medical Writer

With a coronavirus vaccine still months off, companies are rushing to test what may be the next best thing: drugs that deliver antibodies to fight the virus right away, without having to train the immune system to make them.

Antibodies are proteins the body makes when an infection occurs; they attach to a virus and help it be eliminated. Vaccines work by tricking the body into thinking there's an infection so it makes antibodies and remembers how to do that if the real bug turns up.

But it can take a month or two after vaccination or infection for the most effective antibodies to form. The experimental drugs shortcut that process by giving concentrated versions of specific ones that worked best against the coronavirus in lab and animal tests.

"A vaccine takes time to work, to force the development of antibodies. But when you give an antibody, you get immediate protection," said University of North Carolina virologist Dr. Myron Cohen. "If we can generate them in large concentrations, in big vats in an antibody factory ... we can kind of bypass the immune system."

These drugs are believed to last for a month or more and could give quick, temporary immunity to people at high risk of infection, such as health workers and housemates of someone with COVID-19. If they proved effective and if a vaccine doesn't materialize or protect as hoped, the drugs might eventually be considered for wider use, perhaps for teachers or other groups.

They're also being tested as treatments, to help the immune system and prevent severe symptoms or death.

"The hope there is to target people who are in the first week of their illness and that we can treat them with the antibody and prevent them from getting sick," said Dr. Marshall Lyon, an infectious disease specialist helping to test one such drug at Emory University in Atlanta.

Having such a tool "would be a really momentous thing in our fight against COVID," Cohen said.

Vaccines are seen as a key to controlling the virus, which has been confirmed to have infected more than 20 million people worldwide and killed more than 738,000. Several companies are racing to develop vaccines, but the results of the large final tests needed to evaluate them are months away.

The antibody drugs are "very promising" and, in contrast, could be available "fairly soon," said Dr. Janet Woodcock, a U.S. Food and Drug Administration official who is leading government efforts to speed COVID-19 therapies. Key studies are underway and some answers should come by early fall.

One company, Eli Lilly, has already started manufacturing its antibody drug, betting that studies now underway will give positive results.

"Our goal is to get something out as soon as possible" and to have hundreds of thousands of doses ready by fall, said Lilly's chief scientific officer, Dr. Daniel Skovronsky.

Another company that developed an antibody drug cocktail against Ebola — Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc. — now is testing one for coronavirus.

"The success with our Ebola program gives us some confidence that we can potentially do this again," said Christos Kyratsous, a Regeneron microbiologist who helped lead that work.

Regeneron's drug uses two antibodies to enhance chances the drug will work even if the virus evolves to evade action by one.

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Lilly is testing two different, single-antibody drugs — one with the Canadian company AbCellera and another with a Chinese company, Junshi Biosciences. In July, Junshi said no safety concerns emerged in 40 healthy people who tried it and that larger studies were getting underway.

Others working on antibody drugs include Amgen and Adaptive Biotechnologies. The Singapore biotech company Tychan Pte Ltd. also is testing an antibody drug and has similar products in development for Zika virus and yellow fever.

“I’m cautiously optimistic” about the drugs, said the nation’s top infectious diseases expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci. “I’m heartened by the experience that we had with Ebola,” where the drugs proved effective.

What could go wrong?

— The antibodies may not reach all of the places in the body where they need to act, such as deep in the lungs. All the antibody drugs are given through an IV and must make their way through the bloodstream to wherever they’re needed.

— The virus might mutate to avoid the antibody — the reason Regeneron is testing a two-antibody combo that binds to the virus in different places to help prevent its escape.

Skovronsky said Lilly stuck with one antibody because manufacturing capacity would essentially be cut in half to make two, and “you will have less doses available.” If a single antibody works, “we can treat twice as many people,” he said.

— The antibodies might not last long enough. If they fade within a month, it’s still OK for treatment since COVID-19 illness usually resolves in that time. But for prevention, it may not be practical to give infusions more often than every month or two.

A San Francisco company, Vir Biotechnology Inc., says it has engineered antibodies to last longer than they usually do to avoid this problem. GlaxoSmithKline has invested \$250 million in Vir to test them.

Giving a higher dose also may help. If half of antibodies disappear after a month, “if you give twice as much, you will have two months’ protection,” Lilly’s Skovronsky said.

— The big fear: Antibodies may do the opposite of what’s hoped and actually enhance the virus’s ability to get into cells or stimulate the immune system in a way that makes people sicker. It’s a theoretical concern that hasn’t been seen in testing so far, but large, definitive experiments are needed to prove safety. “As best as we can tell, the antibodies are helpful,” Lyon said.

Marilynn Marchione can be followed on Twitter: @MMarchioneAP

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.

Science and politics tied up in global race for a vaccine

By BEN FOX Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — No, Russia is not having a Sputnik moment.

The announcement Tuesday by Russian President Vladimir Putin that his country was the first to approve a coronavirus vaccine did not provoke the awe and wonder of the Soviet Union’s launch of the first satellite into orbit in 1957. Instead it was met by doubts about the science and safety.

But it also underscored how, like the space race, the competition to have the first vaccine is about international rivalries as well as science. The first nation to develop a way to defeat the novel coronavirus will achieve a kind of moonshot victory and the global status that goes along with it.

That’s valuable to Putin, whose popularity at home has declined amid a stagnant economy and the ravages of the virus outbreak.

“To be the first one out of the block with a coronavirus vaccine would be a real — pardon the pun — shot in the arm for the Kremlin,” said Timothy Frye, a political science professor at Columbia University who specializes in post-Soviet politics.

Certainly, Russia is not alone in viewing a vaccine in this light. China, where the virus first emerged, has

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also raced to make progress on a vaccine. A state-owned Chinese company is boasting that its employees, including top executives, received experimental shots even before the government approved testing in people.

And President Donald Trump, whose handling of the coronavirus pandemic has put his political fate in grave jeopardy, is hoping to get credit for his administration's aggressive push for a vaccine, ideally one that arrives before Election Day in November.

It's far from clear at this point whether Putin has beaten Trump to this medical milestone.

Putin said the Health Ministry gave its approval after the vaccine underwent the necessary tests and said one of his two adult daughters had been inoculated. "We should be grateful to those who have taken this first step, which is very important for our country and the whole world," he said.

No proof was offered and scientists in Russia warned that more testing would be necessary to prove it is safe and effective. Nonetheless, officials said vaccination of doctors could start as early as this month and mass vaccination may begin as early as October.

Scientists around the world have been cautioning that even if vaccine candidates are proven to work, it will take even more time to tell how long the protection will last.

"It's a too early stage to truly assess whether it's going to be effective, whether it's going to work or not," Dr. Michael Head, senior research fellow in global health at the University of Southampton.

It was also too soon to dismiss the Russian claim out of hand.

The country, though economically dependent on the export of natural resources, does have a history of achievement in science, medicine and aerospace — including becoming the first to put a person into space, in 1961.

"It is possible that they concentrated and could do this," said Daniel Fried, a retired senior U.S. diplomat. "I'm not scoffing at it, but it doesn't mean that the Russian economy is advanced."

A vaccine would be the kind of significant achievement that would elevate Putin at home and in the international community.

"They would love to be able to claim credit because the first country to develop the vaccine will gain enormous prestige," said Fried, a former assistant secretary of state for European and Eurasian affairs who is now a distinguished fellow at the Atlantic Council.

It's also possible Russia had help. The U.S., Britain and Canada last month accused hackers working for Russian intelligence of trying to steal information about a coronavirus vaccine from academic and pharmaceutical research institutions.

In any case, the public is eager for a vaccine as global deaths from the virus surpass 730,000. Some say they would even welcome one from Russia, provided it passes muster with U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration.

"I can't take it anymore. I'm getting crazy," said Fernanda Henderson, as she strapped her infant into a car seat at a park in the Maryland suburbs of Washington for a break from quarantining at home. "I don't think the CDC or the FDA would approve something that is not going to work."

But to Vesna Jezic, a 79-year-old native of Croatia and immunologist who was taking her grandchildren to the same park, the suspiciously fast progress on the vaccine announced by Putin was reason to be doubtful. "You can imagine we don't trust anything that comes from Russia," she said.

The Russian president may face similar doubts at home. Frye noted a 2018 Gallup Poll that showed the former Soviet countries have some of the highest rates of anti-vaccination sentiment in the world.

"If it turns out not to work, it would be a real black eye," he said.

Associated Press writes Michael Kunzelman in Wheaton, Maryland and Maria Cheng in London contributed to this report.

Biden picks Kamala Harris as running mate, first Black woman

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joe Biden named California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, making history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party's presidential ticket and acknowledging the vital role Black voters will play in his bid to defeat President Donald Trump.

In choosing Harris, Biden embraced a former rival from the Democratic primary who is familiar with the unique rigor of a national campaign. The 55-year-old first-term senator, who is also of South Asian descent, is one of the party's most prominent figures. She quickly became a top contender for the No. 2 spot after her own White House campaign ended.

She will appear with Biden for the first time as his running mate at an event Wednesday near his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

In announcing the pick Tuesday, Biden called Harris a "fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country's finest public servants." She said Biden would "unify the American people" and "build an America that lives up to our ideals."

Harris joins Biden at a moment of unprecedented national crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 160,000 people in the U.S., far more than the toll experienced in other countries. Business closures and disruptions resulting from the pandemic have caused severe economic problems. Unrest, meanwhile, has emerged across the country as Americans protest racism and police brutality.

Trump's uneven handling of the crises has given Biden an opening, and he enters the fall campaign in strong position against the president. In adding Harris to the ticket, he can point to her relatively centrist record on issues such as health care and her background in law enforcement in the nation's largest state.

The president told reporters Tuesday he was "a little surprised" that Biden picked Harris, pointing to their debate stage disputes during the primary. Trump, who had donated to her previous campaigns, argued she was "about the most liberal person in the U.S. Senate."

"I would have thought that Biden would have tried to stay away from that a little bit," he said.

Harris's record as California attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco was heavily scrutinized during the Democratic primary and turned away some liberals and younger Black voters who saw her as out of step on issues of racism in the legal system and police brutality. She declared herself a "progressive prosecutor" who backs law enforcement reforms.

Biden, who spent eight years as President Barack Obama's vice president, has spent months weighing who would fill that same role in his White House. He pledged in March to select a woman as his vice president, easing frustration among Democrats that the presidential race would center on two white men in their 70s.

Biden's search was expansive, including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a leading progressive; Florida Rep. Val Demings, whose impeachment criticism of Trump won party plaudits; California Rep. Karen Bass, who leads the Congressional Black Caucus; former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice; and Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, whose passionate response to unrest in her city garnered national attention.

A woman has never served as president or vice president in the United States. Hillary Clinton was the Democratic presidential nominee in 2016. Two women have been nominated as running mates on major party tickets: Democrat Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 and Republican Sarah Palin in 2008. Their parties lost in the general election.

The vice presidential pick carries increased significance this year. If elected, Biden would be 78 when inaugurated in January, the oldest man to ever assume the presidency. He's spoken of himself as a transitional figure and hasn't fully committed to seeking a second term in 2024.

Harris, born in 1964 to a Jamaican father and Indian mother, spent much of her formative years in Berkeley, California. She has often spoken of the deep bond she shared with her mother, whom she has called her single biggest influence.

Harris won her first election in 2003 when she became San Francisco's district attorney. In that post, she created a reentry program for low-level drug offenders and cracked down on student truancy.

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She was elected California's attorney general in 2010, the first woman and Black person to hold the job, and focused on issues including the foreclosure crisis. She declined to defend the state's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage and was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court.

After being elected to the Senate in 2016, she quickly gained attention for her assertive questioning of Trump administration officials during congressional hearings.

Harris launched her presidential campaign in early 2019 with the slogan "Kamala Harris For the People," a reference to her courtroom work. She was one of the highest-profile contenders in a crowded Democratic primary and attracted 20,000 people to her first campaign rally in Oakland.

But the early promise of her campaign eventually faded. Her law enforcement background prompted skepticism from some progressives, and she struggled to land on a consistent message that resonated with voters. Facing fundraising problems, she abruptly withdrew from the race in December 2019, two months before the first votes of the primary were cast.

One standout moment of her presidential campaign came at the expense of Biden. During a debate, she said Biden made "very hurtful" comments about his past work with segregationist senators and slammed his opposition to busing as schools began to integrate in the 1970s.

"There was a little girl in California who was a part of the second class to integrate her public schools, and she was bused to school every day," she said. "And that little girl was me."

Shaken by the attack, Biden called her comments "a mischaracterization of my position."

The exchange resurfaced recently with a report that one of Biden's closest friends and a co-chair of his vice presidential vetting committee, former Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd, still harbors concerns about the debate and that Harris hadn't expressed regret. The comments attributed to Dodd and first reported by Politico drew condemnation, especially from influential Democratic women who said Harris was being held to a standard that wouldn't apply to a man running for president.

Some Biden confidants said Harris' debate attack did irritate the former vice president, who had a friendly relationship with her. Harris was also close with Biden's late son, Beau, who served as Delaware attorney general while she held the same post in California.

But Biden and Harris have since returned to a warm relationship.

"Joe has empathy, he has a proven track record of leadership and more than ever before we need a president of the United States who understands who the people are, sees them where they are, and has a genuine desire to help and knows how to fight to get us where we need to be," Harris said at an event for Biden earlier this summer.

At the same event, she bluntly assailed Trump, labeling him a "drug pusher" for his promotion of the unproven and much-questioned malaria drug hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for the coronavirus. After Trump tweeted "when the looting starts, the shooting starts" in response to protests about the death of George Floyd, a Black man in police custody, Harris said his remarks "yet again show what racism looks like."

Harris has taken a tougher stand on policing since Floyd's killing. She co-sponsored legislation in June that would ban police from using chokeholds and no-knock warrants, set a national use-of-force standard and create a national police misconduct registry, among other things. It would also reform the qualified immunity system that shields officers from liability.

The list in the legislation included practices Harris did not vocally fight to reform while leading California's Department of Justice. And while she now wants independent investigations of police shootings, she didn't support a 2015 California bill that would have required her office to take on such cases.

"We made progress, but clearly we are not at the place yet as a country where we need to be and California is no exception," she told The Associated Press recently. The national focus on racial injustice now, she said, shows "there's no reason that we have to continue to wait."

Ronayne reported from Sacramento, California. Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe, Jill Colvin and Julie Pace contributed from Washington.

Greene, who made racist videos, wins GOP nod in Georgia

By BEN NADLER Associated Press

ATLANTA (AP) — Marjorie Taylor Greene, a businesswoman who has expressed support for the far-right conspiracy theory QAnon and been criticized for a series of racist comments, has won the Republican nomination for Georgia's 14th Congressional District.

Greene beat neurosurgeon John Cowan in a primary runoff for the open seat on Tuesday in the deep-red district in northwest Georgia, despite several GOP officials denouncing her campaign after videos surfaced in which she expresses racist, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim views.

