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"IT TAKES A LOT OF  
COURAGE TO SHOW  
YOUR DREAMS TO  
SOMEONE ELSE."

-ERMA BOMBECK

Chicken Soup  
for the Soul



## School Calendar

- |                      |                                     |               |                                  |
|----------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------|----------------------------------|
| Aug. 19 .....        | First Day of School                 | Feb. 12 ..... | Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL    |
| Sept. 7 .....        | Labor Day - NO SCHOOL               | Mar. 4 .....  | End of Third Quarter             |
| Sept. 19 .....       | ACT testing at Groton Area          | Mar. 6 .....  | NE Region DI at Groton           |
| Sept. 21 .....       | Homecoming Coronation (7:30 p.m.)   | Mar. 19 ..... | Spring Break - NO SCHOOL         |
| Sept. 25 .....       | Homecoming game with Redfield       | Mar. 27 ..... | State DI in Pierre               |
| Oct. 8 .....         | P-T Conferences (1:30-8:30)         | Apr. 2 .....  | Good Friday - NO SCHOOL          |
| Oct. 9 .....         | Lake Region Marching Festival       | Apr. 11 ..... | POPS Concert (2:00 & 5:00)       |
| Oct. 14 .....        | LifeTouch Pictures at Elementary    | Apr. 17 ..... | ACT testing at Groton Area       |
| Oct. 15 .....        | LifeTouch Pictures at GHS           | Apr. 24 ..... | PROM                             |
| Oct. 16 .....        | End of First Quarter                | Apr. 29 ..... | MS Spring Concert (7:00)         |
| Oct. 24 .....        | ACT testing at Groton Area          | May 4 .....   | Elementary Spring Concert (7:00) |
| Oct. 27 .....        | Financial Aid Night                 | May 6 .....   | End of 2nd Semester              |
| Nov. 11 .....        | Veteran's Day Program               | May 6 .....   | HS Concert/Awards Night (7:00)   |
| Nov. 26-27 .....     | Thanksgiving Vacation               | May 16 .....  | Graduation (2:00)                |
| Dec. 10 .....        | MS/HS Christmas Concert (7:00)      |               |                                  |
| Dec. 22 .....        | Elementary Christmas Concert (1:00) |               |                                  |
| Dec. 22 .....        | Early Dismissal (2:00)              |               |                                  |
| Dec. 22 .....        | End of First Semester               |               |                                  |
| Dec. 23-Jan. 1 ..... | Christmas Vacation                  |               |                                  |
| Jan. 4 .....         | School Resumes                      |               |                                  |
| Jan. 15 .....        | NCSEC Faculty Inservice - NO SCHOOL |               |                                  |
| Feb. 10 .....        | LifeTouch Pictures at GHS Gym       |               |                                  |
| Feb. 11 .....        | P-T Conferences (1:30-8:30)         |               |                                  |

?? FFA Banquet (7:00)

\*All make-up days will be added to the end of the school calendar.

**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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## Groton City Council Meeting Agenda

August 18, 2020 – 7:00pm  
Groton Community Center

(IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO CALL IN TO THIS MEETING, PLEASE MAKE PRIOR ARRANGEMENTS TO DO SO BY CALLING CITY HALL 605-397-8422)

1. Public Comments - pursuant to SDCL 1-25-1  
(Public Comments will offer the opportunity for anyone not listed on the agenda to speak to the council. Speaking time will be limited to 3 minutes. No action will be taken on questions or items not on the agenda.)
2. Minutes
3. Bills
4. July Finance Report
5. Airport Fly In follow up – September 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup>
6. Water tower colors and logo
7. Water Tower Replacement – Schedule B – Maguire Iron Application for Payment Number 1 for \$67,500
8. Executive session personnel & legal 1-25-2 (1) & (3)
9. Adjournment

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## Here are the results from the 2020 SDFBCA Pre-Season Coaches Poll:

11AAA

O'Gorman (13)  
SF Roosevelt (9)  
Brandon Valley  
SF Washington  
SF Lincoln  
Others: Harrisburg

11AA

Pierre (20)  
Brookings (1)  
Yankton  
Mitchell (1)  
Huron  
Others: Douglas

11A

Tea Area (9)  
Canton (9)  
Dell Rapids (2)  
Dakota Valley (2)  
West Central  
Others: Madison, Lennox

11B

Bridgewater-Emery/Ethan (12)  
Winner (7)  
Sioux Valley (2)  
St. Thomas More (1)  
McCook Central/Montrose  
Others: Elk Point-Jefferson, Beresford

9AA

Viborg-Hurley (20)  
Bon Homme (1)  
Lemmon-McIntosh  
Deuel (1)  
Platte-Geddes  
Others: Hamlin, Arlington/Lake Preston, Baltic

9A

Canistota/Freeman (20)  
Howard  
Gregory (1)  
Sully Buttes  
Britton-Heccla (1)  
Others: DeSmet, Warner

9B

Colman-Egan (9)  
Wolsey-Wessington (6)  
DR St. Mary (3)  
Herreid/Selby Area  
Langford (1)  
Others: Harding County, Faulkton Area

## GFP Accepting Returns of Big Game Licenses

PIERRE, S.D. - According to South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (GFP) officials, successful applicants in the Elk, Archery Deer, Gavins Point Paddlefish, apprentice deer, and mentored deer seasons have until August 31 to return their licenses due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Applicants returning a license will receive a full refund and retain their preference points.

Licenses should be sent to:

GFP Licensing Office, 20641 SD Hwy 1806, Ft. Pierre, SD 57532.

Individuals should include a note saying they are wanting a refund on the included license.

Licenses must be postmarked Aug. 31 to receive a refund.

## **Rounds: Earlier Start Date for Haying, Grazing and Chopping of Cover Crops Will Help South Dakota Farmers and Ranchers Prepare for Fall and Winter Season**

PIERRE—U.S. Sen. Mike Rounds (R-S.D.) today made the following statement after the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced farmers and ranchers in 19 South Dakota counties can begin haying, grazing and chopping cover crops on prevented plant acres starting on September 1 rather than November 1:

“The past two years have been incredibly difficult for South Dakota farmers and ranchers, with many facing excessive moisture and flooding, while other parts of the state are facing drought conditions. These weather conditions make it difficult for producers to wait until November 1 to begin grazing or harvesting cover crops. I’m pleased USDA has provided some flexibility by allowing them to hay, graze and chop their fields earlier in the season. I hope USDA will consider additional South Dakota counties for early haying and grazing. This will help them to better prepare for the coming fall and winter months.”

The South Dakota counties impacted by this announcement are: Beadle, Brown, Brule, Campbell, Clark, Codington, Day, Edmunds, Faulk, Hand, Hanson, Hyde, McPherson, Marshall, Potter, Roberts, Sanborn, Spink and Walworth.

More information on USDA’s announcement is available [here](#).

On June 12, Rounds joined Sen. John Thune and a number of other farm-state senators and representatives in a letter to USDA Secretary Sonny Perdue, requesting an earlier start date for harvesting cover crops.

Rounds also cosponsored the Cover Crop Flexibility Act, which would make permanent the earlier start date for harvesting cover crops on prevented plant acres.

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**#176 in a series**

## **Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller**

Numbers look low again today, which is, of course, a good thing; but it is a Monday. I am firmly determined not to get excited until I see what tomorrow looks like.

We reported 40,700 new cases today, a 0.8% increase to 5,453,600. We broke 170,000 deaths today with 170,419. I have a list of 10 states and territories where case reporting over the past 14 days is increasing and of 22 where case reporting is decreasing. There were 559 deaths reported today, a 0.3% increase. I have 10 states and territories where death reports are increasing.

We talked briefly last night about case clusters at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. As of today, they had 177 students isolated after testing and another 349 in quarantine due to possible exposure; and they threw in the towel, announcing undergraduate courses will all be delivered remotely this fall. There have been protests of decisions to hold in-person classes at other institutions, and there have also been concerns voiced about students attending parties, large ones, without observing distancing and masking guidelines. People who know college students should not be stunned to find they do not necessarily exhibit excellent judgement while at parties. I used to be a college student myself, and that wasn't so long ago that I don't remember what it's like to be 18 or 19 and away from home for the first time.

There have been similar challenges at the elementary and secondary education level in states where school has already started. There are teacher protests at school opening before they've met their state's guidelines for opening, there are quarantines of sometimes large numbers of students after possible exposures, and there have been schools that closed almost as soon as they opened due to widespread exposures among their students. We're in quite a mess, folks; and I don't look for that to get a lot better until we get the community spread problem we're pretending not to have under some sort of control.

Further complicating decision-making around important matters like school reopenings are problems popping up in multiple states related to data reporting. Iowa's apparently been mistakenly reporting potentially thousands of current positive tests as having happened as many as five months ago. Apparently what happened was that the system was taking a positive result from August for people who'd had earlier negative tests and reporting those as occurring back at the time of the initial test. So someone tested and negative in March, then tested again last week and positive was showing up in the system as a case reported in March rather than in August. There's a reasonable chance they have for some not-yet-determined period been seriously underreporting new cases, something that's going to make it tough to make good decisions.

California has now cleared that huge backlog caused by a failure in its reporting system to pick up cases from certain labs; but Massachusetts is having trouble getting county-level data, and Texas is just now getting some 59,000 test results that had not yet been reported to health departments. So our pandemic-management fumbblings continue. Michigan had a problem where some results for patients in Idaho were being reported as Michigan cases and some Michigan cases were not being reported to the state. It seems as though, every time I see one of these stories, it includes a statement like this one from Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist and professor at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, saying the lack of national standards for tracking and reporting testing is "problematic."

I want to correct something I reported here just over a week ago. In describing the findings of a study of face masks by Duke University, I reported that these researchers found the neck gaiter might be actually worse than wearing no mask at all. Turns out that is not accurate. The finding was not statistically significant and statements in the paper hypothesizing about the gaiter were misconstrued in the reporting I read. The authors of the original paper have spoken: "Our intent was not to say this mask doesn't work, or never use neck gaiters." Then because of the publicity that this whole issue has received, Linsey Marr, a professor at Virginia Tech and one of the world's leading authorities on aerosols, decided to do a test. The gaiters tested performed very well. So there we are; I'm retracting that statement. Gaiters are not less effective than other masks. If that is your preferred sort of mask, knock yourself out; they work just fine.

I read an interesting article today that postulates the reason it's been so difficult to get folks to take



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this pandemic seriously is that they tend to overlook exponential growth, growth that accelerates over time, and tend to think in terms of linear growth, which doesn't, even when they know better. Problem is pandemics grow exponentially, not linearly. Here's what I'm talking about:

Linear growth occurs when something grows by a fixed amount with time. So if you decide to look for interesting-looking pebbles you see on your daily walk around the neighborhood and decide you'll collect one new pebble each day, on Day 2, you'll have two pebbles in your collection; on Day 5, you'll have five pebbles collected; and after a month, you'll have 30 (or 31) pebbles. It's called linear growth because if you draw a graph of the number of pebbles in your collection against the number of days you've been collecting, the resulting plot would be a straight line going upward.

Exponential growth occurs when the total grows by an amount that increases each day. So let's say you decide that each day you're going to pick up twice as many pebbles as you did the day before. On Day 2, you're going to pick up two pebbles, bringing your collection to three pebbles (the one from yesterday plus your two new ones). Then on Day 3, you'll add four more to the three you already have and on Day 4, you're going to add eight to your seven so that on Day 5, you're going to pick up 16 new pebbles, which will bring your collection to 31 pebbles. And at the end of the month? Well, let's just say you'd have given up on your project long before the end of the month, surely by Day 12 when you'd have to lug 2048 pebbles home with you to add to your collection of 2048 from the previous 10 days, bringing your collection to 4096 pebbles. Things are getting out of hand fast, aren't they? That's exponential growth. (For the record, the answer to my end-of-the-month question is that on Day 30, you'd be picking up 268,435,456 pebbles to take home and add to the 268,435,456 you already had there, bringing your collection to 536,870,912. Which means you need a bigger house—and a helluva wagon to haul them home.) When you graph exponential growth, you see a curve that rises slowly at first, then more and more steeply until the direction is almost straight up.

Now viral spread, at least for any disease now known, doesn't cause a daily doubling in case numbers; but what we've been seeing in this pandemic is streaks where the case numbers increase by a pretty steady percentage each day. And that means each day the number of cases you add is a bigger number than the day before because the same percentage of today's larger total is more new cases than we saw yesterday. the amount of increase grows each day. To help you visualize this, Let's go back in this pandemic to April 1. In the US at that time, we were running growth rates upwards of 10%, and we had around 200,000 cases on April 1, so to keep the math simple in this example, let's work with those numbers. If we have 200,000 cases on April 1 and increase by 10% each day, we're going to see 20,000 new cases on April 2, bringing us to 220,000 total. Then on April 2, we're going to increase by another 10%, this time on the new total, which is 22,000, bringing us to 242,000. On April 3, we're going to increase by 24,200, on April 4 by 26,620, and on April 5 by 29,282. Do you see what's happening? We keep taking the same percentage of an increasing total, and the number of new cases grows each day until within just five days, we've gone from 20,000 new cases a day to nearly 30,000 cases a day. That's what we mean by growth that accelerates over time. This is exponential growth, and it's way scarier than just adding, say 20,000 per day forever in a linear growth pattern.

You may recall a while back—I think it was when we hit four million cases—that we talked about how many days it took to go from one million to two million and then to three and four million. Remember how the time kept getting shorter for each new million? That's exponential growth.

One of the ways we assess growth is to look at doubling time, how long it takes for your total to double. There's a really simple calculation you can do to compute doubling time. (This works whether you're looking at the growth of your investment, viral spread, or any number of other things.) You take the percentage rate of increase as a percentage and divide it into 70. If you're looking at annual increase, then the answer tells you how many years it takes to double; if you're looking at daily increase, then it tells you how many days it takes—same thing with weeks, months, decades, whatever. So if you take \$100 and invest it at a 4% annual rate of return, you can figure out how long it takes to double to \$200 like this:  $70/4 = 17.5$  years.

And if you have a viral infection and the number of cases is increasing by 1% per day (which is a little

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below our average rate of growth over the past 7-14 days), then we can figure out how many days it will take the US to double its case total from today's 5,453,600 to 10,907,200:  $70/1 = 70$  days. A couple of months and change. If we do nothing to slow it down and things don't get worse.

That seems serious to me. That's why I'm striking such a serious tone these days. Anyone else?

The Washington Post has been following ten regular, non-celebrity-type people through the pandemic to chronicle their experiences along the way. One of them is sculpture artist, Cara Briggs Farmer. She was earning a living as an artist, but said early on that she generally is busy through the fall with commissioned work before things slow down in winter so that by March, when her bank account is dwindling, she's ready for business to pick up again. Of course, this year, that's not how it worked. "My shows started canceling. And this massive public art project I've been working on just stalled."

She dealt with the problem by going to work in a grocery store early in the mornings to fill online orders. She said, "I'm ready to do this for a year. . . . Realistically, I'm prepared to just make this my new normal." She added, "Both of my grandfathers fought the Nazis. The least I can do right now is go work in a grocery store." After describing how she'd bought a building, fixed it up, and opened a gallery, she explained, "I'll be damned if we're going to lose this building over a pandemic. If working in a grocery store at 4 a.m. means the bills are paid and we get to keep it, I'll do it."

She had her will drawn up, you know, just in case; then she bought a \$20 secondhand unicycle. She did it to balance things because "[y]ou've got to have recess. Pandemics are serious and you need to take a break. If we're going to go to a lawyer and get our wills done, we need recess." At the time she bought it she declared, "You can't be cranky on a unicycle."

She talked about her work at the grocery store, how it gave her some human interaction to replace what she would normally have gotten at art shows all summer and how she learned about her co-workers. "I'm really optimistic about this younger generation of people in the United States. I've gotten to know some really lovely young people in their early 20s at the grocery store and oh my God, just let them take this country and run with it. They're hopeful and they're passionate and they really don't take any guff," things I get the idea are also true of Ms. Briggs Farmer.

Her work has picked up somewhat over the summer, some commissions from private clients wanting pieces done, as well as one large-scale public art piece; she said, "It's been a busy summer." She described installing a large public art piece in Iowa City, with just one rather than the more usual three or four parks department people she would have been working with before the pandemic. "It was really lovely to have something that felt like a laid-back, half a day of work with another person. It was just very pre-pandemic normal." She noted the coincidence of installing a work of art titled "Emergence" just as lockdowns were being lifted and people were coming out to interact again. Thinking about "Emergence" gives me reason to be hopeful about our future.

I've been thinking about the way she just buckled down and did what needed to be done. Faced with pretty serious hardship, she figured out how to keep herself afloat and got on with it—and then found the best in the people she was working with. And at last, she reemerged, bringing us with her into whatever this pandemic future turns out to be. Let's design that, make it what we think it should be instead of waiting for it to happen by accident. One last thing Ms. Farmer said is, "This pandemic has I think given us all an opportunity to figure out what our priorities are, and I think people are living more intentionally." I hope so; that's our best shot at creating the sort of place we want to live.

While we all work on that, take care of yourself. We'll talk again.

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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 12	Aug. 13	Aug. 14	Aug. 15	Aug. 16	Aug. 17	Aug. 18
Minnesota	61,839	62,303	62,993	63,723	64,413	65,152	65,716
Nebraska	29,030	29,244	29,660	29,988	30,241	30,372	30,563
Montana	5,104	5,268	5,407	5,541	5,659	5,750	5,792
Colorado	51,441	51,756	52,219	52,538	52,838	53,176	53,370
Wyoming	2,584	2,600	2,627	2,694	2,730	2,789	2,829
North Dakota	7885	7970	8171	8322	8444	8587	8647
South Dakota	9713	9815	9897	10,024	10,118	10,274	10,360
United States	5,141,879	5,197,749	5,248,172	5,314,116	5,357,396	5,403,218	5,444,115
US Deaths	164,545	166,038	167,092	168,458	169,432	170,052	170,559
Minnesota	+323	+464	+690	+730	+690	+739	+564
Nebraska	+334	+214	+416	+328	+253	+131	+191
Montana	+87	+164	+139	+134	+118	+91	+42
Colorado	+402	+315	+463	+319	+300	+338	+194
Wyoming	+19	+16	+27	+67	+36	+59	+40
North Dakota	+172	+85	+201	+151	+122	+143	+60
South Dakota	50	+102	+82	+127	+94	+156	+86
United States	+47,314	+55,870	+50,423	+65,944	+43,280	45,822	+40,897
US Deaths	+1,080	+1,493	+1,054	+1,366	+974	+620	+507
	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



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## August 17th COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

Brown and Day counties continue to see increases in the area. Brown County has 12 new positive cases and Day County has 12. The Brown County positivity rate is 18.9 percent South Dakota had 86 positive cases and a positivity rate of 8.9 percent. No new deaths in South Dakota but there was one in North Dakota.