"WE WON! Thank you for your support! Save America. Stop Socialism," Greene tweeted late Tuesday. A video posted to her Twitter account of her victory party showed a room full of supporters gathered closely together. Few, if any, wore face masks to protect against the coronavirus.

In a victory speech posted to social media, Greene said she decided to enter politics because the country is heading in the wrong direction.

"So the Republican establishment was against me. The DC swamp has been against me. And the lying fake news media hates my guts," she said. "Yep, it's a badge of honor."

She has amassed tens of thousands of followers on social media, where she often posts videos of herself speaking directly to the camera. Those videos have helped propel her popularity with her base, while also drawing strong condemnation from some future would-be colleagues in Congress.

In a series of videos unearthed just after Greene placed first in the initial June 9 Republican primary, she complains of an "Islamic invasion" into government offices, claims Black and Hispanic men are held back by "gangs and dealing drugs," and pushes an anti-Semitic conspiracy theory that billionaire philanthropist George Soros, who is Jewish, collaborated with the Nazis.

Several high-profile Republicans then spoke out against her. House Minority Whip Steve Scalise of Louisiana quickly threw his support behind Cowan, while Rep. Jody Hice of Georgia rescinded an endorsement of Greene.

Greene also is part of a growing list of candidates who have expressed support for QAnon, the far-right U.S. conspiracy theory popular among some supporters of President Donald Trump. Lauren Boebert, another candidate who has expressed support for QAnon, recently upset a five-term congressman in a Republican primary in Colorado.

Greene has positioned herself as a staunch Trump supporter and emphasizes a strongly pro-gun, pro-border wall and anti-abortion message. She has also connected with voters through an intensive effort to travel the district and meet people on the ground.

Larry Silker, a 72-year-old retiree, cast a ballot for Greene last week at an early voting location in Dallas, Georgia.

"She seems to be a go-getter, you know. She's out seeing everybody that she can, and I think that's nice," Silker said.

Asked whether he had seen criticism of Greene's remarks, Silker said: "Well yeah, you know, you see it. But do you put faith in it? You just have to weigh it out."

Voter Pamela Reardon said she supports Greene because she connects with people, and she's anti-abortion, a defender of the Second Amendment and "a true Christian."

"I got behind her because of her honesty," she said. "She's not going to be bought by anybody. I could tell that her heart was pure."

Reardon is familiar with criticism of Greene's social media posts and videos but says "she's never said anything racist like they say she has," and blamed attacks by her opponent's campaign.

The district stretches from the outskirts of metro Atlanta to the largely rural northwest corner of the state. Greene will face Democrat Kevin Van Ausdal in November. Van Ausdal acknowledged that he faces an uphill battle in the heavily conservative district in an interview Tuesday night and called on people across the country to rally behind his campaign.

"Honestly the local Democratic money is not a lot," he said.

"We need donors to help get out the message and show people that there is an alternative, and a great alternative, to QAnon conspiracies and divisive rhetoric," he said.

Republican Rep. Tom Graves, who did not seek reelection, last won the seat with over 76% of the vote in 2018.

AP reporter Jeff Martin contributed from Dallas, Georgia.

How it happened: Inside Biden's search for a running mate

By JULIE PACE, DAVID EGGERT and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Gretchen Whitmer wanted out.

The Michigan governor had caught the interest of Joe Biden and his vice presidential vetting committee, who were drawn to her prominence in a crucial battleground state and her aggressive response to the coronavirus outbreak there. But by late spring, the nation was in the midst of a reckoning over race and inequality following the death of George Floyd, a Black man who died after a white police officer pressed his knee into his neck for several minutes.

Whitmer sent word to Biden's team that while she was flattered, she no longer wanted to be considered for the running mate slot, according to a high-ranking Democrat familiar with the process. She recommended Biden pick a Black woman.

But Biden still wanted Whitmer in the mix, and he personally called her in mid-June to ask if she would continue on to the second, more intensive round of vetting, according to the official. Whitmer agreed.

But forces in the country, and within the Democratic Party, were indeed pushing Biden toward a history-making pick. As protests over the death of Floyd and other Black Americans filled the streets across the country, an array of Democrats urged Biden to put a Black woman on the ticket — a nod to this moment in the nation's history, to the critical role Black voters played in Biden's ascent to the Democratic nomination, and to their vital importance in his general election campaign against President Donald Trump.

On Tuesday, Biden tapped California Sen. Kamala Harris to be his running mate, making her the first Black woman to serve on a major party presidential ticket. This account of how he made that decision, the most important of his political career, is based on interviews with 10 people with direct knowledge of the vetting and selection process. Most insisted on anonymity to disclose private conversations and deliberations.

Biden, well aware of the potential pitfalls of being a 77-year-old white male standard-bearer of a party increasingly comprised of women, people of color and young voters, made clear even before he had clinched the Democratic nomination that his running mate would be a woman.

His initial list of possible contenders was sprawling: roughly 20 governors, senators, congresswomen, mayors and other Democratic stalwarts. They were young and old; Black, Hispanic, white, Asian; straight and gay. Some, including Harris, had competed against Biden for the Democratic nomination.

From the start, some Biden advisers saw Harris as a logical choice. She was among the party's most popular figures, a deft debater and a fundraising juggernaut. She had been thoroughly vetted during her own campaign and Biden's team expected there would be few surprises if she was the pick.

Indeed, Harris' potential downsides were well-known to Biden advisers. Her record as a prosecutor in California was already viewed skeptically by some younger Democrats during the primary and would face even more scrutiny against the backdrop of a national debate over inequality in the criminal justice system.

There were also nagging questions about Harris' most high-profile moment of the primary campaign — a harsh and deeply personal broadside against Biden over his position on school busing in the 1970s. Though Biden would later brush the moment aside as campaign tactics, the attack was said to have stunned the former vice president, who had considered his relationship with Harris strong. It also raised concern among a small cadre of Biden advisers that Harris would be eyeing the Oval Office herself from the start, a particular worry given that Biden has not firmly committed to serving two terms if elected in November.

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And so, as spring turned to summer, a string of other Black women would take a turn in the spotlight as Biden weighed his options. Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms and Florida Rep. Val Demings impressed Biden's team with their leadership during the police brutality protests.

Some House Democrats — including South Carolina Rep. James Clyburn, a close Biden confidant — advocated for Rep. Karen Bass, a Californian who chairs the Congressional Black Caucus. Biden also took a strong interest in Susan Rice, with whom he worked closely when she served in the White House as President Barack Obama's national security adviser.

The leading contenders, who also included Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth, submitted reams of financial records, texts of speeches and other personal information. Biden's selection team canvassed a vast array of Democrats to ask for their views on the candidates' temperament and families, then grilled the candidates on much of the same.

Biden, too, regularly discussed his potential pick with his sprawling network of friends and advisers. He used Obama in particular as a sounding board, though confidants to both men say the former president was careful not to tip his hand in those conversations as to whom he preferred.

But in private, Obama suggested to others that he believed Harris was the favorite.

In one of Harris' conversations with the vetting committee, Chris Dodd — a longtime Biden friend who served alongside him in the Senate — asked if she had remorse for her debate stage attack on his bus-ing record.

Harris, as she had previously done so publicly, brushed it aside as simply politics. Dodd, a member of the running mate selection committee, was put off and let that be known. The incident was first reported by Politico and confirmed to The Associated Press by a person with direct knowledge.

The public disclosure of Dodd's comments angered some of the highest-ranking women on Biden's campaign team. Some of Harris' allies also mobilized to defend her, including California Lt. Gov. Eleni Kounalakis, who organized a call with Biden's vetting team about two weeks ago to assuage any doubts about whether the senator was the right choice for the ticket.

On the 45-minute call, Kounalakis and other statewide officials, labor and business leaders took turns sharing their personal histories with Harris and their impressions of her as a leader.

"Speaking out as strongly as we did, collectively, helped them understand how supported she is and why," Kounalakis said on Tuesday.

The call ended with Biden's vetting team telling the Harris supporters that they had all recommended her as one of the top candidates for the job.

The pandemic had largely grounded Biden in his home state of Delaware throughout the summer, and also upended some of the ways he had expected to build a rapport with the running-mate contenders. There were no joint rallies or carefully orchestrated, yet casual-looking, outings to local restaurants in battleground states. Biden was also accepting few in-person visitors at his home.

But he did want to speak one-on-one with the women who had made it through the vetting process and interviews with his selection committee. He would hold conversations with 11 women in the final nine days before he made his pick — a mixture of in-person meetings and video teleconferences.

Whitmer was among those who flew to Delaware for an in-person audience. She boarded a private plane in Lansing, Michigan, on Aug. 2, spending just a few hours on the ground before returning to Michigan.

Rice, who had perhaps the closest personal relationship with Biden of all the contenders, spoke twice with Biden in recent days. Duckworth also had a formal interview over the weekend, as did Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams, who was initially viewed as a leading contender for the job.

On Tuesday, in the hours before his campaign announced Harris as the pick, Biden would call each of those women to inform them that they had not been selected. Warren, whose relationship with Biden has deepened in recent months through regular policy discussions, was also among those to receive a personal call from the former vice president.

In some of the conversations, Biden left open an opportunity. Please consider joining me in another role in the administration, he said.

Eggert reported from Lansing, Michigan, and Ronayne from Sacramento, California. Associated Press writers Bill Barrow in Atlanta, Will Weissert in Wilmington, Delaware, and Laurie Kellman in Washington contributed to this report.

Big Ten, Pac-12 pull plug on fall football amid pandemic

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Football Writer

A crumbling college football season took a massive hit Tuesday when the Big Ten and Pac-12, two historic and powerful conferences, succumbed to the pandemic and canceled their fall football seasons.

Five months almost to the day after the first spikes in coronavirus cases in the U.S. led to the cancellation of the NCAA basketball tournaments, the still raging pandemic is tearing down another American sports institution: fall Saturdays filled with college football.

"This was an extremely difficult and painful decision that we know will have important impacts on our student-athletes, coaches, administrators and our fans," Pac-12 Commissioner Larry Scott said. "We know nothing will ease that."

Despite pleas from players, coaches and President Donald Trump in recent days to play on, 40% of major college football teams have now decided to punt on a fall season, a decision that will cost schools tens of millions of dollars and upends traditions dating back a century.

Both conferences cited the risk of trying to keep players from contracting and spreading the coronavirus when the programs are not operating in a bubble like the NBA and NHL are doing. They also cited the broader state of the pandemic in the United States, which has had more than 5 million cases of COVID-19.

"Every life is critical," first-year Big Ten Commissioner Kevin Warren told the AP. "We wanted to make sure we continually, not only in our words but in our actions, do put the health and safety and wellness of our student-athletes first."

Two smaller conferences, the Mid-American and Mountain West, had already announced the uncertain move to spring football. The decisions by the deep-pocketed Big Ten and Pac-12, with hundred million-dollar television contracts and historic programs, shook the foundation of college sports.

What's next?

The Southeastern Conference and Atlantic Coast Conference released statements expressing cautious optimism. The Big 12 was quiet, but a person familiar with the conference's discussions told The Associated Press the league was continuing to work toward playing in the fall. The person spoke on condition of anonymity because the conference was not planning to make its internal discussions public. The Big 12 has still not released its revised schedule.

Outside the Power Five conferences, the American Athletic Conference, Conference USA and Sun Belt made no immediate moves.

"Everyone is going to make their independent decisions and I certainly respect our colleagues," Scott said. "We try to be very collaborative, communicative with our peers across the country. But at the end of the day, our presidents and chancellors looked at what was in best interest of Pac-12 student-athletes based on the advice and frankly what's going on in our communities."

The Big Ten said it was postponing all fall sports and hoping to make them up in the second semester. An hour later, the Pac-12, the Big Ten's Rose Bowl partner, said all sports would be paused until Jan. 1, including basketball.

Players around the country were stunned. Many had recently taken to social media with the hashtag #WeWanttoPlay. Ohio State star quarterback Justin Fields was among those trying to present a unified front and save their season.

After the announcement, Fields simply posted to Twitter: "smh," short for shaking my head.

"Our lives are changing forever right before our eyes," Arizona offensive lineman Donovan Laie tweeted.

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Less than a week ago, the Big Ten — which includes perennial powers such as Ohio State, Michigan, Nebraska and Penn State — had released a revised conference-only football schedule it hoped would help it navigate a fall season filled with potential COVID-19 disruptions.

Even after the Big Ten made its call, there were diverging thoughts about how it should have proceeded.

Ohio State athletic director Gene Smith said he would have liked to have pushed back the season from Sept. 5 to maybe early October.

“Wish we could have had a little bit more time to evaluate, but we certainly understand this was the time we had to pull the plug,” Smith told the Big Ten network.

A statement from Nebraska’s president, athletic director and coach was more stern: “We are very disappointed in the decision by the Big Ten Conference to postpone the fall football season, as we have been and continue to be ready to play.”

Nebraska coach Scott Frost and Ohio State coach Ryan Day had both suggested Monday that if the Big Ten did not play their schools might look elsewhere for games.

“We have 14 schools in the Big Ten right now and I expect to have 14 schools in the Big Ten,” Warren said.

In the Pac-12, where Southern California, Oregon, Washington and Stanford have won championships in recent years, there seemed to more consensus.

“We feel good about our decision,” Oregon President Michael Schill said. “We would have made this decision independent of the Big Ten. We respect the institutions in the Big Ten. Many of them have the same values we have. We’re pleased they are joining us.”

The cost of losing football will be devastating to athletic departments. The Big Ten distributed more than \$50 million to most of its members in 2018, but most of that came from media rights deals and a conference TV network powered by football. Maybe some can be recouped in the spring, but there are bills to pay now.

Wisconsin of the Big Ten has estimated \$100 million in losses with no football at all. Michigan said it could be in the red more than that.

“We do have a reserve that will take us so far, but we’re going to have to have some layoffs,” Wisconsin athletic director Barry Alvarez said. “There will be some of our units that won’t be working. Those are things we have a plan for. Those are very difficult decisions to make.”

Over the last month, conferences had been reworking schedules in the hopes of being able to buy time and play a season. The Big Ten was the first to settle on conference-only play, in early July, and all the Power Five conferences eventually switched to either all or mostly conference play.

The idea behind it was to create flexibility to deal with the possibility of having to cancel or reschedule games because of COVID-19 outbreaks, like the ones that have hit Major League Baseball.

It also created an every-conference-for-itself atmosphere that could now lead to two college football seasons — one in the fall and one in the spring. Or maybe none at all.

Follow Ralph D. Russo at <https://twitter.com/ralphDrussoAP> and listen at <http://www.westwoodonepodcasts.com/pods/ap-top-25-college-football-podcast/>

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Biden picks Kamala Harris as running mate, first Black woman

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joe Biden named California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate on Tuesday, making history by selecting the first Black woman to compete on a major party’s presidential ticket and acknowledging the vital role Black voters will play in his bid to defeat President Donald Trump.

In choosing Harris, Biden is embracing a former rival from the Democratic primary who is familiar with the unique rigor of a national campaign. The 55-year-old first-term senator, who is also of South Asian

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descent, is one of the party's most prominent figures. She quickly became a top contender for the No. 2 spot after her own White House campaign ended.

She will appear with Biden for the first time as his running mate at an event Wednesday near his home in Wilmington, Delaware.

In announcing the pick, Biden called Harris a "fearless fighter for the little guy, and one of the country's finest public servants." She said Biden would "unify the American people" and "build an America that lives up to our ideals."

Harris joins Biden at a moment of unprecedented national crisis. The coronavirus pandemic has claimed the lives of more than 160,000 people in the U.S., far more than the toll experienced in other countries. Business closures and disruptions resulting from the pandemic have caused severe economic problems. Unrest, meanwhile, has emerged across the country as Americans protest racism and police brutality.

Trump's uneven handling of the crises has given Biden an opening, and he enters the fall campaign in strong position against the president. In adding Harris to the ticket, he can point to her relatively centrist record on issues such as health care and her background in law enforcement in the nation's largest state.

The president told reporters Tuesday he was "a little surprised" that Biden picked Harris, pointing to their debate stage disputes during the primary. Trump, who had donated to her previous campaigns, argued she was "about the most liberal person in the U.S. Senate."

"I would have thought that Biden would have tried to stay away from that a little bit," he said.

Harris's record as California attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco was heavily scrutinized during the Democratic primary and turned away some liberals and younger Black voters who saw her as out of step on issues of racism in the legal system and police brutality. She declared herself a "progressive prosecutor" who backs law enforcement reforms.

Biden, who spent eight years as President Barack Obama's vice president, has spent months weighing who would fill that same role in his White House. He pledged in March to select a woman as his vice president, easing frustration among Democrats that the presidential race would center on two white men in their 70s.

Biden's search was expansive, including Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, a leading progressive; Florida Rep. Val Demings, whose impeachment criticism of Trump won party plaudits; California Rep. Karen Bass, who leads the Congressional Black Caucus; former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice; and Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, whose passionate response to unrest in her city garnered national attention.

A woman has never served as president or vice president in the United States. Hillary Clinton was the Democratic presidential nominee in 2016. Two women have been nominated as running mates on major party tickets: Democrat Geraldine Ferraro in 1984 and Republican Sarah Palin in 2008. Their parties lost in the general election.

The vice presidential pick carries increased significance this year. If elected, Biden would be 78 when inaugurated in January, the oldest man to ever assume the presidency. He's spoken of himself as a transitional figure and hasn't fully committed to seeking a second term in 2024.

Harris, born in 1964 to a Jamaican father and Indian mother, spent much of her formative years in Berkeley, California. She has often spoken of the deep bond she shared with her mother, whom she has called her single biggest influence.

Harris won her first election in 2003 when she became San Francisco's district attorney. In that post, she created a reentry program for low-level drug offenders and cracked down on student truancy.

She was elected California's attorney general in 2010, the first woman and Black person to hold the job, and focused on issues including the foreclosure crisis. She declined to defend the state's Proposition 8, which banned same-sex marriage and was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court.

After being elected to the Senate in 2016, she quickly gained attention for her assertive questioning of Trump administration officials during congressional hearings.

Harris launched her presidential campaign in early 2019 with the slogan "Kamala Harris For the People,"

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a reference to her courtroom work. She was one of the highest-profile contenders in a crowded Democratic primary and attracted 20,000 people to her first campaign rally in Oakland.

But the early promise of her campaign eventually faded. Her law enforcement background prompted skepticism from some progressives, and she struggled to land on a consistent message that resonated with voters. Facing fundraising problems, she abruptly withdrew from the race in December 2019, two months before the first votes of the primary were cast.

One standout moment of her presidential campaign came at the expense of Biden. During a debate, she said Biden made "very hurtful" comments about his past work with segregationist senators and slammed his opposition to busing as schools began to integrate in the 1970s.

"There was a little girl in California who was a part of the second class to integrate her public schools, and she was bused to school every day," she said. "And that little girl was me."

Shaken by the attack, Biden called her comments "a mischaracterization of my position."

The exchange resurfaced recently with a report that one of Biden's closest friends and a co-chair of his vice presidential vetting committee, former Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd, still harbors concerns about the debate and that Harris hadn't expressed regret. The comments attributed to Dodd and first reported by Politico drew condemnation, especially from influential Democratic women who said Harris was being held to a standard that wouldn't apply to a man running for president.

Some Biden confidants said Harris' debate attack did irritate the former vice president, who had a friendly relationship with her. Harris was also close with Biden's late son, Beau, who served as Delaware attorney general while she held the same post in California.

But Biden and Harris have since returned to a warm relationship.

"Joe has empathy, he has a proven track record of leadership and more than ever before we need a president of the United States who understands who the people are, sees them where they are, and has a genuine desire to help and knows how to fight to get us where we need to be," Harris said at an event for Biden earlier this summer.

At the same event, she bluntly assailed Trump, labeling him a "drug pusher" for his promotion of the unproven and much-questioned malaria drug hydroxychloroquine as a treatment for the coronavirus. After Trump tweeted "when the looting starts, the shooting starts" in response to protests about the death of George Floyd, a Black man in police custody, Harris said his remarks "yet again show what racism looks like."

Harris has taken a tougher stand on policing since Floyd's killing. She co-sponsored legislation in June that would ban police from using chokeholds and no-knock warrants, set a national use-of-force standard and create a national police misconduct registry, among other things. It would also reform the qualified immunity system that shields officers from liability.

The list in the legislation included practices Harris did not vocally fight to reform while leading California's Department of Justice. And while she now wants independent investigations of police shootings, she didn't support a 2015 California bill that would have required her office to take on such cases.

"We made progress, but clearly we are not at the place yet as a country where we need to be and California is no exception," she told The Associated Press recently. The national focus on racial injustice now, she said, shows "there's no reason that we have to continue to wait."

Ronayne reported from Sacramento, California. Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe, Jill Colvin and Julie Pace contributed from Washington.

The Latest: Omar holds off well-funded primary challenger

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Latest on Tuesday's elections (all times local):

10:25 p.m.

Rep. Ilhan Omar of Minnesota has survived a stiff Democratic primary challenge from a well-funded opponent who tried to make an issue of her national celebrity.

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Omar defeated Antone Melton-Meaux, an attorney and mediator who raised millions of dollars. The victory means Omar is nearly certain to easily win a second term in November in her solidly liberal 5th Congressional District.

Omar in 2018 became one of the first two Muslim women elected to Congress, building on a national profile that started when the onetime refugee from Somalia was elected to the Minnesota Legislature just two years earlier.

Her aggressive advocacy on liberal issues, and her eagerness to take on Donald Trump, made her even more prominent. She is known as one of the four "squad" members of progressive first-term congresswomen of color.

9:45 p.m.

Marjorie Taylor Greene has won the Republican nomination for Georgia's 14th Congressional District.

She's a businesswoman who has expressed support for the far-right conspiracy theory QAnon and has been criticized for a series of racist comments.

Greene beat neurosurgeon John Cowan in a primary runoff for the open seat on Tuesday.

That's despite several GOP officials denouncing her campaign after videos surfaced in which she expresses racist, anti-Semitic and anti-Muslim views. She has responded to the criticism by blasting "the fake news media" and "the DC swamp."

Her victory comes in a deep-red area in northwest Georgia.

Greene will face Democrat Kevin Van Ausdal in November. Republican Rep. Tom Graves, who did not seek reelection, last won the seat with over 76% of the vote in 2018.

9:37 p.m.

Former Rep. Jason Lewis has won Minnesota's five-way Republican primary for Senate.

Lewis, a one-term congressman and former conservative radio host, had the name recognition and money to easily beat several challengers on Tuesday. Lewis has spent months on a mostly virtual campaign aimed at taking down Democratic Sen. Tina Smith.

He has been an outspoken critic of the state's coronavirus restrictions, and he has worked to tie Smith to what he calls "heavy-handed lockdown measures."

Smith is seeking election to her first full term since being appointed to replace Al Franken after Franken was caught up in sexual misconduct allegations. She won the Democratic primary Tuesday.

The fall campaign is shaping up as a referendum on President Donald Trump, who came close to carrying Minnesota in 2016 and is making an extra push to win the state this time.

9:34 p.m.

Democratic Sen. Tina Smith has won the Democratic primary in Minnesota as she seeks to win her first full term in the seat once held by Al Franken.

Smith faced four little-known opponents on Tuesday. She was appointed to the seat in early 2018 after Franken resigned amid sexual misconduct allegations. She won an election later that year to finish the remainder of his term.

Smith is a former lieutenant governor. Jason Lewis, a one-term congressman and a former syndicated radio talk show host, was the favorite among Republicans seeking to challenge her in November. He is a staunch Trump supporter.

The fall campaign is shaping up as a referendum on President Donald Trump, who came close to carrying Minnesota in 2016 and is making an extra push to win the state this time.

Smith says she has a record of working across party lines to get things done despite being in the minority in the GOP-controlled Senate.

9:15 p.m.

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Vermont Lt. Gov. David Zuckerman has won the state's Democratic gubernatorial primary.

Zuckerman will go up against incumbent Republican Gov. Phil Scott in the November general election. On Tuesday, Zuckerman defeated former Vermont Education Secretary Rebecca Holcombe and two lesser-known candidates to win the party's gubernatorial nomination.

The 48-year-old Zuckerman, a Hinesburg farmer, says he was motivated to run by what he calls "the imperative nature of the climate crisis." Zuckerman says he thinks Scott is "a really admirable person," but he hasn't been really visionary on how to address these issues.

Scott cruised to the Republican Party's nomination to seek his third, two-year term as the state's governor.

8:50 p.m.

Vermont Gov. Phil Scott has won the Republican nomination to seek his third, two-year term as the state's top elected official.

Scott defeated four little-known Republican challengers on Tuesday to win his party's nomination to run in the November election.

He didn't hire staff or actively campaign during the primary, citing the coronavirus.

When announcing his reelection plans in May, Scott said, "Facing, fighting and defeating this virus — and rebuilding a stronger, more resilient economy — are my top priorities."

On the Democratic side, there's a competitive race for the nomination between Lt. Gov. David Zuckerman and former Education Secretary Rebecca Holcombe, who has never run for office. There are also two lesser-known Democratic candidates.

Vermont and New Hampshire are the only two states in the country where governors serve two-year terms.

8:20 p.m.

Joe Biden has won Connecticut's Democratic presidential primary.

Biden defeated Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and Hawaii Rep. Tulsi Gabbard on Tuesday's ballot. Sanders and Gabbard dropped out of the race months ago but didn't ask the secretary of the state's office to remove their names from the ballot.

Biden visited Connecticut in October, when he appeared at a fundraiser hosted by Democratic Gov. Ned Lamont and his wife, Annie, at their home in Greenwich.

Biden was expected to visit the state in March for another fundraising event at a private home, but that was scrapped because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Biden is set to be formally nominated as the Democratic presidential nominee at next week's Democratic National Convention. On Tuesday, he announced California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate.

In 2016, Connecticut went for Democrat Hillary Clinton over the Republican Trump by about 13 percentage points.

8:15 p.m.

President Donald Trump has won Connecticut's Republican presidential primary.

Trump on Tuesday defeated California real estate developer and perennial candidate Rocky De La Fuente. Former Massachusetts Gov. William Weld and former Illinois congressman Joe Walsh were also in the race at one point but later withdrew.

Connecticut Republican Party chair J.R. Romano had criticized Secretary of the State Denise Merrill for holding a GOP primary, saying it was a waste of money for communities because Trump faced no viable competition. Merrill argued that she was following state law.

De La Fuente was endorsed by the Alliance and Reform parties and has appeared on the ballot in at least a half dozen states as a Republican. He is the onetime owner of more than two dozen car dealerships.

In 2016, Connecticut went for Democrat Hillary Clinton over the Republican Trump by about 13 percentage points.

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10:40 a.m.

A Republican congressional candidate in Connecticut has abruptly ended his campaign on the day of his primary election following his arrest on a domestic assault charge.

The state Republican Party says Thomas Gilmer was arrested late Monday and dropped out of the race because of "the severity of the accusations." The party had endorsed Gilmer over his primary opponent.

Wethersfield police say Gilmer was charged on a warrant with first-degree unlawful restraint and second-degree strangulation and posted a \$5,000 bond.

In a statement obtained by the Hartford Courant, Gilmer said, "I cannot in good conscience move forward in this campaign while I am simultaneously forced to clear my name. And clear my name I will."

The 29-year-old Gilmer, of Madison, was competing against Justin Anderson, of East Haddam, a lieutenant colonel in the Connecticut Army National Guard who served two combat tours in Afghanistan. The winner of the race in November will face U.S. Rep. Joe Courtney, a Democrat who is favored to win reelection to represent a district spanning eastern Connecticut.

1000s of Korean laborers still lost after WWII, Cold War end

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — Shin Yun-sun describes her life as a maze of dead ends.

The South Korean has spent many of her 75 years pestering government officials, digging into records and searching burial grounds on a desolate Russian island, desperately searching for traces of a father she never met.

Shin wants to bring back the remains of her presumed-dead father for her ailing 92-year-old mother, Baek Bong-rye. Japan's colonial government conscripted Shin's father for forced labor from their farming village in September 1943, when Baek was pregnant with Shin.

As the 75th anniversary of the end of the war nears, the thousands of conscripted Korean men who vanished on Sakhalin Island are a largely forgotten legacy of Japan's brutal rule of the Korean Peninsula, which ended with Tokyo's Aug. 15, 1945, surrender.

Shin vows to never stop searching for her father but fears time is running out.

"Family members (of Sakhalin laborers) are dying every day, and I can't even put into words how impatient I feel," Shin recently told The Associated Press at her Seoul home.

It's unclear what happened to many of the forced Korean conscripts on Sakhalin. They disappeared during extreme tumult.

WWII ended with the Korean Peninsula divided into a Soviet-backed north and U.S.-backed south, and the devastating 1950-53 Korean War followed. In the ensuing decades, Cold War animosities saw the rival Koreas regularly threatening each other with war.

About 400 aging relatives like Shin hope to bring back the remains of the missing workers, seeking closure after years of emotional misery and economic hardship.

Historians say Japan forcibly mobilized around 30,000 Koreans as workers during the late 1930s and 1940s on what was then called Karafuto, or the Japanese-occupied southern half of Sakhalin, near the northern Japanese island of Hokkaido.

They endured grueling labor in coal mines and logging and construction sites as part of Imperial Japan's wartime economy, which became heavily dependent on conscripted Korean labor when Japanese men were sent to war fronts.