#### **Brown County:**

Total Positive: +12 (485) Positivity Rate: 18.8%  
Recovered: +4 (429)  
Active Cases: +8 (53)  
Total Tests: +64 (6344)  
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (22)  
Deaths: 0 (3)  
Percent Recovered: 88.4% (-1.5)

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +86 (10,360 total) Positivity Rates: 8.9%  
Total Tests: 962 (165,065 total)  
Hospitalized: +5 (921 total). 60 currently hospitalized (down 6 from yesterday)  
Deaths: 0 (153 total)  
Recovered: +44 (9,013 total)  
Active Cases: +12 (1,194)  
Percent Recovered: 87.0 No change  
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 46% Non-Covid, 51% Available  
ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 62% Non-Covid, 35% Available  
Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 22% Non-Covid, 73% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Kingsbury, Gained Miner): Bennett 6-6, Jerauld 40-39-1, Jones 2-2, Haakon 1-1, Hyde 3-3, Mellette 24-24, Miner 15-15, Perkins 4-4, 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: 4 active cases	
Beadle (9): 19 active cases	
Bennett: Full Recovered	
Bon Homme: +2 positive (13 active cases)	
Brookings (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (19 active cases)	
Brown (3): +12 positive, +4 recovered (53 active cases)	
Brule: 3 active cases	
Buffalo (3): 5 active cases	
Butte (1): 6 active cases	
Campbell: +1 recovered (1 active case)	
Charles Mix: +1 recovered (17 active cases)	
Clark: +1 recovered (2 active cases)	
Clay: -1 positive (23 active cases)	
Codington (1): +6 positive, +1 recovered (49 active cases)	
Corson: +1 recovered (18 active cases)	
Custer: +2 positive, +3 recovered (15 active case)	
Davison (1): +1 positive (8 active cases)	
Day: +2 positive, +1 recovered (6 active cases)	
Deuel: +5 positive, +1 recovered (11 active cases)	
Dewey: +1 positive (26 active cases)	
Douglas: +1 positive (4 active cases)	
Edmunds: +1 recovered (5 active cases)	
Fall River: 1 recovered (3 active cases)	

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Faulk (1): 4 active cases  
 Grant: 7 active cases  
 Gregory: +1 positive (2 active cases)  
 Haakon: Fully Recovered  
 Hamlin: +1 positive (15 active cases)  
 Hand: 5 active cases  
 Hanson: 4 active cases  
 Harding: 2 active cases  
 Hughes (3): +2 positive (14 active cases)  
 Hutchinson: 4 active cases  
 Hyde: 1 active case  
 Jackson (1): 1 active case  
 Jerauld (1): Fully Recovered  
 Jones: Fully Recovered  
 Kingsbury: 1 active case  
 Lake (4): +2 positive, +3 recovered (6 active cases)  
 Lawrence (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (23 active cases)  
 Lincoln (2): +3 positive, +5 recovered (86 active cases)  
 Lyman (3): 6 active cases  
 Marshall: 4 active cases  
 McCook (1): +1 recovered (9 active cases)  
 McPherson: 1 active case  
 Meade (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (22 active cases)  
 Mellette: Fully Recovered  
 Miner: Fully Recovered  
 Minnehaha (68): +26 positive, +33 recovered (398 active cases)  
 Moody: 3 active cases  
 Oglala Lakota (2): +2 recovered (16 active cases)

Pennington (33): +9 positive, +11 recovered (112 active cases)  
 Perkins: 1 active cases  
 Potter: 1 active case  
 Roberts (1): 13 active cases  
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered  
 Spink: 6 active cases  
 Stanley: +1 positive (2 active case)  
 Sully: 1 active case  
 Todd (5): 8 active cases  
 Tripp: Fully Recovered  
 Turner: +1 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases)  
 Union (4): 21 active cases  
 Walworth: 1 active cases  
 Yankton (3): +4 positive, +1 recovered (48 active cases)  
 Ziebach: 11 active cases

## North Dakota Dept. of Health Report COVID-19 Daily Report, August 17:

- 2,703 tests (619)
- 8,647 positives (+60)
- 7,343 recovered (+94)
- 126 deaths (+1)
- 1,178 active cases (-35)

## AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	372	0
10-19 years	935	0
20-29 years	2306	2
30-39 years	2018	6
40-49 years	1525	7
50-59 years	1523	18
60-69 years	924	27
70-79 years	409	24
80+ years	348	69

## SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	5134	78
Male	5226	75

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	40	36	393	0	Minimal
Beadle	598	570	1922	9	Moderate
Bennett	6	6	546	0	None
Bon Homme	26	13	820	0	Substantial
Brookings	156	136	2861	1	Moderate
Brown	485	429	4685	3	Substantial
Brule	47	44	766	0	Minimal
Buffalo	109	101	655	3	None
Butte	20	13	822	1	Minimal
Campbell	3	2	100	0	None
Charles Mix	113	96	1407	0	Substantial
Clark	17	15	400	0	Minimal
Clay	141	118	1451	0	Moderate
Codington	169	119	2988	1	Substantial
Corson	47	29	496	0	Substantial
Custer	47	32	819	0	Substantial
Davison	101	92	2460	1	Moderate
Day	28	22	657	0	Moderate
Deuel	24	13	419	0	Substantial
Dewey	59	33	2301	0	Substantial
Douglas	20	16	413	0	Minimal
Edmunds	19	14	425	0	Minimal
Fall River	23	20	1004	0	Minimal
Faulk	29	24	203	1	Minimal
Grant	33	26	746	0	Moderate
Gregory	8	6	407	0	Minimal
Haakon	2	2	296	0	None
Hamlin	31	16	669	0	Substantial
Hand	12	7	301	0	Moderate
Hanson	22	18	222	0	Minimal
Harding	2	0	57	0	Minimal
Hughes	100	83	1827	3	Moderate
Hutchinson	31	27	927	0	Minimal

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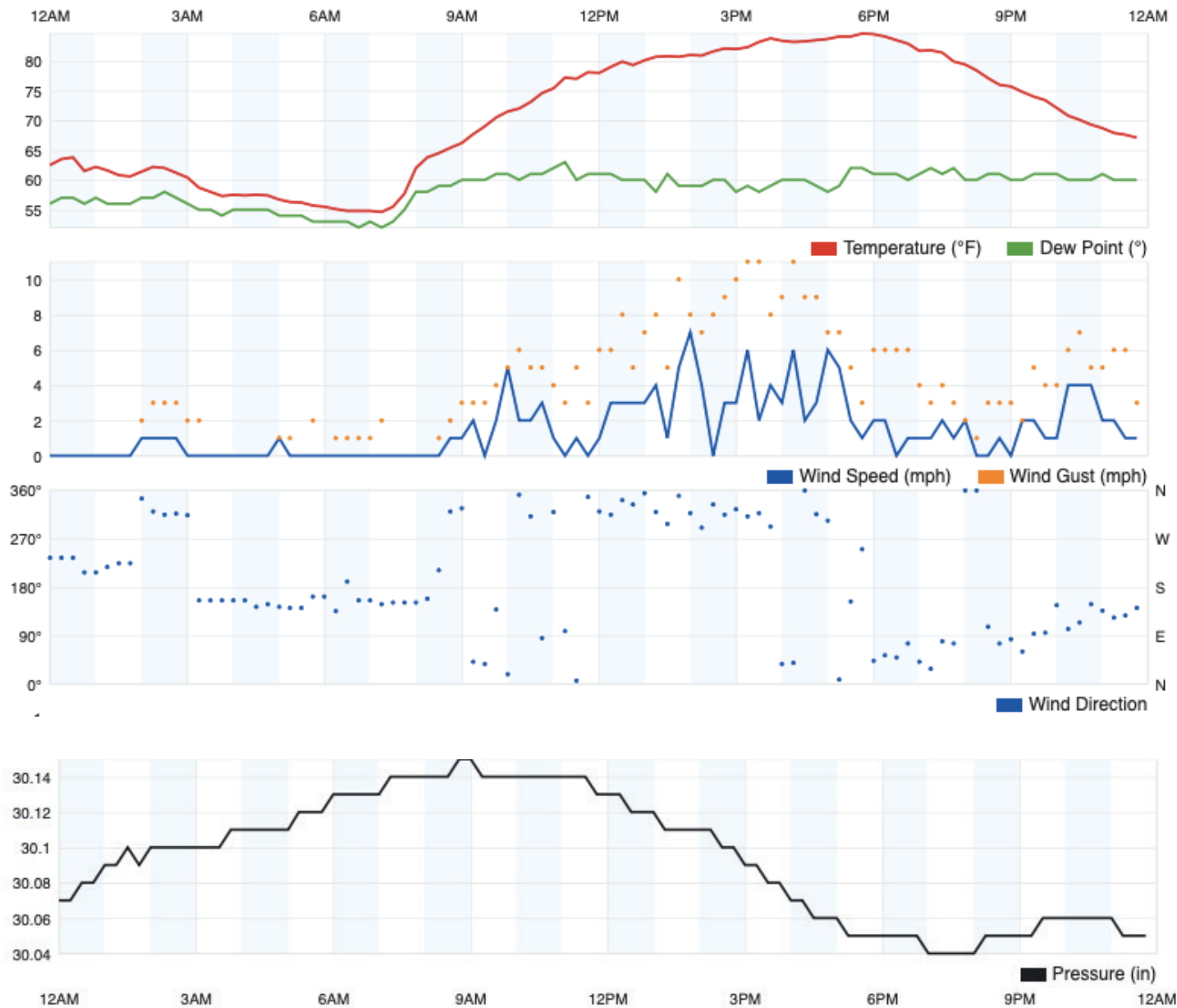
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Hyde	4	3	145	0	Minimal
Jackson	12	10	486	1	Minimal
Jerauld	39	38	275	1	None
Jones	2	2	62	0	None
Kingsbury	15	14	579	0	Minimal
Lake	103	93	977	4	Moderate
Lawrence	74	50	2188	1	Moderate
Lincoln	711	613	7212	2	Substantial
Lyman	91	82	986	3	Minimal
Marshall	12	8	483	0	Minimal
McCook	36	26	662	1	Moderate
McPherson	8	7	224	0	None
Meade	106	83	2054	1	Moderate
Mellette	24	24	393	0	None
Miner	15	15	259	0	None
Minnehaha	4655	4189	28876	68	Substantial
Moody	33	30	655	0	Minimal
Oglala Lakota	158	140	2971	2	Minimal
Pennington	951	804	11369	33	Moderate
Perkins	6	5	196	0	None
Potter	2	1	303	0	Minimal
Roberts	87	73	1891	1	Moderate
Sanborn	13	13	235	0	None
Spink	27	21	1182	0	Minimal
Stanley	16	14	264	0	Minimal
Sully	4	3	83	0	Minimal
Todd	75	62	2249	5	Moderate
Tripp	20	20	625	0	None
Turner	60	47	954	0	Moderate
Union	223	198	2005	4	Moderate
Walworth	18	17	735	0	None
Yankton	157	106	3255	3	Substantial
Ziebach	35	24	316	0	None
Unassigned	0	0	9319	0	

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs





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Today



Mostly Sunny

High: 89 °F

Tonight



Slight Chance  
T-storms

Low: 63 °F

Wednesday



Hot

High: 91 °F

Wednesday  
Night



Partly Cloudy

Low: 65 °F

Thursday



Hot

High: 93 °F



NWS ABERDEEN

WEATHER.GOV/ABR

8/18/2020 4:51 AM

Today Wednesday Thursday

Highs: Mid 80s to Mid 90s  
warmest over central SD

Lows: 60s



Isolated Showers and  
Thunderstorms,



mainly this evening  
over eastern SD &  
western MN



Above Average Temperatures  
Continue...

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## Today in Weather History

August 18, 1936: A tornado moved east, ending southeast of Gettysburg. A farmhouse and four barns were destroyed near Gorman, in Potter County. Property damage was estimated at \$20,000.

August 18, 1938: A tornado destroyed a barn, unroofed a gym, and damaged other buildings near Stephen, in Hyde County. The funnel moved northeast then curved to the northwest. There were two other tornadoes on this day. One moved northeast from near Worley and Broadland in Beadle County producing estimated F3 damage. The other was an estimated F2 and also started off in Beadle County and moved northeast into Kingsbury County. This storm injured three people.

August 18, 1983: High winds up to 80 mph caused extensive damage to trees, structures, and cars, in Lyman, Hyde, Faulk, and Brown Counties. In Presho, several homes lost their roofs. Hay bales were scattered, metal siding was ripped from outbuildings, and a ballpark lost three large fence sections. Gusty winds up to 75 mph were recorded at Ordway, in Brown County, causing damage to a mobile home. Two hangers at the Aberdeen airport received extensive damage, with roofs and doors torn off.

August 18, 2009: Numerous thunderstorms developed along a stationary front and trained over the same locations producing very heavy rains along with large hail. Nickel size hail falling for several minutes piled up to 6 to 8 inches deep near Harrold in Hughes County. Massive rains of 2 to nearly 5 inches resulted in the flash flooding of numerous roads. Several of the streets were washed out. Some rainfall amounts included 3.05 inches at Warner, 3.15 inches southwest of Bristol, 4.40 inches in Webster, and 4.50 inches east of Warner.

1925: During the late morning hours a severe hailstorm struck southeastern Iowa destroying crops along a path six to ten miles wide and 75 miles long. The hail also injured and killed poultry and livestock, and caused a total of 2.5 million dollars damage. The hailstorm flattened fields of corn to such an extent that many had to leave their farms in search of other work.

1931: The Yangtze River in China peaks during a horrible flood that kills 3.7 million people directly and indirectly over the next several months. This flood was perhaps the worst natural disaster of the 20th century.

1983 - Hurricane Alicia ravaged southeastern Texas. The hurricane caused more than three billion dollars property damage, making it one of the costliest hurricanes in the history of the U.S. Just thirteen persons were killed, but 1800 others were injured. The hurricane packed winds to 130 mph as it crossed Galveston Island, and spawned twenty-two tornadoes in less than 24 hours as it made landfall. (The Weather Channel) (Storm Data)

1987 - Thirteen cities in the eastern U.S. reported record high temperatures for the date, including Orlando FL with a reading of 98 degrees, and Portland ME with a high of 94 degrees. Newark NJ reached 90 degrees for the thirty-sixth time of the year, their second highest total of record. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Twenty-two cities, from the Carolinas to the Upper Ohio Valley, reported record high temperatures for the date, pushing the total number of daily record highs since the first of June above the 1100 mark. Afternoon highs of 102 degrees at Greensboro NC and 105 degrees at Raleigh NC equalled all-time records. Evening thunderstorms in Montana produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Scobey. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Thunderstorms over the Middle Atlantic Coast Region and the Upper Ohio Valley produced torrential rains in eastern Virginia during the late morning and afternoon hours. Totals ranged up to twelve inches at Yorktown. Williamsburg VA was deluged with 10.78 inches of rain between 6 AM and 10 AM, with 6.72 inches reported in just two hours. Flash flooding caused nearly twelve million dollars damage in Accomack County VA. Early evening thunderstorms in the Central High Plains Region produced walnut size hail and wind gusts to 80 mph around Casper WY. Thunderstorms produced locally heavy rains in the Yellowstone Park area, causing fifteen mudslides. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)



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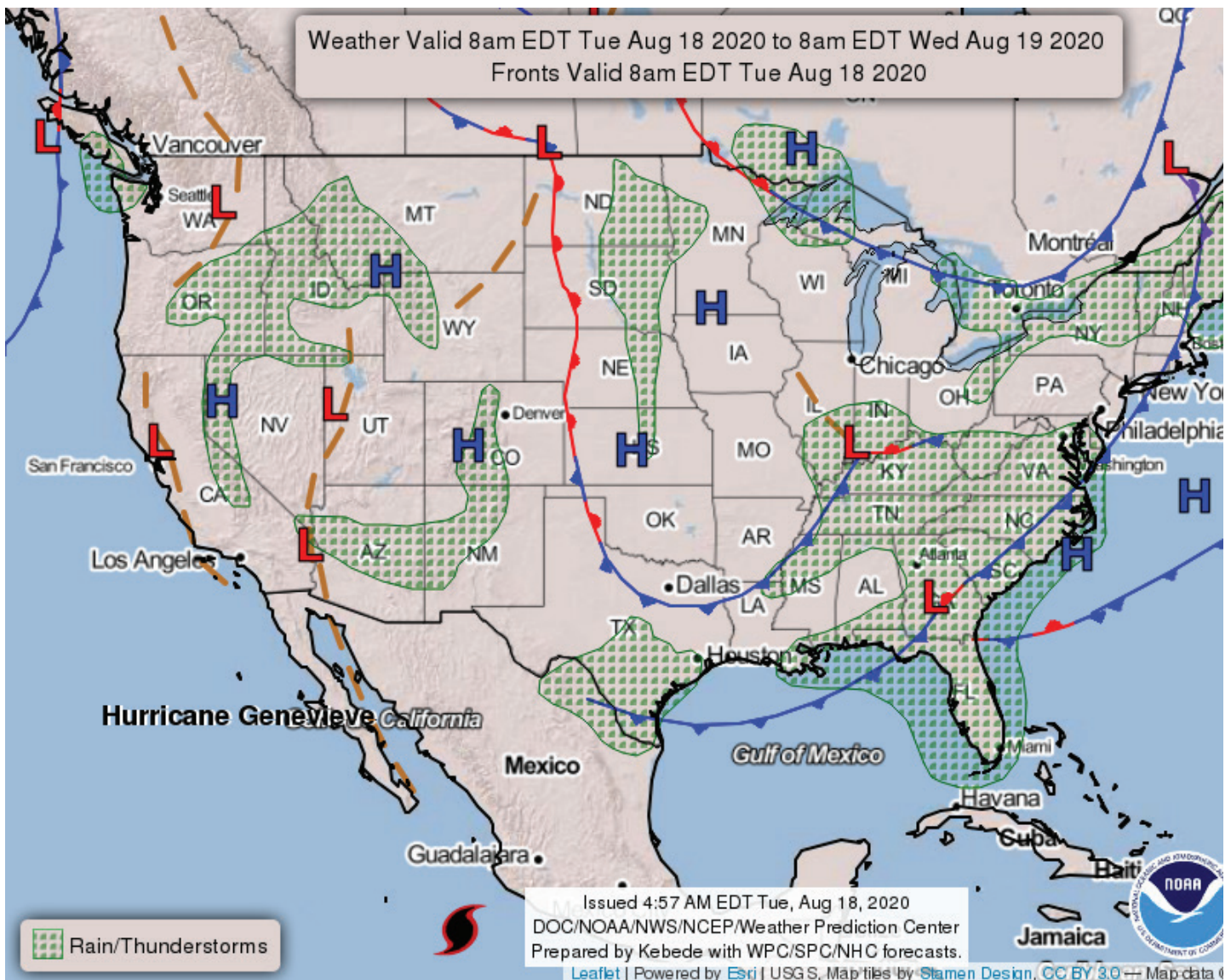
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 85 °F at 5:48 PM**  
**Low Temp: 54 °F at 7:11 AM**  
**Wind: 12 mph at 3:18 PM**  
**Precip: .00**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 109° in 1959**  
**Record Low: 38° in 2002**  
**Average High: 82°F**  
**Average Low: 56°F**  
**Average Precip in Aug.: 1.33**  
**Precip to date in Aug.: 1.24**  
**Average Precip to date: 15.19**  
**Precip Year to Date: 11.75**  
**Sunset Tonight: 8:35 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:40 a.m.**



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## **EARNING IT IS WHAT MATTERS!**

A friend of Clark Gable took her young son to his home for a visit. As they were about to leave, the boy pointed to the Oscar that Gable had won and asked, "May I have this?"

"Sure," answered Gable, giving the Oscar to the child.

"Give it back immediately," shouted the mother in shock.

"Oh, no," said Gable. "Keep it. Having the Oscar around doesn't mean anything to me. Earning it does."

Focusing on the future has many benefits. Paul boldly declared that "I am still not all I should be! But I am focusing all my energies on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead I strain to reach the end of the race."

Paul had excellent reasons to want to forget the past - he persecuted Christians and even had them killed. He held them in great contempt, creating fear and anxiety among them. But, he also accomplished many outstanding things for Christ before he wrote these words. In all reality, he could have "stayed stuck" for one reason or another: either feelings of guilt from the evil things he had done to Christians or a sense of false pride for his exemplary service to his Lord.

These are two traps that every Christian faces: our failures and our successes. Either trap can destroy or defeat what God is calling us to do. We must avoid the "traps" and move forward!

Prayer: Help us, Father, not to ruin the present or the future by staying stuck in the past. You have called us to do great things through Christ. May we always be faithful. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: No, dear brothers and sisters, I have not achieved it, but I focus on this one thing: Forgetting the past and looking forward to what lies ahead, I press on to reach the end of the race and receive the heavenly prize for which God, through Christ Jesus, is calling us. Philippians 3:13-14

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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
- 09/12-13/2020 Groton Fly-In/Drive-In at the Groton Airport north of Groton
- 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
- 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
- 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
- 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
- 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
- 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
- 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates



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## News from the Associated Press

### South Dakota Prep Polls

By The Associated Press

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The preseason South Dakota Prep Media football polls are listed below, ranking the top-five teams in each class ahead of the new season. First-place votes are listed in parentheses.

#### Class 11AAA

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Sioux Falls Roosevelt	(15)	86
2. Brandon Valley	(2)	67
3. Sioux Falls O'Gorman	(1)	55
4. Harrisburg	-	29
5. Sioux Falls Washington	-	26

Others receiving votes: Lincoln 6, Watertown 1.

#### Class 11AA

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Pierre	(18)	90
2. Yankton	-	60
3. Mitchell	-	50
4. Huron	-	38
5. Brookings	-	20

Others receiving votes: Sturgis 7, Douglas 5.

#### Class 11A

Rank-School	FPV	TP
1. Canton	(13)	81
2. Tea Area	(3)	68
3. Dell Rapids	(2)	58
4. West Central	-	29
5. Dakota Valley	-	19

Others receiving votes: Madison 7, Lennox 6, Sioux Falls Christian 2.

#### Class 11B

Rank-School	(FPV)	TP
1. Winner	(14)	82
2. Bridgewater-Emery-Ethan	(4)	75
3. McCook Central-Montrose	-	37
4. Sioux Valley	-	33
5. St. Thomas More	-	29

Others receiving votes: Webster Area 7, Elk Point-Jefferson 4, Mobridge-Pollock 3.

#### Class 9AA

Rank-School	(FPV)	TP
1. Viborg-Hurley	(18)	90
2. Bon Homme	-	56
(tie)Lemon-McIntosh	-	56
4. Deuel	-	38
5. Hamlin	-	12

Others receiving votes: Platte-Geddes 9, Baltic 7, Arlington-Lake Preston 2.

#### Class 9A

Rank-School	(FPV)	TP
-------------	-------	----

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1. Canistota-Freeman (18) 90
2. Howard - 64
3. Gregory - 42
4. De Smet - 35
5. Sully Buttes - 19

Others receiving votes: Warner 11, Britton-Hecla 7, Wall 1, Burke 1.

Class 9B

- Rank-School (FPV) TP
1. Wolsey-Wessington (10) 77
  2. Colman-Egan (6) 72
  3. Dell Rapids St. Mary (1) 51
  4. Langford Area - 29
  5. Harding County - 18

Others receiving votes: Alcester-Hudson 15, Herreid-Selby Area 7, Corsica-Stickney 1.

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## Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

Madison Daily Leader, Aug. 13

Decide CARES funds before the last minute

South Dakota legislators and Gov. Kristi Noem are deciding whether to call a special legislative session to decide how to spend most of the coronavirus relief funds given to the state by the federal governments.