Families thought their loved ones would return when Japan's surrender in WWII cemented the Soviet Union's full control over Sakhalin.

Soviet authorities repatriated thousands of Japanese nationals from Sakhalin. But they refused to send back the Koreans, who had become stateless after the war, apparently to meet labor shortages in the island's coal mines and elsewhere.

Moscow's attitude hardened further after Communist ally North Korea invaded South Korea in June 1950;

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most of the Korean laborers in Sakhalin had come from the South.

South Korea and Russia established diplomatic relations in 1990 and about 4,000 Koreans have returned from Sakhalin since. But people like Shin who lost track of their relatives long before then have seen little progress.

"The Soviet Union detained him, prevented him from going home and exploited his labor," Shin said about her father, who, according to Russian records, worked at a logging site at least until the end of 1951.

"(The Russian government) should at least find and send back his remains."

Last year, Shin and other relatives submitted petitions to a United Nations group for help locating 25 Sakhalin Koreans. The U.N. group in June asked Russia's government to search for 10 of them first, said Ethan Hee-Seok Shin, a legal advocate from the Seoul-based Transitional Justice Working Group who has helped with the petitions.

While Soviet authorities offered the Korean workers Soviet or North Korean citizenship beginning in the 1950s, many chose to remain stateless in hopes of eventually returning to South Korea.

When some Korean workers protested for a return to South Korea in 1976, Soviet officials responded by sending 40 of them and their families to North Korea, a move that silenced further complaints.

Until the 1990s, it was also difficult for South Koreans to campaign for repatriation because people with family connections in communist countries were often stigmatized amid broad anti-communist sentiment.

Shin said it has only been the last two decades when relatives felt comfortable talking openly about their missing fathers. This meant their plight got less attention than other atrocities tied to Japan's colonial rule of Korea, including military sexual slavery and labor conscriptions to mainland Japan, said Bang Il-kwon, a scholar at Seoul's Hankuk University of Foreign Studies.

Another searching family member, Lee Gwang-nam, 76, bears a striking resemblance to his missing father, who was conscripted on the same day as Shin's father from their hometown of Imsil.

Lee is eager to end a "lifelong wait" by his 93-year-old mother, who wants to be buried with her husband when she dies.

Lee received a letter from an ethnic Korean in Sakhalin in 1990 who claimed of hearing that his father had died, sometime in the late 1960s. He still has no idea where his father was buried.

It wasn't until 2011 when a South Korean government commission investigating colonial-era forced mobilization arranged joint efforts with Russia to identify and return the remains of the Koreans in Sakhalin who died before the 1990s.

After spending years examining dozens of the island's poorly kept cemeteries, where stone or wooden markers were often missing, damaged or indistinguishable, South Korean researchers concluded in 2015 that at least 5,000 graves belonged to Korean forced laborers.

But the efforts lost momentum after Seoul's previous conservative government refused to extend the commission's mandate after 2015. There's been little talk about reviving the activities under the liberal government of President Moon Jae-in, which has clashed with Japan over other wartime grievances but also wants engagement with North Korea.

Bang, who traveled extensively to Sakhalin in past years while helping with the South Korean searches, said the findings remain partial because Russia has refused to allow extensive access to past records of foreign residents, which it protests over privacy safeguards.

Chung Su-jin can't remember the face of the father he last saw in 1942.

He does remember the packed truck that drove away with his father and other labor conscripts from their village in Uiseong. Chung's grandfather scurried across a river in hopes of seeing his son one last time, but the workers were already gone.

Chung's family, which was already poor, struggled desperately in his father's absence. Chung said he worked as a farmhand for other households from the age of 6, so that he could eat and help support his mother, now dead, and two younger siblings.

"All I inherited was poverty," said Chung, who at 83 still cleans buildings to make ends meet.

While Seoul has said it hopes to reach a new agreement with Moscow that would expand efforts to find and return the remains, Lee Sang-won, an official from Seoul's Ministry of the Interior and Safety,

admits nothing has been fleshed out yet.

Shin bristles at the slow progress.

“Who knows how long it will be before my mother is gone, too?” she said.

Worldwide virus cases top 20 million, doubling in six weeks

By MARK STEVENSON, NICKY FORSTER and MICHELLE R. SMITH Associated Press

It took six months for the world to reach 10 million confirmed cases of the coronavirus. It took just over six weeks for that number to double.

The worldwide count of known COVID-19 infections climbed past 20 million on Monday, with more than half of them from just three countries: the U.S., India and Brazil, according to the tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

The average number of new cases per day in the U.S. has declined in recent weeks but is still running high at over 54,000, versus almost 59,000 in India and nearly 44,000 in Brazil.

In other developments Tuesday:

— Russia became the first country to approve a vaccine against the virus. While a proven coronavirus vaccine would be an epic medical breakthrough, the move raised alarms among scientists because the shots have not been subjected to large-scale testing in humans. They have only been studied in dozens of people, not the thousands typically involved.

— The Big Ten and Pac-12 announced they won't play football this fall because of the virus, taking two of college sports' five powerhouse conferences out of the season. The Big Ten includes Ohio State, Michigan, Nebraska and Penn State, while the Pac-12 includes Arizona, Arizona State, UCLA, the University of Southern California, Oregon, Utah and Washington. College football's lack of centralized leadership leaves every conference to decide for itself.

The severe and sustained crisis in the U.S. — over 5 million cases and 163,000 deaths, easily the highest totals of any country — has dismayed and surprised many around the world, given the nation's vaunted scientific ingenuity and the head start it had over Europe and Asia to prepare.

South Africa, Colombia, Mexico, Peru, Argentina, Russia and the Philippines round out the list of the top 10 countries contributing the most new cases to the global tally since July 22, according to an Associated Press analysis of Johns Hopkins data through Monday.

The real number of people infected by the virus around the world is believed to be much higher — perhaps 10 times higher in the U.S., according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — given testing limitations and the many mild cases that have gone unreported or unrecognized.

Some of the worst-hit nations have been those whose leaders have downplayed the severity of COVID-19, undercut the advice of health experts and pushed unproven remedies.

President Donald Trump, Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro and Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, for example, all rarely wear masks and have resisted calls for strict lockdowns. Trump and Bolsonaro have promoted the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, even though studies have shown it to be useless against the virus, with potentially deadly side effects.

In the U.S., Mexico and Brazil, testing has been criticized as inadequate. While the U.S. has ramped up testing in recent months, Americans have faced discouragingly long lines and delays in getting the results. In Mexico, 47% of tests are coming back positive, suggesting that only seriously ill people are getting screened.

Contact tracing, which has helped authorities in other countries get a handle on the spread, has also been criticized as insufficient in all three countries.

The U.S., with about 4% of the world's population, accounts for about 25% of the known coronavirus infections and 22% of the deaths.

Mexico has reported nearly 500,000 cases and more than 50,300 deaths, but the president's point man on the epidemic, Assistant Health Secretary Hugo López-Gatell, said a full lockdown would prove too costly for people with little savings and tenuous daily incomes.

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"We do not want a solution that would, in social terms, be more costly than the disease itself," he said. Cases have begun to rise significantly in Caracas, Venezuela, perhaps one of the world's least-prepared cities to face the pandemic.

The country has been under a lockdown since March, but limited testing, open defiance of quarantine measures and the return of tens of thousands of Venezuelan migrants from countries with higher case-loads have resulted in a steady expansion that is starting to overwhelm hospitals with scarce supplies.

"What has been successful in other countries is massive testing and isolating the population that is sick," said Domingo Subero, 66, an engineer worried about the situation in Caracas. "Here, neither of those two things is happening."

Elsewhere around the world, New Zealand, which has been praised for quickly getting the virus under control, reported the first cases of local transmission in the country in 102 days. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said four cases were discovered in a single Auckland household.

Associated Press journalists from around the world contributed to this report.

'If not now, when?': Black women seize political spotlight

By CLAIRE GALOFARO and KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

MARIETTA, Ga. (AP) — The little girl ran up to her, wide-eyed and giddy.

"Are you Charisse Davis?" the fourth grader asked.

Davis was stunned. A former kindergarten teacher and librarian, she was more accustomed to shuttling her two sons to basketball practice than being seen as a local celebrity. But now she had been elected the only Black woman on the Cobb County School Board, gaining office in a once conservative suburban community where people who look like her rarely held positions of power.

Something had changed in this place, and something had changed in her.

"I love your hair — your hair looks like my hair," the girl squealed, calling friends over.

It was a moment both innocent and revealing: Not just a child seeing herself in an elected leader, but also a reflection of the rapidly building power of Black women. It's a momentous change that could make history on a national ticket and determine the outcome of the presidential race.

EDITOR'S NOTE — Americans are preparing to choose a leader and a path through a time of extraordinary division and turmoil. Associated Press journalists tell their stories in the series "America Disrupted."

Black women have long been the heart of the Democratic Party — among the party's most reliable and loyal voters — but for decades that allegiance didn't translate to their own political rise. There have been zero Black female governors, just two senators, several dozen congresswomen.

And the people representing them instead have not met their needs: Disparities in education and opportunity resulted in Black women making on average 64 cents for every dollar a white man makes. Long-standing health inequities have caused Black people to die disproportionately from COVID-19.

And countless cases of police brutality have left many Black women terrified every time their children pulled out of the driveway, fearing that they might not make it home alive.

Now Black women are mobilized and demanding an overdue return on their investment. Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden on Tuesday named Kamala Harris as his running mate, making the California senator the first Black woman on a major party's presidential ticket.

The milestone comes after years of political work across America, where Black women have been running and winning elections in historic numbers, from Congress to county school boards.

This transformation is taking place in once unlikely places, suburban counties in the South. Places like Cobb, a rambling expanse of strip malls and subdivisions just north of Atlanta that doubled in population midway through the last century as white people fled the city. Then, slowly, families of color followed, also seeking bigger yards and better schools.

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The year Charisse Davis was born, 1980, Cobb County was 4.5% African American. Now it's more than 27% Black and 13% Hispanic. Its politics caught up with its demographics: In 2016 Hillary Clinton was the first Democratic presidential candidate to eke out a win in Cobb County since Jimmy Carter, a Georgian, in 1976.

President Donald Trump's presidency, which has fueled racial divisions and appealed to white grievance, unleashed for some here an overwhelming urgency. They added their names to down-ticket ballots; they canvassed; they knocked on doors.

When Stacey Abrams, a Black progressive Democrat, ran for governor in 2018, she focused her campaign on women of color. In that election, more than 51,000 Black women in Cobb County cast ballots — 20,000 more than voted in midterm elections four year earlier.

Although Abrams lost narrowly statewide, she won Cobb County handily. Meanwhile, Lucy McBath, a Black mother whose 17-year-old son was killed by a white man who thought his music was too loud, won a congressional seat that includes part of the county, a district once held by conservative firebrand Newt Gingrich.

Charisse Davis looked at the school board members and saw no Black women, so she ran and won. Another Black woman became the chair of the county's young Republicans. Two joined the Superior Court bench. A teenager ran for class president, and she won, too.

"We've been watching from the sidelines and allowing other people to take their turns, and take these positions of power," Davis said. "Now here we are to essentially fix it."

The first county Democratic Party meeting after Trump's election was standing room only.

"It was almost like a support group. We had to be together, we had to grieve and yell," Davis said. "What happened?"

Across the county, there was soul searching over how Clinton lost white, working-class voters, but much less on why Democrats also lost some of the support of this core constituency.

Historically Black women vote in extraordinary numbers, and they don't vote alone: They usher their families, their churches, their neighbors to the polls.

But in 2016, African Americans did not turn out in the numbers the party had come to expect. For the first time in 20 years, their turnout declined in a presidential election. About 70% of eligible Black women voted in 2012 when President Barack Obama, the first Black president, secured a second term. But in 2016 that number slipped to 64%, its pre-Obama level.

While there were multiple reasons for Clinton's loss, including a large defection of white voters, some saw the drop-off as a sign that Black voters had been taken for granted. Organizations sprang up across the country to motivate Black women to organize, run and win.

"We have never been at this moment," said Aimee Allison, who in 2018 founded the network She the People, which is working to turn out a million women of color across seven battleground states. "For us as a group to recognize our own political power means that we also are demanding to govern."

The power of Black voters was demonstrated when they overwhelmingly backed Biden in the South Carolina primary, giving him a staggering victory that rescued his campaign and set him on a path to the nomination. Black women made up about one-third of the Democratic voters in the state and roughly two-thirds voted for Biden, according to the AP VoteCast survey.

Biden quickly pledged to pick a woman as his running mate, and selected Harris from a list of that included several Black contenders — including California Rep. Karen Bass, who neatly summed up Black women's goals: "representation, acknowledgement, inclusion," she said.

Those who advocate for Black women in politics say the stakes have never been higher.

They emphasize that Trump's administration has failed to contain the coronavirus that has killed more than 154,000 Americans, a disproportionate share of them African Americans. He has responded to mass demonstrations over police violence by calling protesters thugs and encouraging law enforcement to beat them back with force.

"Given how directly Black women have been impacted by the incompetence and the malfeasance of the Trump administration, Black women are going to be at the forefront, not only giving rise to voter turnout,

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but also shaping the conversations that we will be having in this election season," said Abrams, who was also considered a possible Biden running mate. "It has been a sea change in how vital our voices have been."

Black women can meet this moment in a way no one else can, they say: The world watched the video of George Floyd begging for his mother as he was dying under a police officer's knee.

Charisse Davis' sons, 10 and 14 years old, asked her: Why won't the officer just let him get up?

When she looks at her own sons, she sees her babies. But the older boy is now taller than she is. He likes hoodies. She worries a stranger might see him as a menace, not a boy whose mother still has to remind him to floss his teeth.

"That is the reality of being a Black mother in this country," she said.

She gets messages after school board meetings: "People like you are the problem," one said. "She's a racist," a man wrote. Another described her as "defiant," and said he had his son watch school board meetings "to see how he shouldn't behave."

She hears: You don't belong there.

"You are dismantling the machine, rocking the boat, and all of those things are the way that they are by design," she said, and added that one of the high schools in the district she represents is named after a Confederate officer.

"That is what the country is built on, that is racism, that is systemic racism, that is white supremacy. It's all these things we don't talk about. But if not now, when?"

When Chinita Allen's 20-year-old son was home from college earlier this year, he and a friend went to work out at their old high school in the affluent, predominantly white part of the county where they live. He had been a football star there. But someone saw two Black men and called the police to report suspicion.

She posted her son's story on Facebook, and it rocketed around this community.

In the not-so-distant past, she might not have spoken up. A soccer mom and educator, she had long avoided talking about race, rocking the boat — until Trump won. Now she's the president of Cobb Democratic Women and leading the charge to try to turn the county totally blue.

"It's all about knowing your worth," she said. "We've always been here, like the Underground Railroad. But it's surfaced now. In a big way. It's a rail train."

Black women powered the civil rights movement, but rarely became its stars. Women like Fannie Lou Hamer, Diane Nash, Myrlie Evers, Ella Baker and Dorothy Height never held political office, but they played a critical role, said Nadia Brown, a Purdue University political science professor.

Only occasionally did their work lead to elective office, as it did when Shirley Chisholm became the first Black woman elected to Congress, in 1968, and a candidate for president in 1972.

But the landscape changed dramatically over the last several cycles. Just two years ago, five Black women were elected to Congress, four of them in majority-white districts, according to the Higher Heights Black Women in American Politics 2019 survey. Congress now has more Black women than ever before: 22 congresswomen and Harris in the Senate, just the second to serve in that chamber,

The change has extended to state and local offices. Two black women are running for governor in Virginia, and if either of them win, she would become the nation's first Black female governor.

In Cobb County, Kellie Hill made history in June as one of two Black women elected to the Superior Court bench. When she first moved to Georgia 30 years ago, fellow lawyers assumed she was her secretary's assistant.

"I said for years, 'Maybe one day they'll be ready for me,'" Hill said. "And as exciting as it is to be the first, it's a little unbelievable that we're having a conversation about being the first in the year 2020."

Although they make up about 7.5% of the electorate, less than 2% of statewide elected executive offices were held by Black women as of November 2019. They account for less than 5% of officeholders elected to statewide executive offices, Congress and state legislatures, according to the Higher Heights survey.

"Black women have done everything that America told us was going to make us successful and we're still at the bottom in terms of our return," said LaTosha Brown, co-founder of Black Voters Matter.

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Black women are posting faster educational gains than any other demographic group in the U.S. — seeing a 76% jump in the number of college degrees earned over the past 20 years, but they aren't reaping the promised economic benefits. On average, Black women made 64 cents for every dollar a white man makes. But that drops to 55 cents for Black women with a professional degree compared to white men with the same level of educational attainment.

"People told us that education is key to being successful," Brown said. "What did Black women do? Black women, out of any constituency group in this country, we enter college more than any other group in this country. Then why does the wealth not reflect that?"

As a result, said Bev Jackson, chair of the Democratic Party's Cobb County African American caucus, Black women have a special resiliency: They have no safety net, so Black women just learn to walk the tightrope better.

Jackson thought about how much she wished her parents had lived to see a Black woman come so close to the Governor's Mansion. Her family's roots in Cobb County go back more than 100 years. Her parents went to segregated schools and sipped out of separate water fountains.

Once, when Jackson was a little girl, she sat down at a lunch counter because she wanted a cherry Coke. The waitress just passed her by, refusing to serve her.

Now Black women around her are daring to run, to win and to demand their leaders fix the broken system that maintains disparities in policing, health care, education, economics.

"You have taken our votes for granted for years. But guess what?" she said. "It's payback time: What are you going to do for us?"

Republicans aren't immune to this awakening.

DeAnna Harris was recently elected chair of the Cobb County Young Republicans, the first Black person in the post. To highlight local Black Republicans — the district attorney, deputy sheriff, a former state representative — she held her inaugural event at the historic African American church she attends. The crowd was diverse, she said, and she was proud of that.

She tries to make a conservative pitch to other Black voters by touting the ideals she believes in: small government, gun rights, religious freedom, anti-abortion. The response is generally something along the lines of, "but I don't like Trump."

"He's never served the role of politician, who gets up there and smiles and says all the right things and winks at the camera, and then when you turn around they stab you in the back," Harris said. Though she doesn't like his tone or his tweets, she supports Trump because of his conservative policies.

But she also believes it's imperative that Republicans broaden their base. The party should look like America, she thinks, and right now it doesn't.

The Democratic Party of Georgia is confident that enthusiasm is on its side. Fair Fight Action, the organization Abrams founded, calculated that Georgia has more than 750,000 new voters who were not registered in 2018, 49% of them voters of color. And despite a pandemic and hourslong lines in some polling places, more Democrats voted in June's presidential primary than in 2008, when Obama was on the ticket.

That Democratic energy can be particularly seen in these northern Atlanta suburbs. McBath, the incumbent in the 6th Congressional District, ran unopposed and got 26,000 more primary votes than the five Republicans candidates combined. In Cobb County, almost 33,000 African Americans voted in the 2016 primary. In the 2020 primary: more than 52,000. Both of the state's Republican senators are up for election, putting Georgia on the front lines of the fight for control of the Senate.

"The 2020 election cycle is going to be key to changing the course of history in this country," said Nikema Williams, chair of the Democratic Party of Georgia, who was selected to replace Rep. John Lewis, the civil rights leader who died in July, on the November ballot. "We're a battleground in Georgia now, and Black women are leading the way."

In Cobb County, even some who can't vote themselves are determined to thwart Trump's chances of

reelection. Gabby Bashizi was one of thousands of teenagers who plotted on the social media site TikTok to reserve tickets to Trump's rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, in June, then not show up.

Trump said he expected a million fans to attend. There were about 6,000, and lots of empty seats.

"I think he's really dangerous," said Bashizi, 17. Her father is an immigrant from Congo, so it feels personal every time Trump calls immigrants criminals or Black Lives Matter protesters "thugs." "We all feel it. We all go home scared. Is it going to be me next?"

When she was younger she struggled to find self-worth. No Disney princesses looked like her. People touched her hair, like it was a strange curiosity. In the sixth grade, she buzzed it to the width of a bottle cap, and cried and cried.

Then she started seeing Black women ascend.

"Seeing them fight their fight on the national stage has led me to be able to fight my fight on a personal level," she said. She grew her hair out again.

Charisse Davis said that it is these young women who give her hope for a better day: They are idealistic, coming of age in a time when Black women are rising, and they can look around, see people like themselves and believe anything is possible.

She knows an 18-year-old named Audrey McNeal. McNeal ran to be the class president at her mostly white high school, and lost. She thought of a poem she once wrote about a princess envious of her brother because one day he would be king; she wanted to be powerful. She ran again, and won.

"It's about time we represent ourselves," McNeal said. Now she's a delegate to the Democratic National Convention. She's heading to Barnard College to study politics.

She thinks she'll be secretary of state one day. And then, maybe, president.

Associated Press writers Angeliki Kastanis, Josh Boak, Emily Swanson and Hannah Fingerhut contributed to this report.

Cosby sex assault appeal takes on non-prosecution deal

By MARYCLAIRE DALE Associated Press

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Bill Cosby's lawyers argued in an appeals filing Tuesday that it was "fundamentally unfair" to let prosecutors use Cosby's damaging deposition from a sex accuser's lawsuit against him at trial.

Cosby believes he had a binding promise from a prosecutor that he could never be charged in the case, and said testimony from five other accusers about encounters that took place years — or even decades — earlier had improperly prejudiced the jury against him.

A spokeswoman for the Montgomery County district attorney's office declined comment but said prosecutors would file a response in the coming month.

Cosby, 83, is serving a three- to 10-year prison term after the jury in his 2018 sex assault trial convicted him of three counts of felony sex assault over a 2004 encounter with accuser Andrea Constand.

The filing claims a deposition by Cosby regarding the use of Quaaludes and allegations of uncharged sexual misconduct with about a half-dozen women "was irrelevant evidence that served no legitimate non-propensity purpose."

Cosby's lawyers argued those incidents occurred too long ago, in some cases going back to the 1970s, and that they lacked "any striking similarities" or comparable facts to the crimes he was tried for.

A former prosecutor had declined to prosecute Cosby when she went to police in 2005. However, another prosecutor reopened the case in 2015 after The Associated Press successfully petitioned a federal judge to unseal filings in the lawsuit she filed against him, including Cosby's deposition testimony about a string of sexual encounters with young women over the years and his admission that he had gotten Quaaludes to give women before sex.

Montgomery County Judge Steven T. O'Neill allowed one other accuser to testify for the prosecution at Cosby's trial in 2017, when the jury deadlocked, and five when he was tried and convicted at a retrial the following year.

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"The time-honored prohibition on bad character evidence was effectively dismantled at Cosby's trial," when the court allowed "decades-old, uncharged allegations of sexual misconduct," lawyer Jennifer Bon-jean wrote in the appeal filing.

Cosby said he relied on prosecutors' promises not to bring charges when he gave the deposition despite the constitutional right not to incriminate himself.

"Although the evidence was purportedly allowed for a limited purpose, the prosecution's closing argument shows that the jury was urged to return a verdict against Cosby based on a depiction of him, unsupported by actual evidence, as a predator who drugged and raped women for decades," Cosby's new filing said.

The result, defense lawyers argued, was a violation of "Cosby's right to be tried on the crimes charged, rather than on an indictment of his entire life."

The filing noted that Cosby's lawyers have not turned up a previous Pennsylvania case that directly addresses whether one prosecutor can make an unwritten promise not to prosecute that their elected successor must honor.

"Fundamental fairness and principles of due process" mean that promise was binding on Montgomery County prosecutors, Cosby's lawyers argued.

In June, Pennsylvania's highest court agreed to review those two issues, overturning a lower court that had rejected Cosby's appeal.

Cosby has been imprisoned in suburban Philadelphia for nearly two years.

This story has been corrected to show the appeals filing was Tuesday, not Thursday.

New York's true nursing home death toll cloaked in secrecy

By BERNARD CONDON, MATT SEDENSKY and MEGHAN HOYER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Riverdale Nursing Home in the Bronx appears, on paper, to have escaped the worst of the coronavirus pandemic, with an official state count of just four deaths in its 146-bed facility.

The truth, according to the home, is far worse: 21 dead, most transported to hospitals before they succumbed.

"It was a cascading effect," administrator Emil Fuzayov recalled. "One after the other."

New York's coronavirus death toll in nursing homes, already among the highest in the nation, could actually be a significant undercount. Unlike every other state with major outbreaks, New York only counts residents who died on nursing home property and not those who were transported to hospitals and died there.

That statistic could add thousands to the state's official care home death toll of just over 6,600. But so far the administration of Democratic Gov. Andrew Cuomo has refused to divulge the number, leading to speculation the state is manipulating the figures to make it appear it is doing better than other states and to make a tragic situation less dire.

"That's a problem, bro," state Sen. Gustavo Rivera, a Democrat, told New York Health Commissioner Howard Zucker during a legislative hearing on nursing homes earlier this month. "It seems, sir, that in this case you are choosing to define it differently so that you can look better."

How big a difference could it make? Since May, federal regulators have required nursing homes to submit data on coronavirus deaths each week, whether or not residents died in the facility or at a hospital. Because the requirement came after the height of New York's outbreak, the available data is relatively small. According to the federal data, roughly a fifth of the state's homes reported resident deaths from early June to mid July — a tally of 323 dead, 65 percent higher than the state's count of 195 during that time period.

Even if half that undercount had held true from the start of the pandemic, that would translate into thousands more nursing home resident deaths than the state has acknowledged.

Another group of numbers also suggests an undercount. State health department surveys show 21,000 nursing home beds are lying empty this year, 13,000 more than expected — an increase of almost double

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the official state nursing home death tally. While some of that increase can be attributed to fewer new admissions and people pulling their loved ones out, it suggests that many others who aren't there anymore died.

However flawed New York's count, Cuomo has not been shy about comparing it to tallies in other states.

Nearly every time Cuomo is questioned about New York's nursing home death toll, he brushes off criticism as politically motivated and notes that his state's percentage of nursing home deaths out of its overall COVID-19 death toll is around 20%, far less than Pennsylvania's 68%, Massachusetts' 64% and New Jersey's 44%.

"Look at the basic facts where New York is versus other states," Cuomo said during a briefing Monday. "You look at where New York is as a percentage of nursing home deaths, it's all the way at the bottom of the list."

In another briefing last month, he touted New York's percentage ranking as 35th in the nation. "Go talk to 34 other states first. Go talk to the Republican states now — Florida, Texas, Arizona — ask them what is happening in nursing homes. It's all politics."

Boston University geriatrics expert Thomas Perls said it doesn't make sense that nursing home resident deaths as a percentage of total deaths in many nearby states are more than triple what was reported in New York.

"Whatever the cause, there is no way New York could be truly at 20%," Perls said.

A Cuomo spokesman did not respond to repeated requests for comment. New York's Department of Health said in a statement that it has been a leader in providing facility-specific information on nursing home deaths and "no one has been clearer in personalizing the human cost of the pandemic."

A running tally by The Associated Press shows that more than 68,600 residents and staff at nursing homes and long-term facilities across the nation have died from the coronavirus, out of more than 164,000 overall deaths.

For all 43 states that break out nursing home data, resident deaths make up 44% of total COVID deaths in their states, according to data from the Kaiser Family Foundation. Assuming the same proportion held in New York, that would translate to more than 11,000 nursing home deaths.

To be sure, comparing coronavirus deaths in nursing homes across states can be difficult because of the differences in how states conduct their counts. New York is among several states that include probable COVID-19 deaths as well as those confirmed by a test. Some states don't count deaths from homes where fewer than five have died. Others don't always give precise numbers, providing ranges instead. And all ultimately rely on the nursing homes themselves to provide the raw data.

"Everybody is doing it however they feel like doing it. We don't have very good data. It's just all over the place, all over the country," said Toby Edelman of the Center for Medicare Advocacy, a nonprofit representing nursing home residents.

New York health chief Zucker explained during the legislative hearing that New York only counts deaths on the nursing home property to avoid "double-counting" deaths in both the home and the hospital. And while he acknowledged the state keeps a running count of nursing home resident deaths at hospitals, he declined to provide even a rough estimate to lawmakers.

"I will not provide information that I have not ensured is absolutely accurate," Zucker said. "This is too big an issue and it's too serious an issue."

Zucker promised to provide lawmakers the numbers as soon as that doublechecking is complete. They are still waiting. The AP has also been denied access to similar nursing home death data despite filing a public records request with the state health department nearly three months ago.

Dr. Michael Wasserman, president of the California Association of Long Term Care Medicine, said it is unethical of New York to not break out the deaths of nursing home residents at hospitals. "From an epidemiological and scientific perspective, there is absolutely no reason not to count them."

Nursing homes have become a particular sore point for the Cuomo administration, which has generally received praise for steps that flattened the curve of infections and New York's highest-in-the-nation 32,787 overall deaths.

A controversial March 25 order to send recovering COVID-19 patients from hospitals into nursing homes that was designed to free up hospital bed space at the height of the pandemic has drawn withering criticism from relatives and patient advocates who contend it accelerated nursing home outbreaks.

Cuomo reversed the order under pressure in early May. And his health department later released an internal report that concluded asymptomatic nursing home staffers were the real spreaders of the virus, not the 6,300 recovering patients released from hospitals into nursing homes.

But epidemiologists and academics derided the study for a flawed methodology that sidestepped key questions and relied on selective stats, including the state's official death toll figures.