It's a complicated issue. As part of its largest stimulus package, Congress and the president provided \$150 billion to states, tribal governments and others. The money to states is based on population, with the minimum amount being \$1.25 billion. That's what South Dakota received.

The original restrictions included two big ones: the money needed to be spent on non-budgeted expenses related to the COVID-19 pandemic, and it must be spent this year.

That still leaves a lot of room for interpretation, and clarification has been coming only in bits and pieces. So far, South Dakota has refilled the unemployment trust fund, and allocated money to local governments like cities and counties.

But plenty of money is left, and we need to spend it wisely. Some observers believe the end-of-the-year deadline will be extended, which would allow the legislature to make decisions during its regular session starting in January. Others believe we have only 140 days to spend it or lose it.

We're leaning toward making decisions now. There is no assurance the deadline will be extended, and spending \$1 billion under a last minute scenario would likely lead to errors, lack of public input and political pressure.

Here's a reasonable compromise. Meet in special session now (the cost of which would probably qualify for reimbursement), get the discussion started and make decisions that will be executed by the end of the year. If the deadline is extended, allow the legislature to amend its special session decisions, based on new and clearer information.

Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, Aug. 13

A letter to World War II veterans

This is an open letter that I've thought about and dreaded writing for a long, long time, because I knew this moment would arrive.

It's a letter to all the World War II veterans I've ever known. A few of them are still around, but most of these people who shaped my life are gone now, and I think of them every day.

To those veterans ...

I'm writing you today on a sobering anniversary. Seventy-five years ago, Japan surrendered to the al-

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lies to effectively end World War II, the greatest conflict in human history and a defining moment in our civilization. It also transformed this nation from what we were into what we are now.

And that was due to you, all of you, who fought that war in various capacities and then helped build the post-war world thereafter.

Where would we be without you? I shudder to think.

It's also overwhelming to consider everything you went through as young men and women.

You marched into a war that altered your lives forever, and many of you did so at terribly young ages. At a time when you should have been going to college or helping out your parents or whatever else, you were instead confronting impossible realities — terrible things that resided beyond your imaginations — in places you probably never heard of in the prewar days. This demanded a resolve beyond your years, mixed, perhaps, with a youthful sense of invincibility. You had to grow up fast, but it carried you through.

Even before all that, though, many of you grew up in the 1930s during a devastating economic depression and a dust bowl. You endured those hardships, and THEN you were thrown into a hurricane of war.

But all this didn't break your spirit; instead, it steeled it. You found the strength, the courage and the sheer will to fight through the fear and adversity, and you seized the day. (I suspect your relatives who fought in World War I taught you that lesson, just as you left your lesson for those who followed.) It was as if there was nothing you couldn't do, or so it seemed to me.

After the war, you built a new kind of America: strong, assured, resourceful, unstoppable. I think this reflected what you yourselves had become during your incredible journey through strife and war and triumph and, finally, peace.

I'm part of the Baby Boomer generation, and for us, World War II was a daily reference point in our lives, even decades after it happened. What you accomplished, no matter how far removed it seemed from us, was always an essential piece of us.

Honestly, we didn't really see you as heroes or warriors. Instead, we saw you as parents, grandparents, uncles and aunts. We saw you as teachers, farmers, policemen and merchants. We saw you as regular, everyday people — the kind of people perhaps some of you just wanted to be after all you had seen. You were the gears in our lives; you were our world.

You taught us a lot, but frankly, I really wish you could have told us more. One thing about you guys that could be so perplexing was that many of you wouldn't, or couldn't, really share your war experiences for a long time.

I had an uncle who was in the war, and during battle in Europe, he found himself pinned down in a foxhole for several days; his only company was his dead buddy, who had been killed as they arrived. My uncle only talked about this sometimes when he drank; it's the only time he unleashed memories that haunted him otherwise in anguished silence.

He wasn't alone. Many of you wouldn't talk about your war years other than in general, stoic terms. It mostly stayed in your heads and, perhaps, in your nightmares. And I know some of you suffered because of it.

Decades later, when Tom Brokaw released his book "The Greatest Generation" in 1998, it seemed to throw open a mighty door. You finally began sharing more of those memories and paint for us a fuller picture of what you endured, once upon a time. (I still remember getting a phone call one day just after the book came out from a World War II veteran in Florida praising the book no end and thanking Yankton's Brokaw for writing it.) I wish you would have shared this sooner, if only to let it out and let us learn and understand more about who you REALLY were.

In these later years, you've been remembered and honored — deservedly so. Part of the reason why, of course, is the grim fact that your generation is fading away. The many have become the few: Of the 16 million Americans who fought in World War II, it's estimated that only about 300,000 of you are left. Five years ago, that number was about 930,000. This 75th anniversary essentially marks the last time the world can properly honor enough of those who are still here. After this, we're mostly on our own.

So here we are. This moment stands as a last farewell, I suppose, and a chance to offer one final, heart-

felt cry of thanks. The vast majority of you may be gone, and yet, you remain — for the world you won for us is still here and, despite its various crises, divisions, issues and other dramas, still stands strong. We are your testament to that.

You can sleep with that knowledge, as well as with this: You will always be part of us, and we will never forget you. I know I never will.

## South Dakota farmers plant more this year than last year

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota farmers were able to plant more this year than they did last year despite spring storms and flooding.

A total of 1,279,908 acres were not planted this year, including 897,773 acres of corn and 296,425 acres of soybeans. That number is down 67.6% from 2019 when nearly 4 million acres was not planted, which made it the most acres of any state. But this year's 1.2 million acres made South Dakota the second hardest-hit state in the country, the Argus Leader reported.

Brown County had the worst numbers this year. A total of 105,684 acres was not planted, which is 22.41% of the acres there.

U.S. Department of Agriculture figures released this week show that about 9.3 million acres in the nation's crop insurance program were not planted this year, which is the third most acres since the department began keeping tracking it in 2007. Last year, a dozen Midwestern states affected by floods and heavy rainfall contributed to that number. But this year, North Dakota, South Dakota and Arkansas accounted for about half the acres that were not planted.

Even with improvements in this year's crop yield, farmers are still recovering from last year's revenue loss, said Scott VanderWal, president of the South Dakota Farm Bureau and vice president of the American Farm Bureau.

"That's something that takes a long time to heal up from," VanderWal said.

Farmers are also dealing with the pandemic, which VanderWal said caused markets to go "backwards."

"People were looking for a chance to make a little money and then all of the sudden the coronavirus came along," VanderWal said.

## COVID-19 cases increase, hospitalizations down in SD

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — State health officials say the number of coronavirus cases increased in South Dakota for the second straight day while current hospitalizations have decreased.

On Monday, there were 86 new coronavirus cases announced, bringing the state's total to 10,360. The death toll in South Dakota remains at 153.

Health officials say 74 additional people have recovered from COVID-19, for a total of 9,013 recoveries.

Current hospitalizations are at 60, down from 66 on Sunday. The number of people who have tested negative increased by 433 Monday, for a total of 118,933 negative tests.

Test results for 519 people were reported on Monday.

## Two teens arrested in Pierre stabbing case

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Two teens have been arrested in a stabbing in Pierre.

Dispatchers got a call shortly before 4 a.m. Sunday from a male victim who said he had been stabbed at a residence, according to police.

He identified the perpetrator as an 18-year-old Pierre woman. The victim says he was also chased by the woman's 18-year-old boyfriend, who was armed with a knife.

Authorities tracked down the couple and arrested them on possible charges of aggravated assault and underage drinking. The male teen could also face a drug paraphernalia possession charge.

KCCR reports both were taken to the Hughes County Jail. The victim was treated for his injuries at Avera St. Mary's hospital.

## U.S. Sen. John Thune's father has died at age 100

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The father of U.S. Sen. John Thune, a man he describes as his hero, has died at age 100.

Harold Thune, a World War II veteran, educator, and lifelong South Dakota resident, died Saturday, on the 75th anniversary of the Allied victory over Japan, commonly known as VJ Day, according to the senator.

The elder Thune grew up in Murdo, where his family worked in a hardware store business. He played basketball at the University of Minnesota and earned most valuable player honors in 1942 the year he graduated and joined the Navy.

"One of the greatest treasures my dad gave me was the appreciation for being part of a team, no matter what station in life I've found myself – in sports, in politics, in governing, and, most importantly, in being part of a family." Sen. Thune said in a statement. "He'd always talk about making the pass, finding your teammate, making the team better."

Following the war, Thune returned to Murdo. He began a teaching career in 1963 and coached the girls and boys basketball teams. He was also named to the South Dakota Sports Hall of Fame and the South Dakota High School Basketball Hall of Fame.

Thune and his wife Pat, who died in 2012, had five children, including the senator.

## WHAT TO WATCH: Democrats adapt roll call, keynote to virus

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — The pageantry often associated with presidential conventions will be remade again as Democrats gather virtually for a second day.

The roll call vote of state delegations, which typically unfolds over several hours of fanfare, will instead be abbreviated Tuesday. And the keynote speech that has launched political careers in the past will be delivered by multiple speakers — without an adoring crowd cheering them on.

Coming off the heels of speeches from Michelle Obama and Bernie Sanders calling for action and unity in Monday night's kickoff, the all-virtual convention continues Tuesday for two hours starting at 9 p.m. EDT. Though Democratic National Committee Chairman Tom Perez is in Milwaukee, the convention host city, most party and elected officials, activists and musical acts will be appearing from livestreams and pretaped videos from around the country.

It all builds toward Joe Biden formally accepting the Democratic nomination on Thursday.

What to watch on the second night of the convention:

**JILL BIDEN**

Though Jill Biden is no stranger to the national stage after her husband's eight years as vice president, she will be introducing herself to Americans as a potential first lady in a prime-time speech. Biden, a long-time community college teacher, will close out the program making a pitch for her husband.

**BUT FIRST, BILL**

A speech from Bill Clinton is among the traditions that Democrats are including in Tuesday night's programming. The former president has spoken at every Democratic National Convention since 1980, including giving powerful addresses that made the case in 2012 for Barack Obama and in 2016 for his wife, Hillary Clinton. Bill Clinton is known for his ability to connect with a crowd, and while doing so, going well past his allotted speaking time. On Tuesday, he'll have to make a compelling case virtually and wrap it up so Jill Biden can speak.

**LEADERSHIP**

The theme is "Leadership Matters." Besides addresses from the nominee's wife and Clinton, the night will feature speeches from former secretary of state and 2004 Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry, progressive favorite Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez of New York, and Rep. Lisa Blunt Rochester of Delaware, who co-chaired the committee that vetted running mates for Biden and helped him decide to



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select California Sen. Kamala Harris.

Other speakers include those who've clashed prominently with President Donald Trump: Senate Minority Leader Chuck Schumer and former acting U.S. Attorney General Sally Yates, who was fired by Trump early in his administration after she refused to defend his travel ban on residents of some predominantly Muslim countries.

## KEYNOTE

The Tuesday night keynote speech can be a star-making opportunity. It's where a state senator from Illinois named Barack Obama become a household name. It's also where Julian Castro, then the mayor of San Antonio made his national debut in 2012 before going on to serve in the Obama administration and run for president in 2020.

Instead of giving the speaking slot to one up-and-comer, Democrats this year are dividing it up among a diverse group of 17 "rising stars." They include Georgia Democrat Stacey Abrams, who was considered a contender for Biden's running mate; Nevada state Sen. Yvanna Cancela, the former political director for the powerful Las Vegas casino workers' union; Mayor Robert Garcia of Long Beach, California, who became the city's first openly gay mayor in 2014; Navajo Nation President Jonathan Nez; and New Hampshire state Rep. Denny Ruprecht, who became that state's youngest lawmaker when he was elected in 2018 at age 19.

## ROLL CALL

Instead of a traditional roll call vote, where Democrats from each state and territory boast about the place they're representing and announce how many delegates they have for the nominee, the party this year will formally nominate Biden with pretaped segments. The roll call will go alphabetically through the 57 states, territories and the Democrats Abroad delegation, meaning Alabama will lead off.

"You're going to see very iconic symbols of America embodied from every state," Perez said, calling it one of the week's highlights.

For example, the plan is for Alabama to lead off the roll call from the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, site of the voting rights marches of 1965 and the Bloody Sunday encounter when state troopers beat and nearly killed civil rights icon John Lewis and other marchers. The late congressman, an Alabama native, died in July after representing Georgia in Congress for more than 30 years.

Alabama Rep. Terri Sewell, a Selma native, is expected to deliver her delegation's votes on Biden's nomination.

## PARTY PLATFORM

Besides formally nominating the presidential candidate, the convention is where the party typically declares its rules and values by adopting a platform. This year, more than 4,000 Democratic delegates cast votes by mail on whether to adopt the platform. The rules and those results will be included in Tuesday night's program.

Among the rules is extending for another four years an overhaul of the nominating process that limits the power of superdelegates, keeping them from a vote on a first presidential nomination ballot if it is contested. Approving the extension now spares a new party chairman or Biden, if he's the incumbent, from having to litigate the issue again with the Bernie Sanders wing of the party.

## TRUMP

While Joe Biden and the Democrats try to use the week of prime-time to build enthusiasm, Trump isn't going to cede the spotlight. The Republican president has plans for travel and political events to counter his rival's convention. On Tuesday, Trump will travel near the U.S.-Mexico border to Yuma, Arizona, to give a speech advertised to be about Biden's "failures on Immigration and Border Security." He's also including some presidential business in his day, visiting Iowa in the aftermath of an unusual wind storm known as a derecho that hit there last week.

## HOW TO WATCH

The program runs from 9 p.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern time. The DNC's official livestream is available online and via its social media channels. CNN, C-SPAN, MSNBC and PBS will air the full two hours, while ABC, CBS, Fox News Channel and NBC will air the final hour, from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m. The convention is also available to watch on Twitch, Apple TV, Roku and Amazon Fire TV.

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

This story has been corrected to show the start time is 9 p.m. EDT, not EST.

## 5 Things to Know Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. **DEMOCRATS CLOSER TO NOMINATION** Potential first lady Jill Biden and Bill Clinton will be the main speakers during the second day of the all-virtual Democratic National Convention.
2. **POSTAL SERVICE IN FOCUS** The House of Representatives is preparing an emergency vote to halt mail delivery delays and embattled Postmaster General Louis DeJoy will testify next Monday before Congress.
3. **LAST-MINUTE RELIEF FOR LGBT RIGHTS** A federal judge has blocked the Trump administration from enforcing a new regulation that would roll back health care protections for transgender people.
4. **HIP-HOP PIONEER'S DEATH CLEARED UP** Federal prosecutors say they have solved one of New York City's most enduring mysteries, the 2002 slaying of Run-DMC star Jam Master Jay.
5. **WAITING FOR PANDA BABY** Giant panda matriarch Mei Xiang is pregnant and could give birth this week at Washington's National Zoo, which has been shuttered for months amid the pandemic.

## Jill Biden's path from reluctant politico to possible FLOTUS

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Jill Biden is a prankster.

It's the first thing most of her friends and former aides say when asked about her character. She once sneaked into a close aide's birthday party dressed as catering staff and surprised him with a drink. She has dressed up as the Grinch to toy with colleagues during Christmas. And she likes to put on a red wig with a bob to pop up unnoticed at events or make her husband, Joe Biden, laugh.

That sense of humor has helped Joe Biden navigate decades in public life that have been marked by achievements, defeats and considerable personal loss. As she prepares to speak Tuesday at the Democratic National Convention, those who have worked closely with Jill Biden say her warmth will appeal to Americans confronting tough times of their own.

"She has a very good sense of, especially in these times, that bringing a little smile, some joy, some levity into moments is important," said Courtney O'Donnell, who served as Jill Biden's communications director during her husband's first term as vice president.

Jill Biden married the presumptive Democratic presidential nominee in 1977, more than four years after his first wife and young daughter were killed in a car accident. She helped raise his surviving sons, Beau and Hunter, before giving birth to daughter Ashley in 1981.

As Joe Biden commuted from Delaware to Washington while serving as a senator, Jill Biden built a career as a teacher, ultimately earning two master's degrees and then a doctorate in education from the University of Delaware in 2007.

Along the way, former coworkers say, Jill Biden, 69, became one of her husband's most valuable political advisers, someone whose opinion was paramount in most of his biggest decisions, both political and personal. She was skeptical of his 1988 presidential campaign, but pushed him to run again in 2008, according to her memoir.

After Joe Biden became the presumptive nominee this year, she played a prominent role in auditioning many of the vice presidential candidates, appearing with them at various events. During a recent interview on CBS, Jill Biden acknowledged that she and her husband "talked about the different woman candidates."

"But it's gotta be Joe's decision," she added.

But those who know Jill Biden best say she's slightly perplexed at being called one of her husband's most significant "advisers," insisting that her relationship with her husband is far deeper and more nuanced

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than such a label would suggest.

"He's got plenty of political advisers. That's not what she is," said Cathy Russell, who was Jill Biden's chief of staff during the Obama administration and is now a vice chair on the campaign. "She is his spouse, and she loves him and she talks to him about all sorts of things, but she has a unique role, and it's not being a political adviser. That's not her thing."

Jill Biden does remain one of her husband's closest confidantes — particularly now, at a time when both Bidens are largely confined to their Wilmington home due to the coronavirus pandemic. Aides say the Bidens often pass each other in the halls during the day as they head from a briefing to a virtual event to a fundraiser.

"They see each other a lot, but there's a lot of passing and crossing each other. In the evening they try to sit together and just kind of regroup and chat about things," Russell said. "They've got grandkids and kids and two dogs. They've got family and lives that are sort of spinning around them, and I think they just try to always find time for each other."

A self-described introvert, Jill Biden was initially a reluctant political wife. In her memoir, she writes of giving her first political speech and having no desire to "give any speeches, anytime, anywhere — just the thought of doing so made me so nervous I felt sick."

But after eight years as the vice president's wife and then giving speeches and appearing at events after her husband left office, Jill Biden has become one of her husband's most prominent surrogates. She has appeared in virtual events in more than 17 cities since May, and is one of the campaign's primary surrogates to Latino voters, headlining town halls and holding frequent calls with members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus.

In one week this month, Jill Biden appeared at everything from a science-focused fundraiser to an event with Joe Biden's faith coalition to one focused on LGBTQ youth, speaking with emotion and fluency about her husband's plans for each constituency.

She's also one of his most protective surrogates, a quality she writes about in her memoir — and one that was on full display during a Super Tuesday speech Joe Biden gave in March when a handful of protesters rushed the stage. Jill moved between the protesters and her husband, pushing a protester away.

But the resistance to being called an "adviser" on Biden's team reflects Jill Biden's persistent and successful efforts to carve out her own career and identity independent of her husband's political ambitions, something she prioritized even during his time in the Senate.

"They lived in Delaware always, through all those Senate campaigns, and she had her own life. She was raising her children, she was teaching, she was going to school at night at different times," said Russell. "She was never a part of the Washington scene. That political life just wasn't her life."

Jill Biden continued to teach at a community college while her husband was vice president, against the advice of multiple aides at the time.

"Being a teacher is not what I do but who I am," she wrote in her memoir, and described "scrambling into a cocktail dress and heels" in the bathroom at her school to make it to a White House reception, or grading papers on Air Force Two, with relish.

Indeed, she has said she plans to continue teaching if she becomes first lady.

As longtime friend and teaching colleague Mary Doody described it, the classroom offers Jill Biden a bit of an escape.

"When you're in a classroom, for an hour and a half or two hours or however long you're with those students, it's just you and them, and you build this rapport. It's like you build a little family," Doody said. "And I think that's why it's so important for her to teach."

Aides say she'll continue to advocate for many of the same issues she championed as the vice president's wife if she returns to the White House as first lady. During her eight years in the Obama administration, she focused on military spouses and families, advocated for community colleges and sought to raise awareness around breast cancer prevention.

All the while, Doody notes, Jill Biden is known for being impeccably dressed, always offering up a good book recommendation, writing small notes or sending flowers to friends, family and staff who need a pick

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me up, and making sure to get to all her grandkids' sports games. Doody expects her to continue it all. "If I could figure out how she does all that, I would have a really good secret to share," Doody said.

## Dems put divides aside, rally behind Biden at convention

By STEVE PEOPLES and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michelle Obama delivered a passionate condemnation of President Donald Trump during the opening night of the Democratic National Convention, declaring him "in over his head" and warning that the nation's mounting crises would only get worse if he's reelected over Joe Biden.

"Donald Trump is the wrong president for our country," she said. "He cannot meet this moment. He simply cannot be who we need him to be for us."

The former first lady, one of the nation's most respected women, was the headliner at the first presidential nominating convention of the coronavirus era. There was no central meeting place or cheering throng during the all-virtual affair Monday night. But it was an opportunity for Democrats — and some Republicans — to rally behind Biden, the party's presidential nominee.

Bernie Sanders, the progressive Vermont senator who was Biden's last standing rival during the primary, encouraged his loyal supporters to vote for the former vice president in November, arguing the nation can't survive another four years of Trump. He notably backed Biden's plan for tackling health care, one of their most substantive differences in the past. Sanders backs a Medicare for All plan while Biden has called for expanding the current "Obamacare" law.

But it was Michelle Obama, making her fourth convention appearance, who once again delivered an electrifying moment. Wearing a necklace that said "vote," she tapped into her enduring popularity among Black voters and college educated suburban women — voters Biden will need to show up in force.

She issued a stark warning to a country already navigating health and economic crises along with a reckoning on racism.

"If you think things possibly can't get worse, trust me, they can and they will if we don't make a change in this election," she said as she issued a call to action for the coalition of young and diverse voters who twice sent her family to the White House.

Biden will formally accept the nomination on Thursday near his home in Wilmington, Delaware. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, who is the first Black woman on a national ticket, speaks Wednesday night.

Leading up to that, Biden sought on opening night to demonstrate the broad ideological range of his supporters.

On the same night he was praised by Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist who championed a multitrillion-dollar universal health care plan, Biden also won backing from Ohio's former Republican Gov. John Kasich, an anti-abortion conservative who spent decades fighting to cut government spending.

"My friends, I say to you, and to everyone who supported other candidates in this primary and to those who may have voted for Donald Trump in the last election: The future of our democracy is at stake. The future of our economy is at stake. The future of our planet is at stake," Sanders said as he endorsed Biden's health care plan.

Still, there were real questions about whether the prime-time event would adequately energize the disparate factions Biden hopes to capture.

Republicans face a similar challenge next week.

Trump sought to undermine the Democrats' big night by hosting a political rally in Wisconsin, where Biden's party had originally planned this week's convention. He called the Democrats' event "a snooze" before it even began.

Monday's speeches were framed by emotional appearances from average Americans touched by the crises that have exploded on Trump's watch.

Philonise and Rodney Floyd led a moment of silence in honor of their brother, George Floyd, the Minne-



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sota man whose death while in police custody sparked a national moment of awakening on racial injustice.

"George should be alive today," Philonise Floyd said matter-of-factly.

Also speaking was Kristin Urquiza, an Arizona woman who lost her father to COVID-19, which has killed more than 170,000 people in the United States.

"My dad was a healthy 65-year-old," she said. "His only preexisting condition was trusting Donald Trump, and for that, he paid with his life."

And Rick Telesz, a Pennsylvania farmer, warned that Trump's trade war has had a "truly a devastating effect" on his farm before the coronavirus brought another blow with what he called "misinformation" coming from the country's leadership.

"My biggest concern is that if these trends continue with this type of leadership, I will be the last generation farming this farm," he said.

Democrats abandoned their plans for an in-person gathering in Milwaukee because of the pandemic. The unprecedented gathering is not only testing the bonds of the diverse Biden-Harris coalition but the practical challenges of running a presidential campaign in the midst of a pandemic.

At this moment, Biden sits in a stronger political position than Trump, who has struggled to expand his political coalition under the weight of his turbulent leadership and prolonged health and economic crises. But 77 days before votes are counted, history is not on the Democratic challenger's side. Just one incumbent president has been defeated in the last four decades.

Polls also suggest that Biden, a 77-year-old lifelong politician, is on the wrong end of an enthusiasm gap. His supporters consistently say they're motivated more by opposition to Trump, who is 74, than excitement about Biden. Democrats hope to shift that dynamic beginning with the convention.

The former first lady, whom Gallup determined was the nation's most admired woman last year, wowed Democrats at the 2016 presidential convention by coining the phrase: "When they go low, we go high." She insisted on Monday she was not abandoning that tack, explaining that taking the high road doesn't mean staying silent.

With no live audience for any of the speakers, convention organizers were forced to get creative in their high-stakes quest to generate enthusiasm. There were live appearances from speakers in Texas, South Carolina, Wisconsin and Michigan, but many of the speeches that aired Monday night were prerecorded.

Seeking to inject some family fun into an otherwise serious two-hour video montage, the campaign hosted drive-in viewing stations in six states, much like drive-in movies, where viewers could watch on a big screen from the safety of their vehicles. There were also many online watch parties featuring celebrities and elected officials to make the experience more interactive.

It was unclear how many people attended the parties. In most, only the speakers were visible on screen. In one watch party, Washington Rep. Pramila Jayapal and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren rallied progressives, many of whom had preferred Sanders over Biden.

"We must do everything we can to energize and excite our base about the choice before us," Jayapal said

The Monday speakers included plenty of Democratic politicians: Rep. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, who is the highest ranking African American in Congress; New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo; Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer; Alabama Sen. Doug Jones; Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto and two former presidential contenders: Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Sanders.

And beyond Kasich, there were three high-profile Republicans backing Biden who got speaking slots: California businesswoman Meg Whitman, former New Jersey Gov. Christine Whitman and former New York congresswoman Susan Molinari.

It was impossible to fully gauge America's interest in the all-virtual format on the first night. Broadcast TV networks are showing the final hour each night live, cable news is showing both hours and many viewers plan to stream from the rivals' websites or on social media.

Trump, as he often does, was ensuring he'd be a part of the conversation.

The Republican president made two swing-state campaign appearances on Monday, first in Minnesota and then in Wisconsin, which was to be the location for the Democrats' convention before the coronavirus outbreak.



Trump said he had "no choice" but to campaign during the convention to address voters in the face of what he described as hostile news media.

"The only way we're going to lose this election is if the election is rigged," Trump said in Wisconsin, raising anew with no evidence the specter of significant voting fraud.

Associated Press writer Kathleen Ronayne in California contributed to this report.

## National Zoo awaits birth of pandemic panda cub

By ASHRAF KHALIL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Zookeepers at Washington's National Zoo are on furry black-and-white baby watch after concluding that venerable giant panda matriarch Mei Xiang is pregnant and could give birth this week. It's a welcome bit of good news amid a pandemic that kept the zoo shuttered for months.

"We need this! We totally need this joy," said zoo spokeswoman Pamela Baker-Masson. "We are all in desperate need of these feel-goods."

Although so-called "phantom pregnancies" are common with pandas and other large bears, Baker-Masson said an ultrasound scan revealed a "really strong-looking, fantastic fetus" that could be delivered this week.

"The image was great. She is absolutely pregnant. But things could still happen, just like in a human pregnancy," Baker-Masson said.

The zoo posted a video from the ultrasound on Instagram. "Keep your paws crossed!" the zoo posted, reporting that the fetus was "kicking and swimming in the amniotic fluid."

The announcement of the pregnancy has already touched off a fresh round of panda-mania for one of the zoo's feature attractions. Viewership on the zoo's panda-cam has increased 800%.

The zoo reopened on a limited basis July 24, with restrictions in place to keep the crowds down. However, all indoor exhibits, including the extremely popular panda house, have remained closed. Visitors can still view the outdoor panda enclosure, but Mei has mostly been staying indoors, creating a nest out of branches. She can still be viewed on the panda cam.

Panda births are inherently tricky, with stillbirths and miscarriages happening frequently. There is also a phenomenon called "resorption" whereby the fetus is unexpectedly absorbed back into the mother's body. Baker-Masson said that is rare with a fetus this well-developed.

Another potential complication is the age of the mother. Mei, at 22, would be the oldest giant panda to successfully give birth in the United States. The oldest in the world gave birth in China at age 23.

"Reproductively speaking, she is an older bear," Baker-Masson said. "But she has been a great mother in the past."

Mei Xiang has successfully given birth to three cubs: Tai Shan, Bao Bao and Bei Bei. All were transported to China at age 4, under terms of the zoo's agreement with the Chinese government.

Mei was impregnated via artificial insemination, a process which was heavily affected by precautions over the COVID-19 pandemic. The procedure was conducted shortly after the entire zoo shut down on March 14.

Normally, zookeepers would have used a combination of stored frozen sperm and fresh semen extracted from male panda Tian Tian. In order to minimize the number of close-quarters medical procedures conducted, zoo staff decided to skip the extraction and inseminate Mei only with thawed out semen from 2016. If successful, it would be the first of its kind in the U.S. using only frozen sperm.

## Michelle Obama warns at DNC that Trump is 'in over his head'

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — At the 2016 Democratic National Convention, former Michelle Obama told party members that "when they go low, we go high."

After four years of President Donald Trump, she came back to give it to them straight.

"If you think things cannot possibly get worse, trust me they can; and they will, if we don't make a

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change in this election," Mrs. Obama told her party in a blunt and emotional appeal that capped the first night of the Democrats' convention.

The former first lady outlined dire stakes for the election ahead, declaring President Donald Trump "in over his head" and the "wrong president for our country." Warning of possible voter suppression, she told Americans they must vote for Joe Biden "in numbers that cannot be ignored" if they want to preserve the "most basic requirements for a functioning society."

The scathing assessment was delivered in the last and longest speech in Democrats' experiment with a virtual convention in the coronavirus era, a spot Mrs. Obama earned through her overwhelming popularity in her party.

She delivered her remarks in a casual setting — a living room, with a Biden campaign sign on the mantle — and identified as much with the beleaguered voters of America as the lineup of politicians that preceded her in the program.

"You know I hate politics," she said, before diving into a speech that appealed to both her longtime fans in the Democratic coalition and a broad audience she's drawn since leaving the White House and becoming a bestselling author.

The president "has had more than enough time to prove that he can do the job, but he is clearly in over his head," she said. "He cannot meet this moment."

"It is what it is," Mrs. Obama said — echoing a remark Trump made recently about the U.S. death toll from the coronavirus.

Citing the pandemic, the flagging economy, the political unrest that's broken out nationwide over systemic racism and what she described as America's lack of leadership on the world stage, Mrs. Obama said the nation is "underperforming not simply on matters of policy, but on matters of character."

In contrast, Mrs. Obama said, Biden is a "profoundly decent man" who "knows what it takes to rescue an economy, beat back a pandemic and lead our country." She recounted how Biden has prevailed through the personal tragedy of losing his first wife, baby daughter and adult son and said Biden will "channel that same grit and passion to help us heal and guide us forward."

Republican Donald Trump succeeded President Barack Obama, a Democrat, in 2017 and has tried to undo many of Obama's achievements on health care, the environment and foreign policy, among others.

On Monday, before the event, Trump took a dig at the former first lady's coming speech, noting that her remarks were prerecorded and that his own speech at the Republican National Convention next week will be live.

"Who wants to listen to Michelle Obama do a taped speech?" he said at a rally in Wisconsin.

Mrs. Obama, who leads an effort to help register people to vote, spoke about the importance of voting in the Nov. 3 election, which will take place amid a pandemic that has killed more than 170,000 Americans and infected more than 5 million in the U.S.

Wearing a necklace that spelled out the word "Vote," she noted Trump lost the popular vote but still won the White House, and "we've all been suffering the consequences."

Her remarks came as debate rages in Washington about U.S. Postal Service changes that are delaying mail deliveries around the country, and amid legal battles in several states over access to mail-in ballots. Mrs. Obama issued a call to action to those who sat out the last election: Now is not the time to "withhold our votes in protest or play games," she said.

"We have got to grab our comfortable shoes, put on our masks, pack a brown bag dinner and maybe breakfast too, because we've got to be willing to stand in line all night if we have to," she said.

In keeping with the virtual nature of the convention, Mrs. Obama's remarks were recorded before Biden's announcement last Tuesday that he had chosen California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate.

Her speech was the fourth Democratic convention address by Michelle Obama, who first introduced herself to the nation during her husband's groundbreaking campaign in 2008. She spoke again in 2012 to urge voters to give him a second term.

Michelle Obama returned to the convention stage in 2016, backing former first lady Hillary Clinton over

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Trump, who had spent years pushing the lie that Barack Obama was not born in the U.S. and was ineligible for the presidency.

She spoke of the code her family lives by: "Our motto is, when they go low, we go high."

This time Obama put an asterisk on that 2016 rallying cry.

"Let's be clear: going high does not mean putting on a smile and saying nice things when confronted by viciousness and cruelty," she said. "Going high means taking the harder path."

Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report from Oshkosh, Wis.

## 5 takeaways from first night of the Democratic convention

By BILL BARROW and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

In another profound way that the coronavirus pandemic has upended American life, the Democratic National Convention started with no convening. Instead, Democrats opted for the first virtual convention as the party begins the formal process of nominating Joe Biden as its candidate for president.

Five takeaways from Monday night:

### MICHELLE OBAMA'S DOMINANT MOMENT

Michelle Obama, in an uncharacteristically pointed and political speech, said President Donald Trump is "simply in over his head," as she forcefully made the case against his administration and tried to create a sense of urgency and energy for Joe Biden's candidacy.

As one of the most popular women in the world, the former first lady's words carried added weight and set a tone for a convention that will try to make the election a referendum on the president's character as much as his record.

Four years ago, she used her Democratic National Convention speaking slot to highlight a slogan that didn't work, politically, for her party in 2016: "When they go low, we go high!"

She insisted that was still the right path, but said that did not mean she wasn't vigorously opposed to Trump. "Let's be clear," Obama said. "Going high does not mean putting on a smile and saying nice things when confronted by viciousness and cruelty."

She then pivoted to a searing critique of Trump.

"Donald Trump is the wrong president for our country," Obama said during her prerecorded 18-minute speech — more than twice as long as any other speaker had. "He has had more than enough time to prove he can do the job but he is simply in over his head."

### JOE BIDEN IS CASTING A WIDE NET

The first chunk of the convention's primetime hour was dominated by a quartet of Republicans -- part of Democrats' effort to emphasize the breadth of their party's coalition, and implicitly contrast it with the narrower one Trump has built.

The four prominent former Republican officials all slammed Trump and praised Biden, hoping to speak to what the Biden campaign believes is a big swath of the electorate that remains uncomfortable with the president. Biden's ability to unite the country has been a centerpiece of his campaign, and on Monday night Democrats tried to show that by cramming as wide an ideological spectrum as possible into a single hour.

"This isn't about Republican or Democrat. It's about a person — a person decent enough, stable enough, strong enough to get our economy back on track," former Environmental Protection Agency chief Christie Todd Whitman said. "Donald Trump isn't that person. Joe Biden is."

Former Ohio Gov. John Kasich said he didn't believe Biden would turn "sharp left."

That open-door approach for Democrats is an implicit contrast with Trump, who is notorious for slamming any Republican who publicly criticizes him and whose convention next week is not likely to feature as wide an ideological range. It makes it harder to agree on a governing platform besides Don't-Be-Trump. But Democrats are gambling on that being sufficient to win.

### SANDERS, KLOBUCHAR LEAD DEMOCRATIC UNITY FRONT

Bernie Sanders spoke for the second time in four years as runner-up. But this one felt different.

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In 2016, he led a surprising progressive insurgency. The palpable tensions between Sanders and nominee Hillary Clinton were on display even as Sanders nominated Clinton from the floor of the Philadelphia convention.

This time, Sanders delivered an unqualified endorsement of Joe Biden and a harsh indictment of Trump. "At its most basic, this election is about preserving our democracy," Sanders said, adding that "authoritarianism has taken root in this country" under Trump. "As long as I am here, I will work with progressives, with moderates and, yes, with conservatives to preserve this nation," he said.

In another dig, Sanders said: "Nero fiddled while Rome burned. Trump golfs."

He added a litany of policy examples of "how Joe will move us forward" to address the fundamental economic inequities that Sanders has railed against for decades.

As runner-up, Sanders got his own time slot Monday night. He followed a video montage of more than a dozen other Democratic primary contenders introduced by Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar. They all offered praise of Biden.

"Out of many, one," Klobuchar said, translating the national motto "e pluribus unum."

Together, it highlighted both Biden's personal relationships in his own party and how much of a unifying force the desire to defeat Trump is for the Democratic Party in 2020.

## VIRTUAL ENTHUSIASM ISN'T EASY

One of the most urgent questions heading into a virtual convention was whether the format could generate enthusiasm. The first impression, charitably, is that it remains a tall order.

Actress Eva Longoria emceed the night's programming, a combination of prerecorded and live material, from a studio. On one hand, Longoria's video interactions with everyday Americans — a farmer, a student, a small business owner, among others — offered a better look at their lives than having them on a traditional convention stage in front of thousands of delegates.

But there's also something lost when the headliners — well-known politicians who are used to much different environs — can't feed off the crowd. You can take the same zinger against Trump or a wrenching personal biographical pitch about Biden, and it just won't land the same way when delivered straight to a camera.

Democrats are clearly aware that they also lost the camera shots that at a normal convention would capture the party's racial, ethnic and gender diversity — that much is assured by party rules on state delegations. They tried to make up for it from the start, with an invocation delivered in Spanish and English and a national anthem sung by children and adults from all over the country, representing a range of races and ethnicities.

Conventions have long been derided in some circles as infomercials. Now the evolution is complete.

## DEMS PUSH CONTRAST WITH TRUMP ON RACE

Democrats showed out of the gate that they will continue to draw a sharp contrast with Trump and Republicans on the matter of racial justice — giving the issue emotional prominence on the opening night.

In the first half-hour, Democrats showcased the family of George Floyd, the Black man whose killing by a white Minneapolis police officer on May 25 spawned nationwide protests and intensified calls to address the nation's history of systemic racism. One of Floyd's brothers spoke about him and named a litany of other Black Americans killed by police, followed by a moment of silence.

Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington, D.C., introduced the Floyd family from Black Lives Matter Plaza, the stretch of 16th Street in Washington leading up to the White House that was repainted and renamed in the wake of Floyd's death.

Bowser compared the history of peaceful protest in the nation's capital with Trump ordering Lafayette Square cleared with tearing agents so he could walk to a nearby church to be photographed with a Bible.

"While we were peacefully protesting, Donald Trump was plotting," Bowser said. "I knew if he did this to D.C., he would do it to your city or your town, and that's when I said enough."

Trump, meanwhile, confirmed two guests he has invited to participate at his convention next week: a white St. Louis couple who gained national headlines when they emerged from their house wielding weapons to confront protesters who were in their neighborhood.



## Amid outcry, postmaster general to testify before House

By MATTHEW DALY and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing a public backlash over mail disruptions, the Trump administration scrambled to respond as the House prepared an emergency vote to halt delivery delays and service changes that Democrats warned could imperil the November election.

The Postal Service said it has stopped removing mailboxes and mail-sorting machines amid an outcry from lawmakers. President Donald Trump flatly denied he was asking for the mail to be delayed even as he leveled fresh criticism on universal ballots and mail-in voting.

"Wouldn't do that," Trump told reporters Monday at the White House. "I have encouraged everybody: Speed up the mail, not slow the mail."

Embattled Postmaster General Louis DeJoy will testify next Monday before Congress, along with the chairman of the Postal Service board of governors.

Democrats and some Republicans say actions by the new postmaster general, a Trump ally and a major Republican donor, have endangered millions of Americans who rely on the post office to obtain prescription drugs and other needs, including an expected surge in mail-in voting this fall.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi is calling the House back into session over the crisis at the Postal Service, setting up a political showdown amid growing concerns that the Trump White House is trying to undermine the agency ahead of the election.

Pelosi cut short lawmakers' summer recess with a vote expected Saturday on legislation that would prohibit changes at the agency. The package will also include \$25 billion to shore up the Postal Service, which faces continued financial losses.

The Postal Service is among the nation's oldest and more popular institutions, strained in recent years by declines first-class and business mail, but now hit with new challenges during the coronavirus pandemic. Trump routinely criticizes its business model, but the financial outlook is far more complex, and includes an unusual requirement to pre-fund retiree health benefits that advocates in Congress want to undo.

Ahead of the election, DeJoy, a former supply-chain CEO who took over the Postal Service in June, has sparked nationwide outcry over delays, new prices and cutbacks just as millions of Americans will be trying to vote by mail and polling places during the COVID-19 crisis.

Trump on Monday defended DeJoy, but also criticized postal operations and claimed that universal mail-in ballots would be "a disaster."

"I want to make the post office great again," Trump said on "Fox & Friends."

Later at the White House, Trump told reporters he wants "to have a post office that runs without losing billions and billions of dollars a year."

The decision to recall the House carries a political punch. Voting in the House will highlight the issue after the weeklong Democratic National Convention nominating Joe Biden as the party's presidential pick and pressure the Republican-held Senate to respond. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sent senators home for a summer recess.

"In a time of a pandemic, the Postal Service is Election Central," Pelosi wrote Sunday in a letter to colleagues, who had been expected to be out of session until September. "Lives, livelihoods and the life of our American Democracy are under threat from the president."

At an event in his home-state Monday, McConnell distanced himself from Trump's complaints about mail operations. But the Republican leader also declined to recall senators to Washington, vowing the Postal Service "is going to be just fine."

"We're going to make sure that the ability to function going into the election is not adversely affected," McConnell said in Horse Cave, Ky. "And I don't share the president's concerns."

Two Democratic lawmakers called on the FBI to investigate actions by DeJoy and the board of governors to slow the mail. "It is not unreasonable to conclude that Postmaster General DeJoy and the Board of Governors may be executing Donald Trump's desire to affect mail-in balloting," Reps. Ted Lieu of California



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and Hakeem Jeffries of New York wrote in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray.

Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and other Democrats, meanwhile, urged the postal board to use authority under a 1970 law to reverse operational changes put in place last month by DeJoy. If he declines to cooperate, "you have the authority, under the Postal Reorganization Act, to remove the postmaster general," the senators said in a letter to board members.

Outside a post office in Baltimore, Rep. Kweisi Mfume, D-Md., called on DeJoy to resign.

"Don't tell me or others that you're just trying to make the post office make money. The U.S. post office is not a business. It is a service. And it is a service to Americans that we must always protect," Mfume said Monday.