"We're trying to find out what worked and what didn't work and that means trying to find patterns," said Bill Hammond, who works on health policy for the nonprofit Empire Center think tank. "You can't do that if you have the wrong data."

AP reporters Jim Mustian and Marina Villeneuve, and investigative researcher Randy Herschaft contributed to this report.

What do the kids say? K-12 students sound off on school

By LEANNE ITALIE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Parents have weighed in on reopening schools. Teachers have weighed in. Public health experts, too, along with cities, states and President Donald Trump.

But what about the kids themselves? As the grown-ups fret, kindergartners to high schoolers faced with a range of scenarios for virtual and in-person classes are expressing both fear and glee over leaving home to learn.

Many said they're most worried about fellow students breaking the rules on wearing masks and keeping their distance, especially in areas that are hot spots for the coronavirus.

"We'll be home in a month," said a skeptical Peter Klamka, an eighth-grader in Las Vegas, in a county that logged 95% of new coronavirus cases reported in Nevada early last week.

The 13-year-old will return to his private school in about three weeks.

"Some kids will be more responsible than others. I'm not looking forward to it but I've got to go school so I'd rather be there in person," Peter said.

Not yet 5, kindergartner Rivington Hall in Westport, Connecticut, will begin her first big-kid year in September, at least in part on Zoom after finishing preschool at home.

"I'd rather go to school because it has more toys and it's more fun," she said as she munched on animal crackers and sipped from a juice box.

Anxious parents around the country are looking to schools that have already opened for signs of how it might go. One, North Paulding High School in suburban Atlanta, rescinded a five-day suspension for a student who shared photos and video of crowded hallways and few students in masks after doors opened this month.

The school has since suffered an outbreak of COVID-19, along with other schools in hard-hit Georgia.

Nearly 50 miles away in Alpharetta, Georgia, 10-year-old Collier Evans will attend school remotely when he begins fifth grade Aug. 17. He could have gone in person full time or picked a blended option but said he was anxious about returning to school.

"My parents and me, we said we don't want to go in a classroom, get sick and then I'd bring it home and get my family sick," Collier said.

As for distance learning, he said: "I hope it's going to go better than last year. You had to wait in a queue for like 30 minutes to ask the teacher one question."

In Tucson, Arizona, 10-year-old Simon Joubaud Pulitzer returned to his private school Aug. 3, his blue button-down uniform shirt and tie in place. He was happy to see his friends again and have face-to-face access to his teachers.

Did he feel safe?

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"Not the first day but after, yes, I felt a bit safer," Simon said. "All kids were following the rules."

Those rules include masks worn indoors, socially distanced desks and only two kids per outdoor picnic table at either end for lunch.

Most American parents said it was unsafe to send their children back to school, with more than 80 percent favoring school conducted at least partly online, according to a new Washington Post-Schar School survey conducted by Ipsos. But many expressed displeasure at the quality of online instruction.

As summer winds down, the mixed feelings mirror the lack of consensus around the country on how to balance virus risks and schooling.

Some Scandinavian countries with far fewer cases than in the U.S. reopened schools with new safety protocols and have had no outbreaks connected to their operations. In Israel, schools that reopened when virus activity was low ended up shutting down a few weeks later when cases spiked.

In the U.S., some school districts plan a mix of in-person classes and online learning to help maintain social distancing. Other districts, including those in Miami, Houston and Los Angeles, are starting classes online only.

Ella Springer, 14, of Kenosha, Wisconsin, will start her sophomore year of high school at home after her school board rescinded an in-class option to open the fall semester. That could change as the year progresses.

"At first I was wanting to go back to school in person but I feel like, watching the numbers in Wisconsin, it makes more sense to go back virtual because it's rising," she said. "It's pretty boring at home but what can you do? Last year the virtual was easier for me to slack off at home because it was a loose kind of thing, but I feel like this year will go a lot better since they've had the whole summer to prepare."

Aiden Anderson, 11, in Orlando, Florida, will begin sixth grade at home for two weeks, then happily head out to school in a state that's among the nation's worst hot spots for the virus.

"I don't like that there's two weeks online," he said. "At home it's so easy to get distracted."

In Littleton, Colorado, 8-year-old Will Asbury is going into third grade. School starts Aug. 24 and he'll be there in person. There was a distance learning option but Will and his little sister, Luca, wanted to go.

"I'm going to feel good because I get to see my friends. Masks are a bummer but at least we get to play with our friends during recess and see them at lunch," he said.

Of distance learning, 6-year-old Luca got right to the point: "I didn't like it."

She's hoping for a unicorn mask to wear when she returns to the classroom.

Alec Blumberg is a high school freshman and his sister, Amelia, a high school senior in Great Neck, New York. Their school, for now, decided on full time, at-home learning to start in September with a possible staggered approach in person later on, allowing half the students in at a time.

"I really want to go back. It would be nice to interact with people and have a more separate life at school and home," Alec said. "But if the school lays out a plan, will the kids follow it? I'm really not sure."

Amelia, 17, said exactly how responsible students will be is what worries her the most, based on what she's seen among peers.

"Some people aren't as careful as others," she said. "They aren't following any type of safety measures, which really scares me. But I really want to go back. It's the last year. We didn't even get to say goodbye to any of our teachers when we left last year."

School for Indianapolis, Indiana, seventh-grader Maria Beck started July 30. The 12-year-old is attending online full time. At first, her school district was going to offer some in-person instruction, then changed its mind. There's been a recent uptick in COVID-19 cases in her area.

"I'm a big extrovert," Maria said of missing face-to-face school. "But so far, it's been going very well. I do hope we get to go back some day."

Her third-grade sister, 8-year-old Felicity, said she, too, is OK with distance learning. Among the things she misses most about real school? Lunch.

"I'd be scared that I'd get sick," she said of returning to school, "but I'd be really happy that I'd be able to go back."

Israeli PM's uneasy alliance seems headed toward collapse

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — When Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his rival, Benny Gantz, agreed to form an “emergency” government in May after three bitter and deadlocked election campaigns, the goal was to stabilize Israeli politics in the face of a global pandemic.

But less than 100 days later, their fractious coalition government could be headed toward collapse as Israel grapples with a raging coronavirus outbreak, an economic calamity and a wave of public protests. With little common ground and a severe lack of trust, the uneasy alliance now has just two weeks to reach a budget deal or plunge the nation into its fourth election since last year.

The differences run so deep that this week's Cabinet meeting was canceled. Parliament is expected on Wednesday to approve an extension beyond the Aug. 25 deadline to allow the sides more time to reach a compromise. But even if there is a deal, few expect the partnership to last much longer because of the bad blood and many clashes.

“What is clear is that even if elections have been deferred, this is just a matter of time. In another two months a new excuse will be found, and we will once again find ourselves in the same deep crisis,” argued columnist Sima Kadmon in the Yediot Ahronot daily. “Netanyahu has been given time to conceive of his next tricks and shticks.”

Critics say that Netanyahu is focused on his ongoing corruption trial and resistant to ceding the premiership to Gantz next year, as called for by their coalition agreement. Netanyahu has reportedly tried to lure in defectors from Gantz's party to secure a thin parliamentary majority and avert another election.

Netanyahu has seen his support drop dramatically in the face of the wave of demonstrations sweeping the country against his perceived failure to respond to the virus and its resulting economic crisis. He's repeatedly said he opposes another election, saying that with unemployment over 20% now is the time to focus on getting the Israeli economy back on track.

But opponents believe he is angling for a crisis that would trigger a new election. Despite the dip in support, polls suggest Netanyahu's Likud maintains a sizable lead over all other parties.

The election of a more favorable government could enable Netanyahu to pre-empt what is expected to be a new legal challenge against his fitness to serve. Opponents are expected to file the challenge when the evidentiary stage of the trial begins in January. During that phase, he will be required to sit in court three times a week.

In another twist, opposition leader Yair Lapid, who this week accused both Netanyahu and Gantz of playing “pathetic petty politics at the expense of the public,” intends to introduce a bill that will bar anyone indicted of a crime from seeking the premiership. Without Gantz's support, it is unlikely to pass.

The showdown ostensibly revolves around the state's budget. The government is required by law to pass one by Aug. 25 or else elections are automatically called.

The coalition agreement calls for a two-year budget. But Netanyahu, citing the economic crisis, is pushing for a 2020 budget alone. Gantz says that a short-term budget halfway through the year would be meaningless and violate their deal.

Netanyahu appears to be driven in part by political considerations.

Under their power-sharing deal, a failure to reach a budget deal appears to be the only scenario that allows Netanyahu to dissolve the partnership without yielding power to Gantz.

If a long-term budget deal is reached, it would all but guarantee that Gantz will take over as prime minister in November 2021, as specified in the deal.

Netanyahu desperately wants to stay in office throughout his trial, which is expected to drag on for several years.

At a tour of an air force base Tuesday, he tried to explain his motivations as that of responsible leadership.

“I don't deal in ultimatums. I think we need to pass a budget immediately, for the needs of our security and for the needs of the state,” Netanyahu said.

Defense Minister Gantz, whose Blue and White faction has also seen its support drop, says he doesn't want to go to elections and accuses Netanyahu of having “personal reasons” for leading to it.

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"Whoever loves the state of Israel doesn't take it to elections at this time," Gantz said Monday.

He and Netanyahu have repeatedly clashed throughout their brief alliance over various pieces of legislation and policy proposals. Ever since Gantz's faction broke ranks with coalition discipline two weeks ago to pass a pro-gay rights bill, Netanyahu's allies have been threatening disbandment.

They've also differed in their approach to the widescale protests drawing thousands to the streets several times a week. While Gantz has sympathized with the demonstrators, Netanyahu has denounced them as radicals and anarchists who were waging an incitement campaign against him and his family.

Netanyahu has come under withering criticism for remaining in office while on trial for corruption, pushing for seemingly anti-democratic measures under the guise of combating the virus and generally mismanaging the crisis. The size of his bloated government, a minister's comment dismissing the public's pain, and his own efforts to secure himself a sizable tax break have created a sense that the 70-year-old Netanyahu is detached from the troubles of his angry electorate. His family's perceived hedonism and zest for power have further alienated those who are struggling.

Netanyahu is on trial for a series of cases in which he allegedly received lavish gifts from billionaire associates and traded regulatory favors with media moguls for more favorable coverage of himself and his family. The prime minister has denied any wrongdoing and accuses the media and law enforcement of a witch hunt to oust him from office.

Follow Aron Heller at www.twitter.com/aronhellerap

Scientists uneasy as Russia approves 1st coronavirus vaccine

By VLADIMIR ISACHENKOV and DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russia on Tuesday became the first country to approve a coronavirus vaccine, a move that was met with international skepticism and unease because the shots have only been studied in dozens of people.

President Vladimir Putin announced the Health Ministry's approval and said one of his two adult daughters already was inoculated. He said the vaccine underwent the necessary tests and was shown to provide lasting immunity to the coronavirus, although Russian authorities have offered no proof to back up claims of safety or effectiveness.

"I know it has proven efficient and forms a stable immunity," Putin said. "We must be grateful to those who made that first step very important for our country and the entire world."

However, scientists in Russia and other countries sounded an alarm, saying that rushing to offer the vaccine before final-stage testing could backfire. What's called a Phase 3 trial — which involves tens of thousands of people and can take months — is the only way to prove if an experimental vaccine is safe and really works.

By comparison, vaccines entering final-stage testing in the U.S. require studies of 30,000 people each. Two vaccine candidates already have begun those huge studies, with three more set to get underway by fall.

"Fast-tracked approval will not make Russia the leader in the race, it will just expose consumers of the vaccine to unnecessary danger," said Russia's Association of Clinical Trials Organizations, in urging government officials to postpone approving the vaccine without completed advanced trials.

While Russian officials have said large-scale production of the vaccine wasn't scheduled until September, Deputy Prime Minister Tatyana Golikova said vaccination of doctors could start as early as this month. Officials say they will be closely monitored after the injections. Mass vaccination may begin as early as October.

"We expect tens of thousands of volunteers to be vaccinated within the next months," Kirill Dmitriev, chief executive of the Russian Direct Investment Fund that bankrolled the vaccine, told reporters.

The vaccine developed by the Gamaleya Institute in Moscow with assistance from Russia's Defense Ministry uses a different virus -- the common cold-causing adenovirus -- that's been modified to carry

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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 a similar technology as vaccines being developed by China’s CanSino Biologics and Britain’s Oxford University and AstraZeneca — but unlike those companies, Russian scientists haven’t published any scientific information about how the vaccine has performed in animal tests or in early-stage human studies.

Dmitriev said even as Russian doctors and teachers start getting vaccinated, advanced trials are set to start Wednesday that will involve “several thousand people” and span several countries, including the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines and possibly Brazil.

The Associated Press couldn’t find documentation in the Russian Health Ministry’s records indicating that permission to start the advanced trials was granted. The ministry has not responded to a request for comment.

Putin said one of his daughters has received two doses, and had minor side effects such as slight fever, and is now “feeling well and has a high number of antibodies.” It wasn’t clear if she was one of the study volunteers.

The Health Ministry said in a statement Tuesday that the vaccine is expected to provide immunity from the coronavirus for up to two years, citing its experience with vaccines made with similar technology.

However, scientists around the world have been cautioning that even if vaccine candidates are proven to work, it will take even more time to tell how long the protection will last.

“The collateral damage from release of any vaccine that was less than safe and effective would exacerbate our current problems insurmountably,” Imperial College London immunology professor Danny Altmann said in a statement Tuesday.

The World Health Organization has urged that all vaccine candidates go through full stages of testing before being rolled out, and said Tuesday it is in touch with the Russian scientists and “looks forward to reviewing” Russia’s study data. Experts have warned that vaccines that are not properly tested can cause harm in many ways — from harming health to creating a false sense of security or undermining trust in vaccinations.

Becoming the first country in the world to approve a vaccine was a matter of national prestige for the Kremlin as it tries to assert the image of Russia as a global power. Putin repeatedly praised Russia’s effective response to the outbreak in televised addresses to the nation, while some of Moscow’s top officials — including the country’s prime minister and Putin’s own spokesperson — became infected.

And the U.S., Britain and Canada last month accused Russia of using hackers to steal vaccine research from Western labs. Russia has denied involvement.

Russia has so far registered 897,599 coronavirus cases, including 15,131 deaths.

The Gamaleya Institute’s director, Alexander Gintsburg, raised eyebrows in May when he said that he and other researchers tried the vaccine on themselves before the start of human studies.

Those trials started June 17 with 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 group were recruited from the military, which raised concerns that servicemen may have been pressured to participate. The test was declared completed earlier this month.

“It’s a too early stage to truly assess whether it’s going to be effective, whether it’s going to work or not,” said Dr. Michael Head, senior research fellow in global health at England’s University of Southampton.

It’s not Russia’s first controversial vaccine. Putin has bragged 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.” However, there is little evidence either of the two Ebola vaccines approved in Russia was widely used in Africa. As of 2019, both of those vaccines were listed by the WHO as “candidate vaccines.”