Congress is at a standoff over postal operations. House Democrats approved \$25 billion in a COVID-19 relief package but Trump and Senate Republicans have balked at additional funds for election security. McConnell held a conference call Monday with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and GOP senators on the broader virus aid package.

The Postal Service said Sunday it would stop removing its distinctive blue mailboxes through mid-November following complaints from customers and members of Congress that the collection boxes were being taken away. And White House chief of staff Mark Meadows pledged that that "no sorting machines are going offline between now and the election."

The legislation set for Saturday's vote, the "Delivering for America Act," would prohibit the Postal Service from implementing any changes to operations or level of service it had in place on Jan. 1. The package would include the \$25 billion in earlier funds that are stalled in the Senate.

DeJoy, the first postmaster general in nearly two decades who was not a career postal employee, has pledged to modernize the money-losing agency to make it more efficient. He eliminated most overtime for postal workers, imposed restrictions on transportation and reduced of the quantity and use of mail-processing equipment.

Trump said last week that he was blocking emergency aid to the Postal Service, as well as a Democratic proposal to provide \$3.6 billion in additional election money to the states to help process an expected surge of mail-in ballots. Both funding requests have been tied up in congressional negotiations over a new coronavirus relief package.

Meanwhile, the Postal Service is seeking a short-term rate increase that would raise prices on commercial domestic competitive parcels, including Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, first-class package service, Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service. The agency cited increased expenses, heightened demand for online packages due to the coronavirus pandemic and an expected increase in holiday mail volume.

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Associated Press writers Darlene Superville and Jill Colvin in Washington and Bruce Schreiner in Frankfort, Ky., contributed to this report.

## Dems put divides aside, rally behind Biden at convention

By STEVE PEOPLES and MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Michelle Obama delivered a passionate condemnation of President Donald Trump during Monday's opening night of the Democratic National Convention, declaring him "in over his head" and warning that the nation's mounting crises would only get worse if he's reelected over Joe Biden.

"Donald Trump is the wrong president for our country," she said. "He cannot meet this moment. His simply cannot be who we need him to be for us."

The former first lady, one of the nation's most respected women, was the headliner at the first presidential nominating convention of the coronavirus era. There was no central meeting place or cheering throng during the all-virtual affair. But it was an opportunity for Democrats — and some Republicans — to rally behind Biden, the party's presidential nominee.

Bernie Sanders, the progressive Vermont senator who was Biden's last standing rival during the primary, encouraged his loyal supporters to vote for the former vice president in November, arguing the nation

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can't survive another four years of Trump. He notably backed Biden's plan for tackling health care, one of their most substantive differences in the past. Sanders backs a Medicare for All plan while Biden has called for expanding the current "Obamacare" law."

But it was Michelle Obama, making her fourth convention appearance, who once again delivered an electrifying moment. Wearing a necklace that said "vote," she tapped into her enduring popularity among Black voters and college educated suburban women — voters Biden will need to show up in force.

She issued a stark warning to a country already navigating health and economic crises along with a reckoning on racism.

"If you think things possibly can't get worse, trust me, they can and they will if we don't make a change in this election," she said as she issued a call to action for the coalition of young and diverse voters who twice sent her family to the White House.

Biden will formally accept the nomination on Thursday near his home in Wilmington, Delaware. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, who is the first Black woman on a national ticket, speaks Wednesday night.

Leading up to that, Biden sought on opening night to demonstrate the broad ideological range of his supporters.

On the same night he was praised by Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist who championed a multi-trillion-dollar universal health care plan, Biden also won backing from Ohio's former Republican Gov. John Kasich, an anti-abortion conservative who spent decades fighting to cut government spending.

"My friends, I say to you, and to everyone who supported other candidates in this primary and to those who may have voted for Donald Trump in the last election: The future of our democracy is at stake. The future of our economy is at stake. The future of our planet is at stake," Sanders said as he endorsed Biden's health care plan.

Still, there were real questions about whether the prime-time event would adequately energize the disparate factions Biden hopes to capture.

Republicans face a similar challenge next week.

Trump sought to undermine the Democrats' big night by hosting a political rally in Wisconsin, where Biden's party had originally planned this week's convention. He called the Democrats' event "a snooze" before it even began.

Monday's speeches were framed by emotional appearances from average Americans touched by the crises that have exploded on Trump's watch.

Philonise and Rodney Floyd led a moment of silence in honor of their brother, George Floyd, the Minnesota man whose death while in police custody sparked a national moment of awakening on racial injustice.

"George should be alive today," Philonise Floyd said matter-of-factly.

Also speaking was Kristin Urquiza, an Arizona woman who lost her father to COVID-19, which has killed more than 170,000 Americans as of Monday evening.

"My dad was a healthy 65-year-old," she said. "His only preexisting condition was trusting Donald Trump, and for that, he paid with his life."

And Rick Telesz, a Pennsylvania farmer, warned that Trump's trade war has had a "truly a devastating effect" on his farm before the coronavirus brought another blow with what he called "misinformation" coming from the country's leadership.

"My biggest concern is that if these trends continue with this type of leadership, I will be the last generation farming this farm," he said.

Democrats abandoned their plans for an in-person gathering in Milwaukee because of the pandemic. The unprecedented gathering is not only testing the bonds of the diverse Biden-Harris coalition but the practical challenges of running a presidential campaign in the midst of a pandemic.

At this moment, Biden sits in a stronger political position than Trump, who has struggled to expand his political coalition under the weight of his turbulent leadership and prolonged health and economic crises. But 78 days before votes are counted, history is not on the Democratic challenger's side. Just one incumbent president has been defeated in the last four decades.

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Polls also suggest that Biden, a 77-year-old lifelong politician, is on the wrong end of an enthusiasm gap. His supporters consistently say they're motivated more by opposition to Trump, who is 74, than excitement about Biden. Democrats hope to shift that dynamic beginning with the convention.

The former first lady, whom Gallup determined was the nation's most admired woman last year, wowed Democrats at the 2016 presidential convention by coining the phrase: "When they go low, we go high." She insisted on Monday she was not abandoning that tack, explaining that taking the high road doesn't mean staying silent.

With no live audience for any of the speakers, convention organizers were forced to get creative in their high-stakes quest to generate enthusiasm. There were live appearances from speakers in Texas, South Carolina, Wisconsin and Michigan, but many of the speeches that aired Monday night were prerecorded.

Seeking to inject some family fun into an otherwise serious two-hour video montage, the campaign hosted drive-in viewing stations in six states, much like drive-in movies, where viewers could watch on a big screen from the safety of their vehicles. There were also many online watch parties featuring celebrities and elected officials to make the experience more interactive.

It wasn't clear how many people attended the parties. In most, only the speakers were visible on screen. In one watch party, Washington Rep. Pramila Jayapal and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren rallied progressives, many of whom had preferred Sanders over Biden.

"We must do everything we can to energize and excite our base about the choice before us," Jayapal said

The Monday speakers included plenty of Democratic politicians: Rep. Jim Clyburn of South Carolina, who is the highest ranking African American in Congress; New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo; Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer; Alabama Sen. Doug Jones; Nevada Sen. Catherine Cortez Masto and two former presidential contenders: Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar and Sanders.

And beyond Kasich, there were three high-profile Republicans backing Biden who got speaking slots: California businesswoman Meg Whitman, former New Jersey Gov. Christine Whitman and former New York Congresswoman Susan Molinari.

It was impossible to fully gauge America's interest in the all-virtual format on the first night. Broadcast TV networks are showing the final hour each night live, cable news is showing both hours and many viewers plan to stream from the rivals' websites or on social media.

Trump, as he often does, was ensuring he'd be a part of the conversation.

The Republican president made two swing-state campaign appearances on Monday, first in Minnesota and then in Wisconsin, which was to be the location for the Democrats' convention before the coronavirus outbreak.

Trump said he had "no choice" but to campaign during the convention in order to address voters in the face of what he described as hostile news media.

"The only way we're going to lose this election is if the election is rigged," Trump said in Wisconsin, raising anew with no evidence the specter of significant voting fraud.

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AP writer Kathleen Ronayne in California contributed.

## California power grid operator cancels rolling blackouts

By JANIE HAR and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Widespread blackouts to reduce pressure on the electric grid were averted Monday night after regulators warned earlier in the day that they would not have enough power to meet demand in the midst of a heat wave.

The California Independent System Operator lifted its emergency declaration shortly before 8 p.m. Monday, after the state's power grid operator had warned that it expected to implement rotating outages that could have left millions of Californians in the dark for up to two hours.

California ISO would have ordered utilities to shed their power loads as demand for electricity to cool homes soared. The operator had said as many as 3.3 million homes and businesses would be affected

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but later reduced that to around a half-million before cancelling the option.

Pleas for people to leave their air conditioners at higher temperatures and avoid using washing machines and other major appliances seemed to have worked.

"Thank you for conserving," California ISO said in a tweet.

The first rolling blackouts in nearly 20 years came Friday as unusually hot weather overwhelmed the electrical grid. The three biggest utilities — Pacific Gas & Electric, Southern California Edison and San Diego Gas & Electric — turned off power to more than 410,000 homes and businesses for about an hour at a time until the emergency declaration ended 3 1/2 hours later.

A second but shorter outage hit Saturday evening, affecting more than 200,000 customers. Californians packed beaches and river banks over the weekend to cool off from scorching triple-digit temperatures that raised the risk of more wildfires and fears of the coronavirus spreading.

An irate Gov. Gavin Newsom signed an emergency proclamation Sunday allowing some energy users and utilities to tap backup energy sources. He acknowledged Monday that the state failed to predict and plan for the energy shortages.

"I am not pleased with what's happened," he said during a news briefing. "You shouldn't be pleased with the moment that we're in here in the state of California."

Newsom also sent a letter demanding that the state Energy Commission, state Public Utilities Commission and the California Independent System Operator investigate the blackouts.

The Democratic governor said residents battling a heat wave and a pandemic in which they're encouraged to stay home were left without the basic necessity of electricity. In Southern California, temperatures reached a record high of 110 in Lancaster and 111 in Palmdale.

"These blackouts, which occurred without prior warning or enough time for preparation, are unacceptable and unbecoming of the nation's largest and most innovative state," Newsom wrote in the letter. "This cannot stand. California residents and businesses deserve better from their government."

During a grid operator board meeting Monday, California ISO CEO and President Steve Berberich said the weekend blackouts could have been avoided had regulators listened to its previous concerns about a power shortfall. In call later with reporters, he softened his tone, saying he knows the Public Utilities Commission is working to find the right balance of energy sources.

"It's substantial, no question about it," he said of the outage.

The Public Utilities Commission said it would work with the other agencies to figure out what happened. The demand for electricity in the last few days has been consistent with expectations, spokeswoman Terrie Prosper said.

"The question we're tackling is why certain resources were not available," she said.

The last time a California governor faced power outages, he was successfully recalled. Gray Davis, a Democrat, was recalled in October 2003 and replaced by Arnold Schwarzenegger, a Republican.

Daniel Kammen, an energy professor at the University of California, Berkeley, said the state needs to do more to store and sell clean energy sources, and he hopes this week's blackouts will prompt officials to act.

"This is kind of a stress test on the system," he said. "We have not built up enough of a smart enough system to take advantage of all the renewables we have in place."

Customers are asked to reduce energy use through Wednesday night, especially during peak evening hours.

Bonnie Wikler, 66, worried about her husband, who is recovering from open heart surgery. She said it was very stressful to lose power twice over the weekend at their home in Coalinga, a city in central California where temperatures reached 109 Fahrenheit (43 Celsius).

They thought about driving somewhere but were too afraid of coronavirus exposure, so they stayed home and cooled off with ice water, she said.

"If there was a fire or an earthquake, I would understand, but to cut power without letting you know, it just seems outlandish to me," Wikler said.

Berberich acknowledged that his agency should have given more public notice, saying, "We own that



and are sorry we didn't do more."

In Marin County, just north of San Francisco, officials opened a cooling center that only 21 people visited over the weekend, spokeswoman Laine Hendricks said. It's equipped with a backup generator, and employees are screening for COVID-19 symptoms and ensuring people are wearing masks, she said.

"We're still in a shelter-in-place environment," Hendricks said. "Even though it's hot outside, COVID hasn't gone away."

California also still faces the threat of power outages to prevent wildfires. Thousands were without power for days last year when Pacific Gas & Electric and other utilities shut off lines amid high, dry winds in order to prevent wildfires.

This story has been corrected to remove an inaccurate reference to declaration being lifted two hours after initial warning. The first warning came in the afternoon.

Beam reported from Sacramento. Associated Press writers Olga R. Rodriguez in San Francisco and Christopher Weber in Los Angeles also contributed to this report.

## Five takeaways from first night of the Democratic convention

By BILL BARROW and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

In another profound way that the coronavirus pandemic has upended American life, the Democratic National Convention started Monday with no convening. Instead, Democrats opted for the first virtual convention as the party begins the formal process of nominating Joe Biden as its candidate for president.

Here are five takeaways from the first night.

### MICHELLE OBAMA'S DOMINANT MOMENT

Michelle Obama, in an uncharacteristically pointed and political speech, said President Donald Trump is "simply in over his head," as she forcefully made the case against his administration and tried to create a sense of urgency and energy for Joe Biden's candidacy.

As one of the most popular women in the world, the former first lady's words carried added weight and set a tone for a convention that will try to make the election a referendum on the president's character as much as his record.

Four years ago, she used her Democratic National Convention speaking slot to highlight a slogan that didn't work, politically, for her party in 2016: "When they go low, we go high!"

She insisted that was still the right path, but said that did not mean she wasn't vigorously opposed to Trump. "Let's be clear," Obama said. "Going high does not mean putting on a smile and saying nice things when confronted by viciousness and cruelty."

She then pivoted to a searing critique of Trump.

"Donald Trump is the wrong president for our country," Obama said during her prerecorded 18-minute speech — more than twice as long as any other speaker had. "He has had more than enough time to prove he can do the job but he is simply in over his head."

### JOE BIDEN IS CASTING A WIDE NET

The first chunk of the convention's primetime hour was dominated by a quartet of Republicans -- part of Democrats' effort to emphasize the breadth of their party's coalition, and implicitly contrast it with the narrower one Trump has built.

The four prominent former Republican officials all slammed Trump and praised Biden, hoping to speak to what the Biden campaign believes is a big swath of the electorate that remains uncomfortable with the president. Biden's ability to unite the country has been a centerpiece of his campaign, and on Monday night Democrats tried to show that by cramming as wide an ideological spectrum as possible into a single hour.

"This isn't about Republican or Democrat. It's about a person — a person decent enough, stable enough, strong enough to get our economy back on track," former Environmental Protection Agency chief Christie Todd Whitman said. "Donald Trump isn't that person. Joe Biden is."

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Former Ohio Gov. John Kasich said he didn't believe Biden would turn "sharp left."

That open-door approach for Democrats is an implicit contrast with Trump, who is notorious for slamming any Republican who publicly criticizes him and whose convention next week is not likely to feature as wide an ideological range. It makes it harder to agree on a governing platform besides Don't-Be-Trump. But Democrats are gambling on that being sufficient to win.

**SANDERS, KLOBUCHAR LEAD DEMOCRATIC UNITY FRONT**

Bernie Sanders spoke for the second time in four years as runner-up. But this one felt different.

In 2016, he led a surprising progressive insurgency. The palpable tensions between Sanders and nominee Hillary Clinton were on display even as Sanders nominated Clinton from the floor of the Philadelphia convention.

This time, Sanders delivered an unqualified endorsement of Joe Biden and a harsh indictment of Trump.

"At its most basic, this election is about preserving our democracy," Sanders said, adding that "authoritarianism has taken root in this country" under Trump. "As long as I am here, I will work with progressives, with moderates and, yes, with conservatives to preserve this nation," he said.

In another dig, Sanders said: "Nero fiddled while Rome burned. Trump golfs."

He added a litany of policy examples of "how Joe will move us forward" to address the fundamental economic inequities that Sanders has railed against for decades.

As runner-up, Sanders got his own time slot Monday night. He followed a video montage of more than a dozen other Democratic primary contenders introduced by Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar. They all offered praise of Biden.

"Out of many, one," Klobuchar said, translating the national motto "e pluribus unum."

Together, it highlighted both Biden's personal relationships in his own party and how much of a unifying force the desire to defeat Trump is for the Democratic Party in 2020.

**VIRTUAL ENTHUSIASM ISN'T EASY**

One of the most urgent questions heading into a virtual convention was whether the format could generate enthusiasm. The first impression, charitably, is that it remains a tall order.

Actress Eva Longoria emceed the night's programming, a combination of prerecorded and live material, from a studio. On one hand, Longoria's video interactions with everyday Americans — a farmer, a student, a small business owner, among others — offered a better look at their lives than having them on a traditional convention stage in front of thousands of delegates.

But there's also something lost when the headliners — well-known politicians who are used to much different environs — can't feed off the crowd. You can take the same zinger against Trump or a wrenching personal biographical pitch about Biden, and it just won't land the same way when delivered straight to a camera.

Democrats are clearly aware that they also lost the camera shots that at a normal convention would capture the party's racial, ethnic and gender diversity — that much is assured by party rules on state delegations. They tried to make up for it from the start, with an invocation delivered in Spanish and English and a national anthem sung by children and adults from all over the country, representing a range of races and ethnicities.

Conventions have long been derided in some circles as infomercials. Now the evolution is complete.

**DEMS PUSH CONTRAST WITH TRUMP ON RACE**

Democrats showed out of the gate that they will continue to draw a sharp contrast with Trump and Republicans on the matter of racial justice — giving the issue emotional prominence on the opening night.

In the first half-hour, Democrats showcased the family of George Floyd, the Black man whose killing by a white Minneapolis police officer on May 25 spawned nationwide protests and intensified calls to address the nation's history of systemic racism. One of Floyd's brothers spoke about him and named a litany of other Black Americans killed by police, followed by a moment of silence.

Mayor Muriel Bowser of Washington, D.C., introduced the Floyd family from Black Lives Matter Plaza, the stretch of 16th Street in Washington leading up to the White House that was repainted and renamed in the wake of Floyd's death.



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Bowser compared the history of peaceful protest in the nation's capital with Trump ordering Lafayette Square cleared with tearing agents so he could walk to a nearby church to be photographed with a Bible.

"While we were peacefully protesting, Donald Trump was plotting," Bowser said. "I knew if he did this to D.C., he would do it to your city or your town, and that's when I said enough."

Trump, meanwhile, confirmed two guests he has invited to participate at his convention next week: a white St. Louis couple who gained national headlines when they emerged from their house wielding weapons to confront protesters who were in their neighborhood.

## The Latest: Michelle Obama says vote like lives depend on it

By The Associated Press undefined

Michelle Obama is warning Americans to "vote for Joe Biden like our lives depend on it" during her speech at the Democratic National Convention.

In remarks that capped off Monday night's event, Mrs. Obama offered a sharp rebuke of the Trump presidency, telling viewers that he "has had more than enough time to prove that he can do the job, but he is clearly in over his head." "He cannot meet this moment," she said.

She added that "if you think things cannot possibly get worse, trust me, they can." Mrs. Obama emphasized the need for all Americans to vote, making reference to the voters who stayed home in 2016 and helped deliver Donald Trump the win that year, even as he lost the popular vote.

She says, "We've all been suffering the consequences."

In contrast, she described Biden as a "profoundly decent man" who "knows what it takes to rescue an economy, beat back a pandemic and lead our country."

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HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE DEMOCRATIC NATIONAL CONVENTION:

- Takeaways from first night of Democratic National Convention
- Biden introduces breadth of political coalition to a nation in crisis
- Michelle Obama highlights Biden's character in DNC speech
- DNC Chair Tom Perez says primaries should replace caucuses by 2024

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HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

President Donald Trump largely held his tongue during the first night of the Democratic National Convention but unleashed a flurry of retweets at its conclusion.

Trump's ire was mostly directed at New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who was sharply critical of the president's handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

Trump, in return, amplified attacks on Cuomo's handling of the virus, which ripped through New York in March and April. The two men — one a Democrat, one a Republican — have had an uneasy relationship during the crisis.

The Trump campaign also quickly moved to raise money off the convention's first night, sending to supporters a note that said, "Tonight, Crazy Bernie, Michelle Obama, failed presidential candidate Amy Klobuchar, Fredo's brother: Andrew Cuomo, and Gretchen 'Half' Whitmer" will all spout "fake news" against the president.

It then asked for contributions.

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Bernie Sanders has unleashed a scathing attack on President Donald Trump, suggesting that under him "authoritarianism has taken root in our country."

Addressing the opening night of the virtual Democratic National Convention on Monday, the Vermont senator said Trump had proved incapable of controlling the coronavirus outbreak, coping with the economic fallout and addressing institutional racism in the United States and climate change threatening the globe.

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"Nero fiddled while Rome burned," Sanders said. "Trump golfs."

Sanders, who finished second in the Democratic primary behind Joe Biden, struck a more optimistic tone when he thanked supporters who voted for him in 2016 and 2020 for helping to move the country "in a bold, new direction."

He called on his backers, as well as those who supported other 2020 Democratic primary contenders or Trump four years ago, to unite behind Biden.

Sanders says, "My friends, the price of failure is just too great to imagine."

Joe Biden's former primary rivals are calling on rank-and-file Democrats to put aside any hard feelings and support the former vice president's campaign.

Speaking live from St. Paul, Minnesota, Sen. Amy Klobuchar unveiled a video that also featured New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, former Texas Rep. Beto O'Rourke, businessman Tom Steyer, New York Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand and entrepreneur Andrew Yang, among others.

"It's not easy to unite the Democratic Party," said Washington Gov. Jay Inslee. "Joe Biden has pulled it off."

Democrats started with a large, historically diverse field of candidates. But while the party is becoming increasingly diverse, Biden, a 77-year-old white man, won.

The former rivals said the need to defeat President Donald Trump is just too important to let hard feelings linger.

"There is no cavalry," O'Rourke said. "We are the cavalry."

Republican John Kasich says it's time to "take off our partisan hats and put our nation first."

The former Ohio governor appeared at the Democratic National Convention on Monday in a show of bipartisanship rarely seen in party conventions. Kasich ran for president four years ago but lost the GOP nomination to Donald Trump.

Kasich told Republicans and independents wary of supporting a Democrat not to worry that Joe Biden would take a "sharp left and leave them behind" because Biden is a reasonable person who can't be pushed around. He admitted there are places where the two disagree.

"But that's OK, because that's America," he said.

He crafted the election as a crossroads for the nation, saying the last four years have led to dysfunction and increasing vitriol between Americans.

Kasich left the governorship in 2018. He previously served in Congress and used to have his own show on Fox News in the early 2000s.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo says his state found a way to bring the coronavirus under control by following scientific guidelines and coming together -- an example that he says the Trump administration has refused to follow.

Cuomo addressed the opening night of the virtual Democratic National Convention late Monday, saying New York was "ground zero" for the early outbreak in the U.S. He said the Trump administration "watched New York suffer" without learning from it.

"For all the suffering and tears, our way worked and it was beautiful," Cuomo said, adding, "Americans' eyes have been opened and we've seen the truth: That government matters and leadership matters."

He said that the rest of the country will follow New York's lead by wearing masks and practicing social distancing to slow the spread of the virus -- despite inconsistent messaging from the White House. Cuomo also contrasted Trump with presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden, saying that Biden can be the kind of leader "who can build us up, not tear us down."

George Floyd's brothers led a moment of silence during the first night of the Democratic National Convention to honor the Black Americans who had been killed by police.

Philonese Floyd, sitting next to his brother Rodney Floyd, said that George Floyd had a giving spirit that

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has shown up on streets around our nation" as Americans have protested systemic racism and police brutality in recent months.

Philonense Floyd said, "George should be alive today." He then listed the names of Black Americans who were killed by law enforcement officers or in police custody.

George Floyd, a Black man who was handcuffed, was killed May 25 after a white police officer pressed his knee against Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes as Floyd said he couldn't breathe.

Philonense Floyd implored viewers to "carry on the fight for justice," adding, "Our actions will be their legacies."

Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser is harshly criticizing President Donald Trump before introducing the family of George Floyd at the Democratic National Convention's opening night.

Standing on an outlook above Black Lives Matter Plaza, Bowser said it was time to elect a president who "doesn't fan the flames of racism."

Bowser ordered her city government to paint the words "Black Lives Matter" on the street leading to the White House after protests erupted in Washington and around the U.S.

Trump and Bowser have had a strained relationship for much of his time in Washington. That's especially been the case in the wake of protests that erupted over Floyd's killing by Minneapolis police.

During her remarks, Bowser specifically criticized the use of chemical irritants by law enforcement who cleared protesters from Lafayette Square in June. After the crowd was cleared, Trump emerged from the White House for a photo op with a Bible in front of a nearby church.

Bowser said that while people were peacefully protesting, Trump was "plotting."

The St. Louis couple who waved firearms at Black Lives Matter protesters outside their home in June will appear virtually at next week's Republican National Convention to express their support for President Donald Trump.

A Trump adviser on Monday confirmed the participation of Patricia and Mark McCloskey. The news was first reported by The Washington Post.

The McCloskeys, who are white, have claimed they were protecting themselves from protesters marching on their private street, but they were each charged by a local prosecutor with one felony count of unlawful use of a weapon. Trump has been critical of their treatment and has spoken out in defense of the couple.

The first night of the Democratic National Convention has begun.

The event is being held virtually after the coronavirus pandemic shuttered plans for an in-person convention in Milwaukee.

Actor Eva Longoria Baston served as master of ceremonies of Monday's event. Making early appearances in a montage of voices were labor leader Dolores Huerta, soccer player Megan Rapinoe and Parkland father Fred Guttenberg.

Five of Biden's grandchildren recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

Among the night's speakers were Republican John Kasich, the former governor of Ohio, Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders and former first lady Michelle Obama.

Bernie Sanders will use his Democratic National Convention speech to urge those who supported his progressive presidential bid -- or who may have voted Republican four years ago -- to unite behind Joe Biden in November.

According to excerpts released before Sanders' Monday night speech, he plans to say that the country needs "an unprecedented response" because of the "unprecedented set of crises we face."

Many of Sanders' top advisers and supporters have spent months working with Biden's campaign on joint task forces that devised common policy goals for use in the Democratic platform.

The idea was to promote party unity in a way that did not happen in 2016, when many Sanders supporters remained unenthusiastic about Hillary Clinton.

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Sanders plans to say that Americans must “come together” to defeat President Donald Trump and elect Biden. He will say, “The price of failure is just too great to imagine.”

Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez says the handful of 2020 presidential caucuses should be the last the party ever holds.

He didn't specifically name Iowa, which for decades has led off the nominating calendar, but his position would represent a seismic shift in the party's traditions.

Perez's term as chairman will end before the 2024 nominating calendar is determined. But he told The Associated Press on opening day of the Democratic National Convention that he plans to “use the bully pulpit as a former chair” to make needed changes.

Iowa's caucuses this year were disastrous, with state and national party officials spending days trying to determine the winner. Because of the irregularities, The Associated Press decided against declaring a winner.

The first two nominating states, Iowa and New Hampshire, are overwhelmingly white, while the national party is much more diverse. That gap was underscored this year when eventual nominee Joe Biden did poorly in Iowa and New Hampshire, only to dominate the nominating fight over the ensuing months once more diverse states voted.

Perez wouldn't comment on whether he thinks Iowa or New Hampshire should give up their leadoff spots. But he said the demographics “will undoubtedly come up” in future party discussions.

President Donald Trump is accusing his 2020 opponent Joe Biden of being a “puppet of left-wing extremists” hours before the start of the Democratic National Convention.

Trump was in Minnesota on Monday to press his law and order reelection rhetoric as part of counter-programming to the DNC.

At an airport hangar in Mankato, Trump called Biden a “puppet of left-wing extremists trying to erase our borders, eliminate our police, indoctrinate our children, vilify our heroes, take away our energy.”

Trump says a Biden victory would “replace American freedom with left-wing fascism.” However, fascism is a form of right-wing authoritarianism.

He went so far as to say Biden probably doesn't know where Minnesota is. Trump has pushed a message that the 77-year-old Biden is in cognitive decline, while critics have raised the same accusation against the 74-year-old Trump. The president recently tried to demonstrate his mental fitness by reciting five words in order in a television interview.

Joe Biden will accept the Democratic presidential nomination in a live speech Thursday night, but he'll be seen and heard every night of the convention in some form.

Democratic National Committee Chair Tom Perez tells The Associated Press on Monday that Biden will be part of the virtual convention's prime-time programming leading up to his Thursday address. For example, Perez said Monday's programming will include Biden talking with activists about criminal justice reform.

Perez said viewers this week also will see the former vice president talking about the COVID-19 pandemic and his health care proposals and having conversations with everyday Americans about the economy.

During traditional conventions, the nominee is often mentioned from the speaker's podium but is largely shielded from view as the convention builds to the acceptance speech on Thursday night.

There have been rare exceptions. Al Gore greeted his then-wife, Tipper Gore, for a very public kiss after her speech in 2000. President Barack Obama emerged from backstage to greet former President Bill Clinton after his speech 2012.

## 2 men charged in '02 killing of Run-DMC star Jam Master Jay

By JIM MUSTIAN, MICHAEL BALSAMO, TOM HAYS and MICHAEL R. SISAK Associated Press  
NEW YORK (AP) — Nearly two decades after the slaying of Run-DMC star Jam Master Jay, federal prosecutors said Monday they have solved one of New York City's most enduring mysteries, charging two men



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from his neighborhood with murder and suggesting that the hip-hop artist — celebrated for his anti-drug stance — was ambushed over a cocaine deal.

The suspects were identified in court papers as Ronald Washington, 56, who is currently serving a federal prison sentence stemming from a string of robberies while on the run from police after Jay's 2002 death, and Karl Jordan Jr., 36, who is also charged with engaging in a cocaine distribution conspiracy in 2017.

Jason "Jay" Mizell, known professionally as Jam Master Jay, formed Run-DMC with Joseph "Run" Simmons and Darryl "DMC" McDaniels in the early 1980s. Together, they helped take hip-hop mainstream with hits like "It's Tricky" and the Aerosmith remake collaboration "Walk This Way."

Jay's death, following the long unsolved slayings of rappers Tupac Shakur in Las Vegas in 1996 and Christopher "Biggie Smalls" Wallace in Los Angeles in 1997, shook the hip-hop world. Chuck D of Public Enemy compared his death to that of John Lennon. More than \$60,000 in rewards was offered, but witnesses refused to come forward and the case languished.

"This is a case about a murder that for nearly two decades had gone unanswered," Acting U.S. Attorney Seth DuCharme said at a news conference announcing the charges. "Today, we begin to answer that question of who killed Jason Mizell, and why, and we're confident that we can prove those charges beyond a reasonable doubt."

Washington, who had reportedly been living on a couch at Jay's home in the days before the killing, was publicly named as a possible suspect or witness as far back as 2007. Prosecutors allege he waved a handgun and ordered another person at the recording studio to lie on the ground while Jordan shot Jay in the head Oct. 30, 2002.

According to prosecutors, Jay would bring in bulk amounts of cocaine to sell retail and was killed as retribution for cutting Washington out of a plan to distribute 10 kilograms in Maryland.

"They walked in and murdered him in cold blood," DuCharme said.

A message seeking comment was left with a publicist for Run-DMC. The group performed anti-drug concerts, established scholarships and held voter registration drives at its live shows. In Hollis, the Queens neighborhood where he grew up, Jay was seen as a role model. Friends were puzzled by his death, thinking him an unlikely target for violence.

If convicted, Washington and Jordan each face a mandatory minimum sentence of 20 years in prison and a maximum of life in prison, or the death penalty. Prosecutors said in court papers that Attorney General William Barr had not yet decided whether to seek the death penalty.

Jordan pleaded not guilty at an arraignment held Monday by teleconference because of coronavirus-related precautions. His lawyer declined comment. Washington, who is imprisoned in Kentucky, will be arraigned later this week, prosecutors said.

Prosecutors have asked that both be jailed pending trial.

The 37-year-old Jay was shot once in the head with a .40-caliber bullet by a masked assailant at his studio in Hollis. Police identified at least four people in the studio with Jay when he was killed, including the two armed gunmen.

At Jay's funeral, McDaniels remembered his friend and fellow Run-DMC star as "the embodiment of hip-hop." He was also a husband and a father of three children.

"Jam Master Jay was not a thug," McDaniels said. "Jam Master Jay was not a gangster. Jam Master Jay was a unique individual."

Prosecutors, though, now say Jay had been bringing cocaine into the New York area since 1996.

At the time, Jay's acquaintance with Washington — a repeat offender with convictions dating in 1982 — worried and upset his family.

Before ending up on Jay's couch, Washington served prison time for grand larceny, assault, criminal use of a firearm, heroin possession and other charges. He was been linked to the 1995 fatal shooting of Randy Walker, a close associate of the late Tupac Shakur.

Afterward, prosecutors said, Washington hopped from motel-to-motel and robbed businesses including supermarkets and a Burger King while detectives pursued him in connection with Jay's killing. He remained



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at large for nearly three months until police on Long Island nabbed him for robbing a motel.

Last month, as prosecutors were preparing to seek a grand jury indictment against him for Jay's death, Washington filed a handwritten petition asking to immediately be released to home confinement, arguing his medical history put him at risk for complications from coronavirus. Federal prosecutors responded by asking for more time to respond, delaying any decision until after Washington was charged.

Jordan, just a teenager when Jay was killed, was declared a juvenile delinquent after a 1999 robbery arrest and had a firearm case dismissed when the complaining witness refused to cooperate with law enforcement. In recent years, prosecutors said, he's been caught on audio and video surveillance six times selling cocaine to an undercover federal agent.

This story has been corrected to show Christopher "Biggie Smalls" Wallace was killed in Los Angeles, not New York City. Balsamo reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Jennifer Lehman contributed to this report.

## Universities scramble to deal with virus outbreaks

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

North Carolina's flagship university canceled in-person classes for undergraduates just a week into the fall semester Monday as college campuses around the U.S. scramble to deal with coronavirus clusters linked in some cases to student housing, off-campus parties and packed bars.

The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill said it will switch to remote learning on Wednesday and make arrangements for students who want to leave campus housing.

"We have emphasized that if we were faced with the need to change plans — take an off-ramp — we would not hesitate to do so, but we have not taken this decision lightly," it said in a statement after reporting 130 confirmed infections among students and five among employees over the past week.

UNC said the clusters were discovered in dorms, a fraternity house and other student housing.

Before the decision came down, the student newspaper, The Daily Tar Heel, ran an editorial headlined, "UNC has a clusterf—k on its hands," though without the dashes.

The paper said that the parties that took place over the weekend were no surprise and that administrators should have begun the semester with online-only instruction at the university, which has 19,000 undergraduates.

"We all saw this coming," the editorial said.

Outbreaks earlier this summer at fraternities in Washington state, California and Mississippi provided a glimpse of the challenges school officials face in keeping the virus from spreading on campuses where young people eat, live, study — and party — in close quarters.

The virus has been blamed for over 170,000 deaths and 5.4 million confirmed infections in the U.S.

In Boone, North Carolina, the faculty senate at Appalachian State University — part of the 17-member UNC system — passed a vote of no-confidence in school chancellor Sheri Everts on Monday, in large part for failing to shut down the campus after a recent COVID-19 outbreak. Professors have "moved from a concern about people's livelihoods and the institution's reputation to, now, a concern for people's lives," the declaration read. Everts said in a letter to faculty Monday night that she has received support from the school's Board of Trustees, including a July 6 resolution of confidence in her leadership.

Meanwhile, officials at another UNC school — East Carolina University — said Monday that they had identified a COVID-19 cluster at a dorm. They didn't say whether they were considering switching to online classes.

At Oklahoma State in Stillwater, where a widely circulated video over the weekend showed maskless students packed into a nightclub, officials confirmed 23 coronavirus cases at an off-campus sorority house. The university placed the students living there in isolation and prohibited them from leaving.

"As a student, I'm frustrated as hell," said Ryan Novozinsky, a junior from Allentown, New Jersey, and editor of the student newspaper. "These are people I have to interact with." And, he added, "there will be

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professors they interact with, starting today, that won't be able to fight this off."

OSU has a combination of in-person and online courses. Students, staff and faculty are required to wear masks indoors and outdoors where social distancing isn't possible.

The University of Notre Dame reported 58 confirmed cases since students returned to the South Bend, Indiana, campus in early August. At least two off-campus parties over a week ago have been identified as sources, school officials said.

Paul J. Browne, vice president for public affairs at Notre Dame, said the university is prepared to suspend or otherwise discipline the hosts of such parties.

"We believe we have a very strong chain of health protection, but these parties represent the weak link in that chain, and they can be responsible for a disproportionate spread," he said.

University officials in Tennessee, Georgia and Alabama were likewise frustrated by the lack of social distancing and scenes of crowded bars and other nightspot areas on the first weekend many students returned to school.

In Tuscaloosa, the home of the football-mad University of Alabama, Mayor Walt Maddox appealed to students' love of the game in urging them to take precautions.

"If you don't want to protect yourself and you don't want to protect your family and you don't want to protect your friends and thousands of jobs, maybe, just maybe, you would want to protect football season so we can have it this fall," Maddox said.

Many schools already have flipped from in-person classes to mainly online in recent weeks, and more are expected to do so, said David Long of Tuscan Strategy Consulting, which teamed up with the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security and the Council for Higher Education Accreditation to develop reopening recommendations for colleges and universities.

"It's because it's so difficult to create these systems where everybody is essentially behaving appropriately, meaning social distancing, wearing PPE and not gathering in groups," he said, referring to personal protective equipment. "It's challenging when you're trying to control behavior in young adults, particularly in areas that are outside the classroom and off campus."

Some schools are opting for social contracts and strict codes of conduct as a way for students to keep pressure on their classmates, he said.

Among universities moving ahead with in-person fall classes is Bradley University in Peoria, Illinois, where a dozen students tested positive last month after an off-campus gathering. Classes start Aug. 26 and students are moving into dorms this weekend.

"We have tweaked the move in process this year and are requiring students to sign up for a time slot so we can keep things spaced out and distanced," university spokeswoman Renee Charles said.

Balancing the health risks with educating students has been keeping university presidents up at night, said Mildred García, head of the American Association of State Colleges and Universities. She said many are reconsidering their plans as things change rapidly.

"They are doing the best they can with their staff and trying to educate the students about masks and social distancing and the effects of this virus," she said.

"They're doing all they can — and yet these are young people. When we think back about when we were young, sometimes you think you're invincible."

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Associated Press writers Sean Murphy in Oklahoma City; Jay Reeves in Birmingham, Alabama; Katie Foody in Chicago; Collin Binkley in Boston; Dave Kolpack in Fargo, North Dakota; and Jonathan Drew in Durham, North Carolina, contributed to this report.

## **AP survey: States uncommitted to Trump's unemployment boost**

By GEOFF MULVIHILL Associated Press

President Donald Trump's plan to offer a stripped-down boost in unemployment benefits to millions of Americans amid the coronavirus outbreak has found little traction among the states, which would have to

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pay a quarter of the cost to deliver the maximum benefit.

An Associated Press survey finds that as of Monday, 18 states have said they will take the federal grants allowing them to increase unemployment checks by \$300 or \$400 a week. The AP tally shows that 30 states have said they're still evaluating the offer or have not said whether they plan to accept the president's slimmed-down benefits. Two have said no.

The uncertainty is putting some families' finances in peril.

Tiana Chase, who runs a community game room and store in Maynard, Massachusetts, said the extra \$600 she and her partner had been receiving under the previous federal benefit helped keep them afloat after the pandemic caused many businesses to shutter.

For the past few weeks, she's been getting less than \$300 in unemployment. If that's boosted by another \$300, "it's going to be a lot tighter, but at least I can vaguely manage," she said. "I can cover my home expenses."

Many governors say the costs to states to receive the bigger boost offered by Trump is more than their battered budgets can bear. They also say the federal government's guidelines on how it will work are too murky. Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Wolf, a Democrat, called it a "convoluted, temporary, half-baked concept (that) has left many states, including Pennsylvania, with more questions."

New Mexico was the first state to apply for the aid last week and one of the first to be announced as a recipient by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. But Bill McCamley, secretary of the state's Department of Workforce Solutions, said it's not clear when the money will start going out, largely because the state needs to reprogram benefit distribution systems to make it work.

"People need help and they need it right now," McCamley said. "These dollars are so important, not only to the claimants, but because the claimants turn that money around, sometimes immediately to pay for things like rent, child care, utilities."

In March, Congress approved a series of emergency changes to the nation's unemployment insurance system, which is run by state governments.

People who were out of work got an extra federally funded \$600 a week, largely because the abrupt recession made finding another job so difficult. The boost expired at the end of July, and recipients have now gone without it for up to three weeks.

With Democrats, Republicans and Trump so far unable to agree to a broader new coronavirus relief plan, the president signed an executive order Aug. 8 to extend the added weekly benefit, but cut it to \$300 or \$400 a week, depending on which plan governors choose. States are required to chip in \$100 per claimant to be able to send out the higher amount, something few have agreed to do, according to the AP tally.

Trump's executive order keeps the program in place until late December, though it will be scrapped if Congress comes up with a different program. It also will end early if the money for the program is depleted, which is likely to happen within a few months.

Governors from both parties have been pushing for Congress to make a deal, even after previous talks for a sweeping new coronavirus relief bill, including an unemployment boost, broke off earlier this month.

When Congress finally reaches an agreement, "I have every reason to believe ... there will be a more robust deal that is struck," said Texas Gov. Greg Abbott, a Republican who has been noncommittal about accepting Trump's plan.

One reason for the states' hesitancy is that they fear they will go through the complex steps required to adopt Trump's plan, only to have it usurped by one from Congress, according to a spokeswoman for Republican Wyoming Gov. Mark Gordon.

So far, most states that have said they are taking Trump up on his offer have chosen the \$300 version. Some have not decided which plan to take. In North Carolina, for instance, Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper has pushed for the \$400 plan, but Republican lawmakers have not committed to kick in a share of state money for that.

Mississippi's Republican Gov. Tate Reeves has spurned the deal altogether, saying it's too expensive.

State leaders who say they can't afford to chip in point to the widespread closure of businesses, which

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has hammered government tax revenue. But they also acknowledge that they need the help, as a record number of claims have left their unemployment trust funds in rough shape.