AP medical writers Maria Cheng in London and Luran Neergaard in Alexandria, Virginia, contributed to this report.

What's keeping Washington from a virus deal, explained

By ANDREW TAYLOR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Hopes that talks on a huge COVID-19 relief deal would generate an agreement soon are fizzling, with both the Trump administration negotiating team and top congressional Democrats adopting hard lines and testy attitudes.

Now that President Donald Trump has issued a series of executive edicts and the national political conventions are set to begin, consuming the attention of both Trump and top Democrats, the talks seem to be on an indefinite pause. The urgency has evaporated now that rank-and-file lawmakers have been set free for the August recess, and while both sides still want an agreement — and pressure is likely to remain high — it's looking more like a September legislating effort than an August one.

The impasse leaves millions of jobless people without a \$600-per-week pandemic bonus jobless benefit that has helped families stay afloat, leaves state and local governments seeking fiscal relief high and dry, and holds back a more than \$100 billion school aid package. Money for other priorities, including the election, may come too late, if at all.

Still, it's not like Washington politicians to leave so much money on the table. No one is giving up on an accord, though near-term prospects aren't promising. Based on weeks of reporting on the talks, here's a look at the key obstacles to an agreement:

DEMOCRATIC HARDBALL

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who's displaying her stern streak in her dealings with top Republicans, and top Senate Democrat Chuck Schumer of New York, have adopted hardball negotiating tactics as they survey a tactical landscape that favors them. They have given some ground on the overall price tag, but say it's up to Republicans to acknowledge the scope of the crisis.

Trump is eager for an agreement, much of the country expects one, and it's not too difficult to sketch one out on paper. But Pelosi may have to cede ground to Trump and White House chief of staff Mark Meadows, who have largely abandoned the talks when confronted with Pelosi's demands. And Trump's team ultimately may have to make more concessions than they think since Republicans are split.

WHITE HOUSE INEXPERIENCE

Meadows made his name in Washington — and he's unpopular in many quarters in both parties — as a tea party bomb-thrower who forced out former House Speaker John Boehner, R-Ohio, in 2015. Meadows has never been a consensus builder and he seems focused on tending to Trump's conservative flank and trying to make sure that whatever deal is reached doesn't divide Republicans too badly. As such, he's been taking a hard line with Pelosi, and they have been unable to forge a productive relationship and have taken their backbiting public.

Meadows has been understaffed during the talks, which can slow down the complicated horse-trading such a sweeping bill requires. He also appeared to be the principal force behind Trump's threats — and ultimate moves — to issue executive edicts on the payroll tax and unemployment insurance, steps that coincided with the rapid deterioration of the talks. The orders gave Trump a short-term tactical victory, but will do little for the states, schools and families still clamoring for help.

GOP SPLITS

Any upcoming bill is sure to be opposed by many GOP conservatives, who are already agitating for the party to try to reclaim its long-abandoned focus on deficits and debt.

Many Republicans oppose the generous jobless benefits, viewing them as a disincentive to work, and are against other social welfare elements of the legislation. They're in no mood to accept a Pelosi-blessed agreement. But the pragmatic wing of the party wants to restore bonus jobless benefits that have been cut off, and many GOP incumbents up for reelection are agitating for deal.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

Probably the biggest issue impeding the talks is renewal of the pandemic bonus unemployment benefit, which was set at \$600 until it expired at the end of July. The \$600 benefit meant that most workers were receiving more on unemployment than through their former jobs, and many GOP senators are adamant that it not be fully renewed. But the benefit is popular with voters and Pelosi is solidly behind the full \$600,

which economists say has helped keep millions out of poverty. Still, the Democrats are probably going to have to compromise, though it will likely be among the final items resolved if a deal is to be reached.

STATE AND LOCAL AID

Governors in both parties and a slew of local officials are the driving force behind a massive Pelosi-driven aid plan for state and local governments, which have been starved of tax revenues as the economy slumps. They are pleading for help and have panned Trump's recent executive moves as confusing and inadequate.

But the distance between negotiators on state and local aid is vast. The two sides are hundreds of billions of dollars apart, and Trump has taken to railing against the idea, falsely portraying it as assistance only for the high-profile Democratic governors and big city mayors he often vilifies.

It's clear that Pelosi recognizes she'll have to go far lower than the \$900-plus billion aid package that she built into the Democrats' bill. It's equally clear that Republicans know some level of funding will have to be included. So long as the issue is unresolved, an agreement will be out of reach.

A week after blast, Beirut pauses to remember the dead

By ANDREA ROSA and ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — The shattered city of Beirut on Tuesday marked a week since the catastrophic explosion that killed at least 171 people, injured thousands and plunged Lebanon into a deeper political crisis.

Thousands of people marched near the devastated port, remembering those who died in the most destructive single blast to hit the country.

They observed a minute of silence at 6:08 p.m. local time, the moment on Aug. 4 that thousands of tons of ammonium nitrate exploded in the city's port where it had been stored for more than six years, apparently with the knowledge of top political and security officials.

At that moment Tuesday, church bells tolled and mosque loudspeakers recited a call to prayer.

Hundreds marched through the streets of the hard-hit neighborhood of Gemayze carrying portraits of the dead before a candlelight vigil after dusk near the port.

"He knew," read a poster bearing President Michel Aoun's picture.

Aoun, in office since 2016, said Friday he was first told of the dangerous stockpile nearly three weeks ago and immediately ordered military and security agencies to do "what was needed." But he suggested his responsibility ended there, saying he had no authority over the port.

"I'm very furious, I'm enraged, I'm angry, I'm sad. I'm hopeless," said Anthony Semaan, in his 20s, who said he came to pay respects to the victims.

Like others, he said the government's resignation makes no difference.

"First of all, there are questions that need to be answered. And second, there are other rats that need to be brought down first, and when they are brought down then maybe we can start thinking about the future," he added.

Young people carried placards, each one printed with the names of one dead in a red and a green cedar, Lebanon's national symbol, and sat on stairs in the Gemayze district, facing the port. Elsewhere in the city, burials of the dead continued.

The explosion has fueled outrage against top political leaders and security agencies, and led to the resignation of the government on Monday. In the wake of the disaster, documents have come to light that show that top Lebanese officials knew about the existence of the stockpile in the heart of Beirut near residential areas, and did nothing about it.

Aoun pledged "to all Lebanese who are in pain that I will not be silent and will not rest until the facts are revealed." He tweeted that referring the case to the Supreme Judicial Council is only the first step.

It still wasn't clear what caused the fire in a port warehouse that triggered the explosion of the chemicals, which created a shock wave so powerful it was felt as far away as the island of Cyprus, more than 200 kilometers (180 miles) across the Mediterranean.

"From one minute to the next, the world changed for people in Beirut," said Basma Tabaja, deputy head

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of the International Committee of the Red Cross's delegation in Lebanon.

Outgoing Health Minister Hamad Hassan said the blast killed at least 171 people, with between 30 and 40 still missing. Of the injured, 1,500 needed special treatment while 120 remain in intensive care, he said.

The explosion damaged thousands of apartments and offices in the capital and came amid an unprecedented economic and financial crisis facing the country since late last year.

U.N. food agency head David Beasley, who said a day earlier he is "very, very concerned" Lebanon could run out of bread in about two and a half weeks, told The Associated Press that the World Food Program was looking at all options to make certain there is no interruptions in the food supply.

"We're looking at the port of Tripoli. We're looking at all other options, trucking food in, as well as shipping food in, flying food in, whatever it takes," Beasley said. "Obviously, we want to get the port operating as quickly as possible because that's the cheapest way to feed the most people."

Meanwhile, efforts to form a new government got underway a day after Prime Minister Hassan Diab resigned. His government, which was supported by the militant group Hezbollah and its allies, unraveled after the deadly blast, with three ministers announcing they were quitting.

His government was formed after his predecessor, Saad Hariri, stepped down in October in response to anti-government demonstrations over endemic corruption. It took months of bickering among the leadership factions before they settled on Diab.

Lebanese have demanded an independent Cabinet not backed by any of the political parties they blame for the mess they are in. Many are also calling for an independent investigation into the port explosion, saying they had zero trust in a local probe.

Lebanese officials have rejected an international investigation. The government, in the last decision it made before resigning, referred the case to the Supreme Judicial Council, Lebanon's top judicial body, which handles crimes infringing on national security as well as political and state security crimes.

The state-run National News Agency said that after the case was referred to the Supreme Judicial Council, state prosecutor Ghassan Oueidat will continue his work as a general judicial prosecutor. NNA said that the investigation will continue by the military police and state prosecution and charges will be later filed to the judicial investigator who is to be named by the outgoing minister of justice.

The ammonium nitrate, a chemical used in fertilizers and explosives, originated from a cargo ship called MV Rhosus that had been traveling from the country of Georgia to Mozambique in 2013. It made an unscheduled detour to Beirut as the Russian shipowner was struggling with debts and hoped to earn some extra cash in Lebanon. Unable to pay port fees and reportedly leaking, the ship was impounded.

Associated Press writers Bassem Mroue, Nadine Achoui-Lesage and Sarah El Deeb contributed.

Virus surge makes US weak link in global economic recovery

By DAVID McHUGH, PAUL WISEMAN and JOE McDONALD AP Business Writers

FRANKFURT, Germany (AP) — People in China are back to buying German luxury cars. Europe's assembly lines are accelerating. Now the global economy is waiting for the United States to get its coronavirus outbreak under control and boost the recovery, but there's little sign of that.

The United States' fumbling response to the pandemic and its dithering over a new aid package is casting doubt on its economic prospects and making it one of the chief risks to a global rebound.

After springtime restrictions, many U.S. states prematurely declared victory over the virus and began to reopen their economies, leading to a resurgence in COVID-19 cases. Confirmed infections are rising in most states, and many businesses have had to scale back or even cancel plans to reopen. And while it does not dominate global commerce like it did 20 years ago, America is still by far the biggest economy - accounting for 22% of total economic output, versus 14% for No. 2 China, according to the World Bank.

That makes its handling of the pandemic and its economy crucial for companies like Officina del Poggio, a producer of luxury handbags in Bologna, Italy, that sells 60% its vintage motorcycle-inspired satchels to U.S. customers.

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Company owner Allison Hoeltzel Savini said retail sales dried up during the spring. She had already suffered a blow when Barneys, her main client, went bankrupt and didn't pay for the spring-summer collection that had shipped.

Hoeltzel Savini said she has had to hold off on new hires, and hasn't been able to do her usual sales trip to the United States. She recouped some sales by reaching out directly to customers through newsletters and social media during the height of Italy's lockdown, but remains cautious about the future, as the U.S. market for her goods continues to slow down.

"I am really concerned for the next season, if wholesale clients will be placing orders," she said.

Same for Shenzhen Aung Crown Industrial Ltd., which makes baseball hats. The company usually sells about 60% of its output to the United States. "We can't afford to lose the U.S. market," said general manager Kailyn Weng. "It is difficult to find other markets that could digest such a great amount of high-quality hats ... We have no alternative but to focus on the U.S. market."

The United States is unlikely to pull the world economy out of its rut as it did in past downturns such as after the Asian financial crisis of the late 1990s.

"The U.S. won't be the locomotive," said Nariman Behravesh, chief economist at research firm IHS Markit.

The American economy shrank at an annual pace of 32.9% from April through June, by far the worst quarter on record. The numbers are expected to bounce back strongly in the second half but to leave the U.S. economy well short of where it stood at the beginning of 2020.

Talks in Congress to pass another round of federal coronavirus aid have failed, piling pressure on state and local authorities to keep basic services running. U.S. stock markets are nevertheless near record highs, but analysts attribute that largely to the Federal Reserve's commitment to keep interest rates low.

The European Union, which has reduced the number of contagions more effectively than the U.S., saw its economy shrink at a similar pace but is forecast to grow more quickly next year. And government support for workers has contained the rise in unemployment for now. China, meanwhile, was the first major economy to resume growth since the pandemic struck, recording a 3.2% expansion during the April-June period from the quarter before.

If the U.S. had done a better job managing the outbreak, "the rebound would have been stronger," Behravesh said. "There's no doubt in my mind about that."

Hopes for a strong and quick recovery have largely been dashed by the country's inability to bring the virus under control.

The United States' diminished ability to drive global growth isn't just related to its coronavirus response. Its share of global economic output - and growth - has been eroding.

China's economy has consistently grown faster than America's and has steadily narrowed the gap between them. From 2009 through 2019, China accounted for almost 28% of global economic growth; the United States, just 17%.

"We're in a multi-polar world in which there are multiple locomotives -- China, Europe" as well as the United States, Behravesh said.

Germany's carmakers, who dominate the global market for expensive cars, are already seeing their sales buoyed by China. BMW saw car sales in China rise 17% in the second quarter, compared with a year earlier - before anyone had heard the term "COVID-19." Competitor Daimler's revenues in China rose 15% during the same period from a year earlier while they sagged 36% in the U.S.

Economist Philipp Hauber at the Kiel Institute for the World Economy said that "in fact China has been the locomotive of the global economy in recent years. That does not mean that the development of the economy in the U.S. is inconsequential. Both economies are about the same size, depending on how one measures ... and the two of them are the biggest trading partners for the eurozone."

He said that a weak U.S. economic rebound is the greatest risk to the eurozone and world economy, along with a second wave of coronavirus contagions.

Chinese exporters already were looking for alternatives to the U.S. market after President Donald Trump raised tariffs on their goods in 2018. That has helped Chinese exports grow faster than the world average,

taking away market share from other developing countries. But markets in Asia, Europe and Latin America usually buy lower-priced, less profitable goods.

The ruling Communist Party has been trying for a decade to reduce the country's reliance on exports and to encourage economic growth based on consumer spending at home.

Businesses around the globe are hoping America gets its act together, and soon.

The general manager of Yiwu Sinohood Bags Factory, which makes canvas tote bags, said it usually exports 40% to the United States, but sales in America have dropped to zero.

"We tried to develop the European market, but Europe has also been hit hard by the epidemic," said the manager, David Hu. "The U.S. market is important for us, and I am not confident about finding a replacement."

Wiseman reported from Washington and McDonald from Beijing. Colleen Barry in Milan, Italy, also contributed to this report.

March on Washington reconfigured to comply with virus rules

By AARON MORRISON and ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Amid widespread protests and unrest over the police killings of Black Americans, a national commemoration of the 1963 civil rights March on Washington is being reconfigured to comply with coronavirus protocols in the District of Columbia.

Although many marchers will arrive via charter buses from surrounding communities on Aug. 28, the Rev. Al Sharpton, one of the organizers, will ask some to join satellite marches planned in states that are considered hot spots for COVID-19.

"We're following protocol," Sharpton told The Associated Press in an exclusive interview. "The objective is not how many thousands of people will be (in Washington). It'll still be a good crowd."