Most states expect to exhaust their funds and need federal loans to keep paying benefits during the recession. So far, 10 states plus the U.S. Virgin Islands have done so, including California, which has borrowed \$8.6 billion. Another eight states have received authorization for loans but had not used them as of last week.

California Gov. Gavin Newsom, a Democrat, is among governors who are critical of Trump's approach but decided to take the deal anyway. "As I say, don't look a gift horse in the mouth," Newsom said last week.

The federal Department of Labor reported last week that 963,000 people applied for unemployment benefits for the first time. It was the first time since March that the number dropped below 1 million. The government says more than 28 million people are receiving some kind of unemployment benefit, although that figure includes some double counting as it combines counts from multiple programs.

State unemployment benefits on their own generally fall far short of replacing a laid off worker's previous income.

Chris Wade, who lives in the Chicago suburb of Schaumburg, is a server at a high-end restaurant. He was laid off in March when dine-in restaurants were closed in the state. While he's since returned, he's working only a few shifts a week and his unemployment checks are reduced by the amount he's paid.

The now-expired \$600 weekly unemployment supplement came out to about the same as his family's rent, he said. When his first check came in April, he was eight days behind on rent, but with the help, he's been able to keep paying since then.

"The extra money, no matter what they give me, is all going to rent anyway, or other bills," said Wade, 45. "Every dollar actually counts."

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Follow AP reporter Geoff Mulvihill at <http://www.twitter.com/geoffmulvihill>.

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AP statehouse reporters across the U.S. contributed to this report.

## Trump rule on transgender health blocked at the 11th hour

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A federal judge blocked the Trump administration on Monday from enforcing a new regulation that would roll back health care protections for transgender people.

Finalized days after the Supreme Court barred sex discrimination against LGBT individuals on the job, the regulation from the federal Department of Health and Human Services was to have taken effect Tuesday.

Monday's preliminary injunction from U.S. District Court Judge Frederic Block in Brooklyn bars the administration from enforcing the regulation until the case can be heard in court and decided. Block indicated he thought the Trump administration's so-called transgender rule is invalid in light of the Supreme Court ruling in June on a case involving similar issues in the context of job discrimination.

"When the Supreme Court announces a major decision, it seems a sensible thing to pause and reflect on the decision's impact," Block wrote in his order, suggesting the agency may want to reconsider. "Since HHS has been unwilling to take that path voluntarily, the court now imposes it."

The HHS health care rule was seen as a signal to President Donald Trump's social and religious conservative supporters that the administration remained squarely behind them after the shock of the Supreme Court's 6-3 decision, written by Justice Neil Gorsuch, who was nominated by Trump.

"An employer who fires an individual for being homosexual or transgender fires that person for traits or actions it would not have questioned in members of a different sex," Gorsuch wrote. "Sex plays a necessary and undisguisable role in the decision, exactly what (civil rights law) forbids."

In a tweet, Trump called that "horrible & politically charged" and compared it to a shotgun blast in the faces of conservative Republicans.

The HHS rule sought to overturn Obama-era sex discrimination protections for transgender people in



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health care. Similar to the underlying issues in the job discrimination case before the Supreme Court, the health care rule rests on the idea that sex is determined by biology. The Obama-era version relied on a broader understanding shaped by a person's inner sense of being male, female, neither or a combination.

The lawsuit against the Trump administration rule was brought by an advocacy group, the Human Rights Campaign, on behalf of two transgender women. One of the plaintiffs is an Army veteran, and the other a writer and activist.

Judge Block dismissed as "disingenuous" arguments from HHS that its rule was legally valid, and he wrote that the agency acted "arbitrarily and capriciously" in enacting it.

HHS said it was disappointed by the judge's decision.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called it a "victory for the LGBTQ community and the rule of law."

The judge "was unambiguous in ... ruling that the administration's actions were in blatant violation of the Affordable Care Act's protections and the Supreme Court's recent ... decision, which affirmed that discrimination 'on the basis of sex' included sexual orientation and gender identity," Pelosi said in a statement.

Judge Block was nominated to the federal bench by former President Bill Clinton.

## US approves oil, gas leasing plan for Alaska wildlife refuge

By MARK THIESSEN Associated Press

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) — The Trump administration gave final approval Monday for a contentious oil and gas leasing plan on the coastal plain of Alaska's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, where critics worry about the industry's impact on polar bears, caribou and other wildlife.

The next step, barring lawsuits, will be the actual sale of leases. Development — should it occur — is still years away.

Environmentalists have promised to fight opening up the coastal plain, a 1.56-million acre swath of land along Alaska's northern Beaufort Sea coast after the Department of the Interior approved an oil and gas leasing program.

Secretary of the Interior David Bernhardt signed the Record of Decision, which will determine a program for where oil and gas leasing will take place.

"The establishment of this program marks a new chapter in American energy independence," Bernhardt said during a conference call with reporters.

"Years of inaction have given away to an informed and determined plan to responsibly tap ANWR's energy potential for the American people for generations to come," he said.

Over the past four decades, Republicans have attempted to open the refuge to drilling. President Bill Clinton vetoed a Republican bill to allow drilling in 1995, and Democrats blocked a similar plan 10 years later. President Trump insisted Congress include a mandate providing for leasing in the refuge in a 2017 tax bill.

The Interior's Bureau of Land Management in December 2018 concluded drilling could be conducted within the coastal plain area without harming wildlife.

"Today's announcement marks a milestone in Alaska's forty-year journey to responsibly develop our state and our nation's new energy frontier," Gov. Mike Dunleavy said in a statement.

The Republican governor called the decision "a definitive step in the right direction to developing this area's energy potential," which he estimated at 4.3 and 11.8 billion barrels of recoverable oil reserves.

Republican U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski said the opportunity offered by opening the coastal plain "is needed both now, as Alaskans navigate incredibly challenging times, and well into the future as we seek a lasting economic foundation for our state.

"Through this program, we will build on our already-strong record of an increasingly minimal footprint for responsible resource development."

Trump in 2018 said he hadn't felt strongly about opening the refuge, but had insisted it be included in the tax bill at the urging of others. He also said a friend told him that every Republican president since Ronald Reagan had tried and failed to open the refuge to drilling.

"I really didn't care about it, and then when I heard that everybody wanted it — for 40 years, they've



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been trying to get it approved, and I said, 'Make sure you don't lose ANWR,'" Trump said at the time.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has vowed to protect the refuge.

"His plan released last year made clear that he will permanently protect ANWR and other areas impacted by President Trump's attacks on federal lands and waters," campaign spokesperson Matt Hill said.

Environmental groups immediately assailed opening the refuge and promised litigation.

"The Trump administration's so-called review process for their shameless sell-off of the Arctic refuge has been a sham from the start. We'll see them in court," said Lena Moffitt with the Our Wild America campaign of the Sierra Club.

"This administration has done nothing but disrespect the Indigenous peoples that have occupied these lands," Gwich'in Steering Committee Executive Director Bernadette Demientieff said.

The coastal plain is calving grounds for the Porcupine Caribou Herd, which includes about 200,000 animals, "Our ways of life, our food security, and our identity is not up for negotiation. The fight is not over," she said.

Matt Lee-Ashley, a senior fellow with the Center for American Progress, said the Interior decision won't stand.

"The environmental analysis underpinning this decision is so laughably indefensible that either the courts or a future presidential administration will have no trouble tossing it in the dustbin of history," Lee-Ashely said.

Frank Macchiarola, a senior vice president at the American Petroleum Institute, said the rigorous environmental review process confirms the industry's ability to develop responsibly.

"The industry has a well-established record of safe and environmentally responsible development of Alaska's energy resources and has been recognized for its success in being respectful of Alaska's wildlife and surrounding communities," he said. "Advancements in technology and commitments to environmental stewardship – including for over 50 years in Alaska's Arctic – have enabled America's oil and natural gas industry to safely meet decades of demand for affordable, reliable and cleaner energy."

Bernhardt said the program should stand up to legal challenges or the whims of future presidential administrations.

"Congress has mandated these lease sales, and so they have to go forward in some regard. They can't just simply unduly delay, so that is a reality that Congress created," he said. "And really, absent a change in the law, the question of whether or not there will be a program in ANWR has really been answered."

The decision makes the entire coastal plain — 8% of the 19.3-million-acre refuge — available for oil and gas leasing and potential development. The Department of the Interior said the plan includes protections for habitat and wildlife, including operational time limits on 585,400 acres.

Bernhardt said there will be at least two area-wide leasing sales of at least 400,000 acres each. The first will be held before Dec. 22, 2021, and the second by Dec. 22, 2024.

## Report: Nursing home cases up nearly 80% in COVID-19 rebound

By RICARDO ALONSO-ZALDIVAR Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — COVID-19 cases in U.S. nursing homes jumped nearly 80% earlier this summer, driven by rampant spread across the South and much of the West, according to an industry report released Monday.

"The case numbers suggest the problem is far from solved," said Tamara Konetzka, a research professor at the University of Chicago, who specializes in long-term care. She was not involved with the study.

Long-term care facilities account for less than 1% of the U.S. population, but more than 40 percent of COVID-19 deaths, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

The situation is a politically sensitive issue for President Donald Trump, who is scrambling to hold on to support from older voters as polls show disapproval of his administration's response to the pandemic.

The White House announced in late July the release of \$5 billion for nursing homes, while launching a program to equip each of some 15,000 facilities with a fast-test machine to screen residents and staff

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for the coronavirus.

Monday's study from the American Health Care Association found there were 9,715 coronavirus cases in nursing homes the week starting July 26, a 77% increase from a low point the week of June 21. The group is the industry's main trade association.

Weekly deaths, rose to 1,706 the week of July 26, an increase of nearly 25% from a low point the week starting July 5.

Nursing homes in Sunbelt states had more time to prepare than facilities in the Northeast that were hit in late winter and early spring, with grim results. But Konezka and other researchers have been warning that once a community anywhere experiences an outbreak, it's only a matter of time before the coronavirus enters its nursing homes. A leading theory is that staffers who don't yet know they're infected unwittingly bring the virus in. Inside, the coronavirus encounters an ideal environment in which to spread among frail older people living in close quarters.

"As the virus surges in Sunbelt states, there's no reason to think it won't affect nursing homes in the same way it did in states that surged earlier," said Konezka. "We have learned some things about how to minimize the effect in nursing homes, but providers need the tools to implement those best practices. This is the critical role of federal policy that has not been fulfilled— securing supply chains for (personal protective equipment) and rapid testing."

The industry analysis illustrates the march of the virus across the U.S.

As of the week of May 31, fewer than one-third of the weekly coronavirus cases were from nursing homes in Sunbelt states. But by the week starting July 26, that share was 78%.

Deaths followed a similar pattern. Nursing homes in states across the South and parts of the West accounted for 28% of deaths the week of May 31. That share was 69% by the week starting July 26.

The Trump administration says it's executing on its plan to provide fast-test machines to nursing homes and make sure that all facilities have the protective equipment they need. But Seema Verma, head of the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, said states and nursing homes also have responsibility to safeguard residents. She called on nursing homes to step up their game.

"The reality is that (a) facility's infection control practices is the number one factor leading to the spread of COVID within these facilities," Verma said in a statement. Inspectors "have seen staff forgetting to wash their hands, congregating in break rooms, and wearing (protective equipment) improperly. All the testing in the world is for naught if staff don't adhere to the basic, longstanding infection control practices that the federal government has had in place for years."

Mark Parkinson, head of the nursing home trade group that produced the study, said the problem is bigger.

"The data indicate that this virus is spread by asymptomatic carriers and that even perfect infection control wouldn't have stopped it," he said. "The challenge with this virus is that because it is spread by asymptomatic carriers the prior infection control procedures didn't work."

Parkinson said that about 10% of facilities still report lacking an adequate supply of N95 masks, considered standard for hospital personnel.

He said the administration's effort to distribute fast-test machines could be a "game changer," but added "there's still a long way to go." Distribution is expected to be completed by the end of September.

In the meantime, Parkinson said it can still take three days, and sometimes more, to get results. "We continue to be plagued with a testing problem," he said.

Guidelines call for nursing homes to test all residents at least once, and staffers on a regular basis.

Health and Human Services spokeswoman Mia Heck said, "We are prepared to exert our full authority to make sure the most vulnerable are being tested."

The nursing home association is urging states struggling with the latest coronavirus surge to enact mandates for people to wear masks, saying it would indirectly benefit residents cloistered in such facilities. "There's a direct link between COVID in the community and COVID in the building," Parkinson said.

## Amid outcry, postmaster general to testify before House

By MATTHEW DALY and LISA MASCARO Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Facing a public backlash over mail disruptions, the Trump administration scrambled to respond Monday as the House prepared an emergency vote to halt delivery delays and service changes that Democrats warned could imperil the November election.

The Postal Service said it has stopped removing mailboxes and mail-sorting machines amid an outcry from lawmakers. President Donald Trump flatly denied he was asking for the mail to be delayed even as he leveled fresh criticism on universal ballots and mail-in voting.

"Wouldn't do that," Trump told reporters Monday at the White House. "I have encouraged everybody: Speed up the mail, not slow the mail."

Embattled Postmaster General Louis DeJoy will testify next Monday before Congress, along with the chairman of the Postal Service board of governors.

Democrats and some Republicans say actions by the new postmaster general, a Trump ally and a major Republican donor, have endangered millions of Americans who rely on the post office to obtain prescription drugs and other needs, including an expected surge in mail-in voting this fall.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi is calling the House back into session over the crisis at the Postal Service, setting up a political showdown amid growing concerns that the Trump White House is trying to undermine the agency ahead of the election.

Pelosi cut short lawmakers' summer recess with a vote expected Saturday on legislation that would prohibit changes at the agency. The package will also include \$25 billion to shore up the Postal Service, which faces continued financial losses.

The Postal Service is among the nation's oldest and more popular institutions, strained in recent years by declines first-class and business mail, but now hit with new challenges during the coronavirus pandemic. Trump routinely criticizes its business model, but the financial outlook is far more complex, and includes an unusual requirement to pre-fund retiree health benefits that advocates in Congress want to undo.

Ahead of the election, DeJoy, a former supply-chain CEO who took over the Postal Service in June, has sparked nationwide outcry over delays, new prices and cutbacks just as millions of Americans will be trying to vote by mail and polling places during the COVID-19 crisis.

Trump on Monday defended DeJoy, but also criticized postal operations and claimed that universal mail-in ballots would be "a disaster."

"I want to make the post office great again," Trump said on "Fox & Friends."

Later at the White House, Trump told reporters he wants "to have a post office that runs without losing billions and billions of dollars a year."

The decision to recall the House carries a political punch. Voting in the House will highlight the issue after the weeklong Democratic National Convention nominating Joe Biden as the party's presidential pick and pressure the Republican-held Senate to respond. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell sent senators home for a summer recess.

"In a time of a pandemic, the Postal Service is Election Central," Pelosi wrote Sunday in a letter to colleagues, who had been expected to be out of session until September. "Lives, livelihoods and the life of our American Democracy are under threat from the president."

At an event in his home-state Monday, McConnell distanced himself from Trump's complaints about mail operations. But the Republican leader also declined to recall senators to Washington, vowing the Postal Service "is going to be just fine."

"We're going to make sure that the ability to function going into the election is not adversely affected," McConnell said in Horse Cave, Ky. "And I don't share the president's concerns."

Two Democratic lawmakers called on the FBI to investigate actions by DeJoy and the board of governors to slow the mail. "It is not unreasonable to conclude that Postmaster General DeJoy and the Board of Governors may be executing Donald Trump's desire to affect mail-in balloting," Reps. Ted Lieu of California and Hakeem Jeffries of New York wrote in a letter to FBI Director Christopher Wray.

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Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer and other Democrats, meanwhile, urged the postal board to use authority under a 1970 law to reverse operational changes put in place last month by DeJoy. If he declines to cooperate, "you have the authority, under the Postal Reorganization Act, to remove the postmaster general," the senators said in a letter to board members.

Outside a post office in Baltimore, Rep. Kweisi Mfume, D-Md., called on DeJoy to resign.

"Don't tell me or others that you're just trying to make the post office make money. The U.S. post office is not a business. It is a service. And it is a service to Americans that we must always protect," Mfume said Monday.

Congress is at a standoff over postal operations. House Democrats approved \$25 billion in a COVID-19 relief package but Trump and Senate Republicans have balked at additional funds for election security. McConnell held a conference call Monday with Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and GOP senators on the broader virus aid package.

The Postal Service said Sunday it would stop removing its distinctive blue mailboxes through mid-November following complaints from customers and members of Congress that the collection boxes were being taken away. And White House chief of staff Mark Meadows pledged that that "no sorting machines are going offline between now and the election."

The legislation set for Saturday's vote, the "Delivering for America Act," would prohibit the Postal Service from implementing any changes to operations or level of service it had in place on Jan. 1. The package would include the \$25 billion in earlier funds that are stalled in the Senate.

DeJoy, the first postmaster general in nearly two decades who was not a career postal employee, has pledged to modernize the money-losing agency to make it more efficient. He eliminated most overtime for postal workers, imposed restrictions on transportation and reduced of the quantity and use of mail-processing equipment.

Trump said last week that he was blocking emergency aid to the Postal Service, as well as a Democratic proposal to provide \$3.6 billion in additional election money to the states to help process an expected surge of mail-in ballots. Both funding requests have been tied up in congressional negotiations over a new coronavirus relief package.

Meanwhile, the Postal Service is seeking a short-term rate increase that would raise prices on commercial domestic competitive parcels, including Priority Mail Express, Priority Mail, first-class package service, Parcel Select and Parcel Return Service. The agency cited increased expenses, heightened demand for online packages due to the coronavirus pandemic and an expected increase in holiday mail volume.

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Associated Press writers Darlene Superville and Jill Colvin in Washington and Bruce Schreiner in Frankfort, Ky., contributed to this report.

## Death Valley's brutal 130 degrees may be record if verified

BY SETH BORENSTEIN AP Science Writer

California sizzled to a triple-digit temperature so hot that meteorologists need to verify it as a planet-wide high mark.

Death Valley recorded a scorching 130 degrees (54.4 degrees Celsius) Sunday, which if the sensors and other conditions check out, would be the hottest Earth has been in more than 89 years and the third-warmest ever measured.

The temperature, measured at the aptly-named Furnace Creek during a blistering heat wave, would be the hottest temperature recorded on Earth in August, said Arizona State University professor Randy Cerveny, who coordinates the World Meteorological Organization's extreme temperature team, which is already investigating the mark.

That 130 is only below the disputed all-time record of 134 degrees (56.67 Celsius) at nearly the same spot in 1913 and a 131-degree mark (55 degrees) in Tunisia in 1931, but both were in July, traditionally the planet's hottest month.



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The relentlessly hot weather conditions at the spot support such an extreme reading, so much of the verification effort will be looking at how the measurement was taken and the sensor itself, Cerveny said. Sunday's temperature would beat marks of 129 (53.9 Celsius) recorded three times in recent years, he said. The monitor is an official one that follows world guidelines, but still needs to be examined in a process that takes months, he said.

"We are having more extremes than we had in the past," Cerveny said.

The world is "creeping up on (the 134-degree record) year after year. That is something that cannot be denied," Cerveny said Monday. "These extremes tell us a lot about what will happen in the future."

The western heat wave is due to a "massive dome of high pressure" that keeps roasting the West and the normal Southwest monsoon that would provide rain and relief is missing, so there has been no cooling, Cerveny said. Phoenix has gone weeks with temperatures not dipping below 90, even at night or early in the morning, he said.

The 130-mark capped a week and an ongoing summer of "very strange" weather, said Deke Arndt, director of the National Weather Service's Center for Weather and Climate and former chairman of the U.S. national weather extremes committee.

On Saturday, a fire tornado formed during a wildfire near Chilcoot, California, worsened by the western heat wave. The fire was "burning so incredibly intense, so there is just so much heat going into it" that air rose in a swirl just like what happens in some thunderstorms, said Dawn Johnson, senior meteorologist at the National Weather Service office in Reno, Nevada. "It almost looks like a bomb went off."

And days before that, a violent straight-wind derecho devastated parts of Iowa, Illinois and Indiana, killing four people and causing billions of dollars in damages. Also, the Atlantic keeps setting records for earliest hurricanes, with 11 forming before mid August and the beginning of peak season.

"These kinds of things are certainly consistent with everybody's expectation for what we expect to see more often" with man-made global warming, said Jennifer Francis, a senior scientist at the Woodwell Climate Research Center, formerly Woods Hole Research Center, in Cape Cod, Massachusetts.

Death Valley's National Park's 130-degree temperature was recorded at 3:41 p.m. at Furnace Creek near the park's visitor center. It's the same area that holds the world record for highest temperature ever recorded — 134 degrees (56.67 Celsius) — set on July 10, 1913, although that record remains in dispute. Arndt said meteorologists have made good cases for and against the record's legitimacy.

With this new temperature, Arndt said his former committee might look yet again at the 1913 record, which Cerveny said is based on peer reviewed research and is official.

While individual one-day records shouldn't be used to make a case for or against climate change, scientists say the overall context of more extreme weather and higher temperature shows global warming at work.

Death Valley, an austere landscape in the desert of southeastern California, includes Badwater Basin, which at 282 feet (85.9 meters) below sea level is the lowest point in North America. Nearby mountains also help trap heat there and the dry land helps temperatures get hotter, Cerveny said.