The commemoration, taking place on the 57th anniversary of the Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have A Dream" speech, will begin with a rally at the Lincoln Memorial. Martin Luther King III, a son of the late civil rights icon, attorney Benjamin Crump and the families of George Floyd, Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner, Ahmaud Arbery, and Breonna Taylor, are expected to participate in Washington.

Following the commemorative rally, participants in Washington will march to the Martin Luther King, Jr. memorial in West Potomac Park, next to the National Mall, and then disperse.

All participants will be required to wear masks, Sharpton said. Organizers also will provide hand sanitizing stations and conduct temperature checks throughout the event.

"The objective is to put on one platform, in the shadow of Abe Lincoln, the families of people that ... have lost loved ones in unchecked racial bias," Sharpton said. "On these steps, Dr. King talked about his dream, and the dream is unfulfilled. This is the Exhibit A of that not being fulfilled."

The revised plan appears to avoid a potentially awkward faceoff with Washington Mayor Muriel Bowser's government over COVID-19 restrictions in the nation's capital. In late July, with local infection numbers rising, Bowser ordered that anyone traveling or returning to Washington from a virus hot spot must self-quarantine for 14 days. The list is revised every two weeks and the newest list, released on Aug. 10, classifies 29 states as hot spots.

Bowser, when asked on July 30 about the potential conflict, said government officials had been in contact with march organizers and that Washington would not be relaxing its virus rules for participants.

"They are aware of all the local guidance that would affect their planning," she said. "If there are people who are coming from jurisdictions that are on that list, they would need to be quarantined."

The Aug. 28 event has already received a permit from the National Park Service. Operating under a permit application submitted by activist and radio host Rev. Mark Thompson, the original application estimates 100,000 participants. NPS spokesman Mike Litterst said his agency was discussing COVID-19 mitigation plans with the organizers, but that compliance with local virus restrictions was "not a requirement or condition of the permit."

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Sharpton's civil rights group, the National Action Network, is working with its local chapters to hold commemorations in Kentucky, South Carolina and Texas, where outdoor jumbo screens will display a live simulcast of the rally in Washington. All of those states are currently on Washington's hot spot list.

The NAACP, one of several partners in this year's commemoration, last week launched a website for a virtual March on Washington. The site will livestream the Washington march, in addition to other programming leading up to and after the event.

The Movement for Black Lives, a coalition of more than 150 Black-led organizations that make up the broader Black Lives Matter movement, will hold its virtual Black National Convention later in the evening. Organizers said their convention will coincide with the unveiling of a new political agenda intended to build on the success of this summer's BLM-themed protests, which called for the defunding of police departments in favor of investments to healthcare, education, housing and other social services in Black communities.

Sharpton first announced plans for the commemoration during a June memorial service in Minneapolis for Floyd, a Black man whose death at the hands of police galvanized nationwide protests against police brutality and systemic racism. The march's theme — "Get Your Knee Off Our Necks" — is inspired by a refrain from Sharpton's eulogy for Floyd, who died May 25 after a white police officer held his knee to Floyd's neck.

The civil rights leader has called for participants in other states to march on their U.S. senators' offices, to demand their support of federal policing reforms. Sharpton said protesters should also demand reinvigorated U.S. voter protections, in memory of the late Congressman John Lewis who, until his death on July 17, was the last living speaker at the original March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963.

In June, the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives passed the George Floyd Justice In Policing Act, which would ban police use of stranglehold maneuvers and end qualified immunity for officers, among other reforms.

In July, following Lewis' death, Democratic senators reintroduced legislation that would restore a provision of the historic Voting Rights Act of 1965 gutted by the U.S. Supreme Court in 2013. The law previously required states with a history of voter suppression to seek federal clearance before changing voting regulations.

Both measures are awaiting action in the Republican-controlled Senate.

"Everybody is trying to jump from demonstration and to reconciliation, with no legislation," Sharpton said. "If we don't have the legislation, we'll be back here again."

Morrison reported from New York and is a member of the AP's Race & Ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/aaronlmorrison>.

Is it safe to ride public transit during the pandemic?

By The Associated Press undefined

Is it safe to ride public transit during the coronavirus pandemic?

It depends on a variety of factors, but there are ways to minimize risk.

The main way that the virus spreads is through droplets people spray when they talk, cough or sneeze. That means the best way to reduce the spread of infection on public transit and elsewhere is to wear a mask and stay 6 feet from others, experts say.

Transit systems around the world are requiring riders to wear masks and encouraging people to socially distance. Compliance could vary, especially as ridership levels start rebounding and trains and buses get more crowded. But there are other steps you can take to make trips less risky.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests traveling during non-peak hours, avoiding crowded spots in stations and stops, and skipping rows between seats when possible.

Surfaces are also believed to pose a risk, though to a lesser degree, and transit systems are employing a variety of cleaning techniques. Moscow and Shanghai have experimented with germ-killing ultraviolet

light and Hong Kong has deployed a robot that sprays hydrogen peroxide. In New York, subways are shut down overnight overnight for cleaning.

Even so, the CDC says to avoid touching surfaces such as turnstiles and handrails if you can.

Though much remains unknown about the virus and how it spreads, experts note there have not yet been any major outbreaks linked to transit systems.

The AP is answering your questions about the coronavirus in this series. Submit them at: FactCheck@AP.org.

More Viral Questions: How risky is flying during the coronavirus pandemic?

Can the coronavirus spread through the air?

How risky is dining out during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Powerful derecho leaves path of devastation across Midwest

By RYAN J. FOLEY and SETH BORENSTEIN Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — A rare storm packing 100 mph winds and with power similar to an inland hurricane swept across the Midwest, blowing over trees, flipping vehicles, causing widespread property damage and leaving hundreds of thousands without power as it moved through Chicago and into Indiana and Michigan.

The storm known as a derecho lasted several hours Monday as it tore from eastern Nebraska across Iowa and parts of Wisconsin and Illinois, had the wind speed of a major hurricane, and likely caused more widespread damage than a normal tornado, said Patrick Marsh, science support chief at the National Weather Service's Storm Prediction Center in Norman, Oklahoma.

In northern Illinois, the National Weather Service reported a wind gust of 92 mph near Dixon, about 100 miles (160 kilometers) west of Chicago, and the storm left downed trees and power lines that blocked roadways in Chicago and its suburbs. After leaving Chicago, the most potent part of the storm system moved over north central Indiana by late afternoon.

"It ramped up pretty quick" around 7 a.m. Central time in Eastern Nebraska. I don't think anybody expected widespread winds approaching 100, 110 mph," Marsh said.

A derecho is not quite a hurricane. It has no eye and its winds come across in a line. But the damage it is likely to do spread over such a large area is more like an inland hurricane than a quick more powerful tornado, Marsh said. He compared it to a devastating Super Derecho of 2009, which was one of the strongest on record and traveled more than 1,000 miles in 24 hours, causing \$500 million in damage, widespread power outages and killing a handful of people.

"This is our version of a hurricane," said Northern Illinois University meteorology professor Victor Genisini. He said Monday's derecho will go down as one of the strongest in recent history and be one of the nation's worst weather events of 2020.

Several people were injured and widespread property damage was reported in Marshall County in central Iowa after 100 mph winds swept through the area, said its homeland security coordinator Kim Elder.

Elder said winds blew over trees, flipped cars, downed power lines, ripped up road signs and tore roofs off buildings, some of which caught fire.

"We had quite a few people trapped in buildings and cars," Elder said, adding that the extent of injuries was unknown and no fatalities had been reported. "We're in life-saving mode right now."

Marshalltown Mayor Joel Greer declared a civil emergency, telling residents to stay home and off the streets so that first responders could respond to calls.

MidAmerican Energy said nearly 101,000 customers in the Des Moines area were without power after the storm moved through the area. Reports from spotters filed with the National Weather Service in Des Moines had winds in excess of 70 mph.

Roof damage to homes and buildings was reported in several Iowa cities, including the roof of a hockey arena in Des Moines. Across the state, large trees fell on cars and houses. Some semi-trailers flipped over

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or were blown off highways.

Farmers reported that some grain bins were destroyed and fields were flattened, but the extent of damage to Iowa's agriculture industry wasn't immediately clear.

MidAmerican spokeswoman Tina Hoffman said downed trees made it difficult in some locations for workers to get to power lines. In some cases, power line poles were snapped off.

"It's a lot of tree damage. Very high winds. It will be a significant effort to get through it all and get everybody back on," Hoffman said. "It was a big front that went all the way through the state."

Cedar Rapids, Iowa, had "both significant and widespread damage throughout the city," said public safety spokesman Greg Buelow. Tens of thousands of people in the metro area were without power.

"We have damage to homes and businesses, including siding and roofs damaged," he said. "Trees and power lines are down throughout the entire city."

Cedar Rapids on Monday night issued a 10 p.m. curfew that will continue until further notice, as crews worked to clean up fallen debris.

What makes a derecho worse than a tornado is how long it can hover in one place and how large an area the high winds hit, Marsh said. He said winds of 80 mph or even 100 mph can stretch for "20, 30, 40 or God forbid, 100 miles."

What happened Monday morning was the result of unstable, super moist air that had parked for days over the northern plains and finally ramped up into a derecho.

"They are basically self-sustaining amoebas of thunderstorms," Gensini said. "Once they get going like they did across Iowa, it's really hard to stop these suckers."

Derechos, with winds of at least 58 mph, occur about once a year in the Midwest. Rarer than tornadoes but with weaker winds, derechos produce damage over a much wider area.

The storms raced over parts of eastern Nebraska before 9 a.m. Monday, dropping heavy rains and high winds. Strong straight-line winds pushed south into areas that include Lincoln and Omaha, National Weather Service meteorologist Brian Barjenbruch said.

"Once that rain-cooled air hit the ground, it surged over 100 miles, sending incredibly strong winds over the area," Barjenbruch said.

Omaha Public Power District reported more than 55,500 customers without power in Omaha and surrounding communities.

Marsh said there's concern about widespread power outages across several states. Add high heat, people with medical conditions that require power and the pandemic, and he said "it becomes dire pretty quickly."

Borenstein reported from Kensington, Maryland. AP reporter David Pitt in Des Moines and Sara Burnett in Chicago contributed.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Wednesday, Aug. 12, the 225th day of 2020. There are 141 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 12, 2017, a car plowed into a crowd of people peacefully protesting a white nationalist rally in the Virginia college town of Charlottesville, killing 32-year-old Heather Heyer and hurting more than a dozen others. (The attacker, James Alex Fields, was sentenced to life in prison on 29 federal hate crime charges, and life plus 419 years on state charges.) President Donald Trump condemned what he called an "egregious display of hatred, bigotry and violence on many sides."

On this date:

In 1867, President Andrew Johnson sparked a move to impeach him as he defied Congress by suspending Secretary of War Edwin M. Stanton, with whom he had clashed over Reconstruction policies. (Johnson was acquitted by the Senate.)

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In 1902, International Harvester Co. was formed by a merger of McCormick Harvesting Machine Co., Deering Harvester Co. and several other manufacturers.

In 1909, the Indianapolis Motor Speedway, home to the Indianapolis 500, first opened.

In 1939, the MGM movie musical "The Wizard of Oz," starring Judy Garland, had its world premiere at the Strand Theater in Oconomowoc (oh-KAH'-noh-moh-wahk), Wisconsin, three days before opening in Hollywood.

In 1944, during World War II, Joseph P. Kennedy Jr., eldest son of Joseph and Rose Fitzgerald Kennedy, was killed with his co-pilot when their explosives-laden Navy plane blew up over England.

In 1953, the Soviet Union conducted a secret test of its first hydrogen bomb.

In 1981, IBM introduced its first personal computer, the model 5150, at a press conference in New York.

In 1985, the world's worst single-aircraft disaster occurred as a crippled Japan Airlines Boeing 747 on a domestic flight crashed into a mountain, killing 520 people. (Four people survived.)

In 2000, the Russian nuclear submarine Kursk and its 118-man crew were lost during naval exercises in the Barents Sea.

In 2004, New Jersey Gov. James E. McGreevey announced his resignation and acknowledged that he'd had an extramarital affair with another man.

In 2009, guitar virtuoso Les Paul died in White Plains, New York, at 94.

In 2013, James "Whitey" Bulger, the feared Boston mob boss who became one of the nation's most-wanted fugitives, was convicted in a string of 11 killings and dozens of other gangland crimes, many of them committed while he was said to be an FBI informant. (Bulger was sentenced to life; he was fatally beaten at a West Virginia prison in 2018, hours after being transferred from a facility in Florida.)

Ten years ago: General Motors Co. chief Ed Whitacre announced he was stepping down as CEO on September 1, 2010, saying his mission was accomplished as the company reported its second straight quarterly profit. (Whitacre was succeeded as CEO by GM board member Daniel Akerson.)

Five years ago: Islamic State sympathizers circulated an image that appeared to show the body of a Croatian hostage abducted in Egypt, the first such killing of a foreign captive since the extremist group established a branch in the Arab country. Deadly warehouse blasts in the Chinese port city of Tianjin claimed 165 lives. Former President Jimmy Carter announced he had been diagnosed with cancer following recent liver surgery.

One year ago: A whistleblower complaint bearing this date stated: "In the course of my official duties, I have received information from multiple U.S. Government officials that the President of the United States is using the power of his office to solicit interference from a foreign country in the 2020 U.S. election." (The complaint was addressed to Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., chairman of the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence, and Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., chairman of the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence; it did not reach them until Sept. 25.) The Trump administration said it was moving ahead with one of its most aggressive steps to restrict legal immigration: denying green cards to many migrants who use Medicaid, food stamps, housing vouchers or other forms of public assistance.

Today's Birthdays: Actor George Hamilton is 81. Actor Dana Ivey is 79. Actor Jennifer Warren is 79. Rock singer-musician Mark Knopfler (Dire Straits) is 71. Actor Jim Beaver is 70. Singer Kid Creole is 70. Jazz musician Pat Metheny is 66. Actor Sam J. Jones is 66. Actor Bruce Greenwood is 64. Country singer Danny Shirley is 64. Pop musician Roy Hay (Culture Club) is 59. Rapper Sir Mix-A-Lot is 57. Actor Peter Krause (KROW'-zuh) is 55. Actor Brent Sexton is 53. International Tennis Hall of Famer Pete Sampras is 49. Actor-comedian Michael Ian Black is 49. Actor Yvette Nicole Brown is 49. Actor Rebecca Gayheart is 49. Actor Casey Affleck is 45. Rock musician Bill Uechi is 45. Actor Maggie Lawson is 40. Actor Dominique Swain is 40. Actor Leah Pipes is 32. Actor Lakeith Stanfield is 29. NBA All-Star Khris Middleton is 29. Actor Cara Delevingne (DEHL'-eh-veen) is 28. Actor Imani Hakim is 27.