Summer heat is so routinely extreme that tourists are warned to drink at least a gallon (4 liters) of water each day, carry additional water in their cars, stay close to their vehicles and watch themselves and others for dizziness, nausea and other symptoms of potentially deadly heat illness.

"I've been in Death Valley for 122 (50 Celsius)," Cerveny said. "It's just like be enveloped in a thick hot blanket of air. There is just no relief to it."

John Antczak contributed to this report from Los Angeles.

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## Lawsuit against Trump, postal chief seeks proper funding

By LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Several individuals including candidates for public office sued President Donald Trump and the U.S. Postal Service and its new postmaster general in New York on Monday to ensure adequate funding for postal operations.

The lawsuit was filed in Manhattan federal court as multiple lawsuits were threatened across the country as a response to comments the president recently made and actions taken by newly appointed Postmaster General Louis DeJoy to change operations at post offices nationwide.

The lawsuit alleges that Trump and DeJoy are trying to ensure the postal service cannot reliably deliver election mail.

The lawsuit seeks a court order to force adequate funding of the postal service prior to November's election.

Among plaintiffs in the lawsuit was Mondaire Jones, an attorney and the Democratic nominee for the U.S. House of Representatives in New York's 17th Congressional District, representing Rockland and Westchester counties.

Other plaintiffs included New York State Sen. Alessandra Biaggi, a Democrat in a district representing the Bronx and Westchester and two Democratic candidates for New York State Assembly: Chris Burdick, who seeks to represent parts of Westchester County and Stephanie Keegan, who seeks parts of Putnam and Westchester counties.

Besides candidates for political office, plaintiffs included individuals who say they must vote by mail because they fear traveling or because they worry about contracting the coronavirus.

Those individuals included a Chicago resident who recently underwent a bone marrow transplant, a digital colorist for film and television who votes in California, an 85-year old Suffolk County, New York, voter at an assisted living facility and Mary Winton Green, a 97-year old retired philanthropist and Cook County, Illinois voter who first voted in 1944.

"If she cannot vote reliably by mail, she cannot vote at all," the lawsuit said, noting that her doctors have told her she cannot vote in person.

A message seeking comment was left with the Justice Department and the U.S. Postal Service.

As he left the White House Monday, Trump dismissed claims that he was trying to slow down mail processing.

"Wouldn't do that," he said. "I have encouraged everybody to speed up the mail, not slow the mail. And I also want to have a post office that runs without losing billions and billions of dollars a year."

The lawsuit was filed soon after House Speaker Nancy Pelosi called the House back into session over the crisis at the Postal Service.

Pelosi wants to take up legislation that would prohibit changes at the agency after DeJoy set off a nationwide outcry over delays, new prices and cutbacks just as millions of Americans will begin voting by mail to avoid polling places during the coronavirus outbreak.

The lawsuit cited various news reports and public comments by officials to support its claims that the postal service had imposed a hiring freeze, forbidden overtime and taken stiff measures to prevent steps that usually ameliorate staffing shortages.

## The home front: Virus stalks nurses after they leave work

By STEFANIE DAZIO Associated Press

FULLERTON, Calif. (AP) — There's red tape running along the floor of the coronavirus unit at St. Jude's Medical Center.

It's a clear line of demarcation. On one side, the cold zone, where only a surgical mask, scrubs and shoe coverings are necessary. On the other, the warm zone, where the gloves come on. And the N95 mask. And the gown. And the hairnet. And the face shield.

Another step through glass doors and it's into the hot zone, where coughing patients in green-patterned gowns await.

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It's outside this unit, in an area not marked by red tape or glass doors, that worries the nurses of "4 North" most.

It's home: Where their kids play and their spouses sleep. Where PPE are only letters of the alphabet for toddlers learning their ABCs. Where the coronavirus is called "The Big Cough" and the worldwide pandemic means you have to stay at home because there are "little monsters" everywhere.

For the nurses of "4 North," like their colleagues before them from New York and across the globe, home is fraught with uncertainty. Are they bringing the virus there? Are they exposing their partners and children? Should they isolate or quarantine themselves? Should they quit their jobs to keep their families safe?

As the pandemic rages on and cases climb throughout California, once again one of the nation's hot spots, the answers remain unclear.

In the meantime, the nurses forge ahead. They care for their patients during 12-hour shifts, taking temperatures and holding their hands through gloves and wondering when — if — it will all end. And then they go home, to a new routine of changing clothes in the garage and rushing inside to shower before they can kiss their kids goodnight.

The Associated Press spent several days in the coronavirus unit at St. Jude's and followed four nurses and their families after their shifts were over.

Here are their stories, from work and home:

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Sarvnaz Michel feared for her family's safety.

She had just given birth to her youngest son, Arshan, prematurely and was supposed to return to work as a nurse on Valentine's Day.

The coronavirus pandemic was slowly making its way to the United States. Information was scarce. The effects of the virus on babies, especially ones born premature, was unknown.

Michel took six weeks of unpaid maternity leave to buy time. She started a new job at St. Jude's in March, returning to a field very different from the one she had left before giving birth. Now, she doubles up on purple gloves and seals her cellphone and IDs in plastic.

"I cry almost every night," she said. "If it was only about me, it would be a different story."

Her older son, 2-year-old Leonidas, knows not to hug his mother when she first gets home. He'll sit outside as she showers after her shift, chattering about his day.

But there are things she can't tell him about hers, like the time she spent three hours alone with a patient as she died, holding her hand and brushing her forehead, telling the woman over and over again that her family loved her.

Like when her own uncle died in Iran, succumbing to the virus within two days without access to a ventilator.

Instead, she teaches her son how to give "air hugs" and reads to him from children's books with titles like "My Mom is a Nurse."

Her mother has never kissed Arshan, and Leonidas misses hugging his aunt. The toddler won't be attending preschool with his new backpack anytime soon.

"I love them to death but did we make a mistake, having kids and bringing them into this world?" Michel pauses. "I never doubted before."

"You just want to make sure they're safe."

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For the month of April, the Cushing family lived apart.

Spencer Cushing spent his days — and some of his nights — at St. Jude's, as a nurse caring for "step-down" patients recovering from the most serious COVID-19 symptoms. When his shifts were over, though, he wouldn't go home to his wife, Eleanor, and young sons, 3-year-old James and baby Walter.

The reports from New York were frightening: Hospitals overwhelmed. Medical staff working without proper protective equipment. The death toll climbing.

Was California next?

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"We weren't sure what was safe," Cushing said. "But we knew what we were doing was the safest."

So he rented his own apartment, returning there after his shifts as Eleanor put the boys to bed alone at their home.

James began sleepwalking. Walter grew four new teeth and learned to roll over. Eleanor gave up her own part-time night nursing shifts at St. Jude's so she could stay home with the kids.

On his days off, Cushing would come over with breakfast burritos and groceries and talk to his family from a distance. Sometimes he came back at night, when the boys were sleeping, to have a socially distanced date with Eleanor over a patio campfire.

In the meantime, life at the hospital remained a cycle of donning and doffing protective gear. Some patients recovered. Others didn't.

After a month, the Cushings decided Dad could come home. They felt safe with St. Jude's preparations and plans, and the feared shortage of protective equipment hadn't hit Southern California.

"You couldn't stay away for six months," Eleanor said to her husband. "We're going to be seeing these patients for a long time."

Cushing moved back in. Eleanor returned to working one night shift a week. James stopped sleepwalking and began preparing for his fourth birthday.

"I'm glad you're here, Dad," he would tell his father. "I'm really glad you're here."

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Michele Younkin watched a man die.

The 28-year-old nurse knew it was coming. Comfort care had been arranged. His family, covered in PPE, was there. The Ativan and morphine, medications to relax him, were ready.

It was time.

She took her 65-year-old patient off the machine that was helping him breathe. She held the man's wife close, their blue gowns and purple gloves matching. She shed tears that clung to her face shield.

"Times like these, you will remember this," Younkin's grandmother, a nurse during the polio epidemic, later told her. "You don't forget them."

A few days later, the young nurse's voice broke as she sat cross-legged on a blanket during a sunny day in the park with her husband and giggling infant son, Jackson.

Becoming a nurse was her lifelong dream. She was an EMT at 18 years old. She wanted to follow her grandmother's path.

Now her career has forced her to blur and blend her two lives. She agonizes over her every move in the hospital — "Did I put my gear on the right way, did I take it off the right way, did I touch something wrong accidentally?" — and leaves her shoes in the car after her shifts. She juggles decisions like breastfeeding during a pandemic and whether she should move out of her home to keep her son and husband safe.

"The thought of infecting either of them or my family," she said, her voice catching and her husband, Cody, rubbing her back. "It's crazy."

The pandemic has forced conversations that no young mother should have with a young father, just months after the birth of their first child. They talk about what would happen if she were infected and hospitalized.

"If I were to die, don't come," Younkin told her husband emphatically. "Don't risk yourselves."

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When Jackie Vargas is in the hospital, she feels safe. She's been a nurse for 11 years, and she knows what dangers lurk in the COVID-19 ward where she's been working long hours for months.

She wears her glasses instead of contacts so she doesn't have to touch her eyes. She swaps her sneakers out for glittery black clogs so she doesn't have to handle shoelaces. She seals her N95 mask in a Tupperware-like container between patients so it's stored away from germs in the air.

It's at home where the anxiety escapes, its symptoms infecting her whole family. Vargas' husband is a firefighter in Long Beach, and both are fighting to stay healthy so they can keep working.

So she doesn't hug her mother-in-law, who is taking care of Vargas' younger kids. Through a glass door,

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she visits her own mom and oldest daughter, Kaila, who has already had the virus and is staying with her grandma.

The ICU nurse who has cared for dozens of fevered, sick patients could do nothing more than monitor her 20-year-old daughter's fever over FaceTime. The necessary PPE — like face shields and gowns — is only for the hospital.

Watching her patients alone in the ICU, away from their families, can be emotionally draining.

She tries to soothe her mind and body with "the longest baths" filled with eucalyptus Epsom salt and lavender, as well as journaling and meditation. But sometimes it's hard to calm down.

"Some of the stuff gets to me, the sad stories," she said. "It takes me time to let go, let go of what I've seen."

Her mother, who begged her for years to become a nurse, now pleads for her only child to quit her job. They haven't touched in months, talking through that glass door as Vargas' youngest children splash in Grandma Rose's pool.

Her husband sleeps in the living room if he was exposed at work or one of her patients is very ill. If either of them contract COVID-19, the plan is to quarantine in a tent in the backyard.

Vargas worries about her son, Kai, and her 10-year-old daughter, Ava, watching them as they munch poolside on roasted chicken that Grandma Rose ordered from El Pollo Loco. She avoids kissing their faces and lingering too long at bedtime, but she knows it might not be enough.

"I don't know where there's a safe place for them to go," she lamented.

So she goes back to the hospital.

## How the AP covered ratification of the 19th Amendment

By The Associated Press undefined

The bulletin moved just after 1 p.m. on Aug. 18, 1920, conveying the breaking news that the 19th Amendment had been ratified giving women the constitutional right to vote.

The AP had been covering the slow progress toward suffrage around the country as state after state ratified the amendment in 1920, culminating with Tennessee's approval that put it past the threshold to become law.

The initial AP wire dispatches that day included jubilant reaction from around the country, including telegrams of congratulations from White House cabinet secretaries to the Tennessee governor.

The AP also quoted Maud Wood Park, chairwoman of the National League of Woman Voters, who declared: "Our slogan is 'Every woman a voter' in 1920."

As ratification of the amendment became more likely, the AP also sent newspaper subscribers an analysis in advance that was embargoed until after the measure passed. Here is that original story from 1920:

Ratification of the suffrage amendment to the Constitution ends a struggle which began in this country before the Colonies declared their independence. It will eventually enfranchise 25,000,000 women.

Woman suffrage first raised its voice in America in Maryland in 1647 when Mistress Margaret Brent, heir of Lord Calvert, demanded a place in the legislature of the colony as a property holder of wide extent. And in the days of the Revolution Abigail Adams wrote her husband John Adams at the Continental Congress which was framing the laws of the infant nation that, "if — in the new laws — particular care and attention are not paid to the ladies, we are determined to foment a rebellion and will not hold ourselves bound to obey any laws in which we have no voice."

Organized work for women suffrage began in the United States with the Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, N.Y. in 1848, which was called by Lucretia Mott and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, early leaders of Massachusetts and New York, in response to the indignation aroused by the refusal to permit women to take part in the anti-slavery convention of 1840. From the date of that convention the suffrage movement in the United States began the fight that lasted seventy years and ended with victory. Another convention followed in 1852 at Syracuse, N.Y., at which delegates from Canada were present and it was there that Susan B. Anthony assumed leadership of the cause to which she devoted her life.



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In 1869 the National Woman Suffrage Association, with Miss Anthony and Mrs. Stanton at its head, was formed in New York and in the same year the American Woman Suffrage Association was organized in Cleveland with Lucy Stone and Julia Ward Howe as its leaders. At first differing widely in policy, the National Association, working to put a suffrage amendment through the federal Congress and its sister organization bending its efforts to convert the country state by state, the two associations later united under the name of the National Woman Suffrage Association. The Association's drive for the vote was led, in turn by Mrs. Stanton, Miss Anthony, Dr. Anna Howard Shaw and Mrs. Carrie Chapman Catt, the latter of whom is now its president.

The nineteenth amendment, which bears her name, was drafted by Miss Anthony in 1875 and first introduced in Congress in 1878 by Senator A.A. Sargent of California; and it is in the same language that the new principle of the national law reads:

"Article---, Section 1. The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex.

"Section 2. Congress shall have power, by appropriate legislation, to enforce the provisions of this article."

The amendment holds the record of being before the country longer than any other successful amendment of the Constitution. It was introduced as the 16th Amendment and has been successively the 17th, 18th and 19th and has been before every session of Congress since its initial appearance.

During the first 35 years after its introduction into Congress the amendment made practically no progress and until seven years ago it had not been debated on the floor for 30 years. But the campaign for the movement was slowly but steadily gaining ground in the states.

Meanwhile Miss Anthony made a test of the right of women to cast the ballot by going to the polls and voting. She was arrested and convicted and, though she refused to pay her fine, was never jailed. She became, however, the forerunner of the "militants" who adopted the forceful tactics of the latter days of the campaign.

State after state gradually enfranchised its women citizens. Beginning with Wyoming in 1869, by 1919 sixteen states had given women the right to vote, and fourteen states had presidential suffrage previous to ratification of the amendment.

Militancy in the fight for suffrage in America made its appearance with the formation of the National Woman's Party in 1913. On the eve of President Wilson's inauguration, 8,000 women led by Alice Paul, now the chairman of the party, attempted to march from the Capitol to the White House. They were harassed by a hostile crowd which overran an unsympathetic police, and the capital of the United States had its first experience with suffrage rights.

Continuing their demonstrations over a period of seven years, members of the women's party picketed the White House with banners in their hands and served terms in jail for the disturbances of the peace which grew out of their parades and blockade of the executive mansion. During the last few months before the adoption of the amendment the militants redoubled their exertions. Several demonstrations were held on the steps of the Capitol and on New Year's Day, 1919, watch fires were lighted in front of the White House in which every speech made by President Wilson in Europe on Democracy and self-government was burned. The acts, however, were disavowed by the National Association.

Promptly with the passage of the amendment by the Congress, the suffrage forces turned their attention to ratification by the necessary two thirds of the states. More special sessions of the state legislatures were called to act upon the 19th than upon any other amendment.

Wisconsin and Michigan on June 10 were the first states to ratify, quickly followed on June 16 by New York, Kansas and Ohio.

Other states ratified in the following order: Illinois, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, Texas, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Montana, Nebraska, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Utah, California, Maine, North Dakota, South Dakota, Colorado, Rhode Island, Kentucky, Oregon, Indiana, Wyoming, Nevada, New Jersey, Idaho, Arizona, New Mexico, Oklahoma and West Virginia.

From its beginning in this country, the suffrage movement met determined opposition from women as

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well as from men. The first organized opposition on the part of women manifested itself in 1873 when a committee of prominent women presented a petition to Congress "protesting against the extension of suffrage to women." Mrs. W.T. Sherman, wife of the Civil War hero, headed the committee, of which Miss Catherine Ward Beecher, sister of the famous divine, Henry Ward Beecher, was a member. Various anti-suffrage organizations came into being subsequently, until the National Association opposed to women suffrage was formed in 1911 with Mrs. Arthur M. Dodge of New York as its first president. This body, step by step, fought the adoption and ratification of the amendment.

Full suffrage is enjoyed today by the women of 21 foreign countries including the new states of Czechoslovakia and Poland and the ancient nations of England, Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Now that the women of the United States have won the right equally with the men to take their part in the government of the republic the effect of the women's vote on the political life of the country remains for time to show. Many women are joining the old line parties with their men folk but the National Woman's Party holds its own convention in June and will draw up its platform for the coming campaign. First efforts probably will be directed to the laws on inheritance, divorce, guardianship and other laws alleged to discriminate against women.

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Associated Press Researcher Jennifer Farrar contributed to this report.

## Advocates plan birthday gift for the 19th Amendment: The ERA

By JOCELYN NOVECK AP National Writer

It was a huge step forward for American women when, exactly 100 years ago, they finally gained the guaranteed right to vote with ratification of the 19th Amendment. But to Alice Paul, the step wasn't nearly large enough.

Paul, a suffragist who'd waged hunger strikes and endured forced feedings in jail so women could get the vote, equipped herself with a law degree and got to work writing another constitutional amendment — one that would guarantee women equal rights under the law. She introduced that amendment — now known as the Equal Rights Amendment — in Congress in 1923.

Of course, the ERA, finally passed by Congress in 1972 only to stumble during a circuitous ratification effort, still isn't law. But feminist leaders are determined to change that now. And they feel cultural momentum is on their side for another victory nearly a century in the making.

"To call them suffragists, it sounds like they only wanted one thing," says Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority, of Paul and her colleagues. "The vote was an important step, but they didn't believe the vote alone would give women full equality."

"Basically, we want to finish this," she says. "The women's movement is not giving up until this thing is in the Constitution, period."

It was a joyful moment for Smeal and others when, in January, the Virginia state Legislature, under newly Democratic control, approved the amendment — becoming the crucial 38th state to cross the three-quarters threshold for ratification. But the move hardly resolved the issue, which will likely be decided in the courts over thorny procedural questions.

Still, for advocates, the Virginia vote was more than symbolic. "It's a new day," Smeal says. She and other activists are pinning their hopes on a Democratic presidential victory in November; Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, she says, are strong supporters of the amendment. The key change, she says, will be if the Democrats can take over the Senate, where current Majority Leader Mitch McConnell has expressed opposition to it.

ERA advocates were deeply disappointed, though, when in February, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg said she thought the entire state ratification process should be started over, dealing current efforts a potentially serious blow.

Polling has indicated public support for the amendment. A February poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research showed that roughly 3 in 4 Americans support the ERA.

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And while the poll did find a significant partisan gap in views of the ERA's adoption, majorities across party lines were in support. Nearly 9 in 10 Democrats, compared with about 6 in 10 Republicans, said they were in favor.

Another significant finding: Most Americans mistakenly thought such a provision already existed. Nearly the same amount that approved of the measure, 72%, incorrectly believed the Constitution now guarantees men and women equal rights under the law.

The heart of the amendment reads: "Equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of sex." For many advocates, the urgency comes down to pay equity, and economic equality in general. This is particularly important for women of color, argues Jennifer Carroll Foy, the Virginia delegate who co-sponsored the winning resolution there.

"True justice is economic justice," says Carroll Foy. The ERA, she says, "will not only help women but specifically women of color (in a world) where white women are paid (about) 80 cents to a white man's dollar but black women are paid 60, Latinas 50 and indigenous women less than that."

Carroll Foy, who recently announced a bid for governor, notes the suffrage victory in 1920 did not quite have the same meaning for Black women.

"We're celebrating the anniversary of the 19th Amendment that really only gave the right to vote to white women," she says. "Black women still had to suffer under Jim Crow practices and poll taxes and literacy tests. Even today in 2020, ... with voter suppression tactics alive and well, there are still full populations of black women who are just as disenfranchised as their foremothers were."

Both Carroll Foy and Smeal argue that the need for the ERA has proved yet more important during the current pandemic, in which so many essential workers are women, especially women of color.

"COVID-19 has exposed for the world what many of us already knew," Carroll Foy says. "Many women, especially women of color, make up service and retail industry jobs that don't provide them options of paid family medical leave, paid sick days, or telework, which places them on the front lines every single day. While we are calling these women essential, their paychecks say they are expendable."

The path of the ERA has been a torturous one. When finally passed by the Senate almost 50 years after Paul first proposed it, all that was needed was ratification by 38 states; a deadline was set for 1979.

Smeal remembers the joy of that day in March 1972. "We of course we were ecstatic, because that was it," she says of the moments after the Senate vote. "We had finally done it." But one person was not ecstatic — Paul herself, then in her late 80s.

At a celebration at the former headquarters of the National Woman's Party, which Paul co-founded, "One of our people ran back and found her at Susan B. Anthony's desk, and she was very, very upset," Smeal says. Paul felt the imposed time limit was a delaying trick by opponents from southern states. "She felt it was going to be very, very hard to pass," Smeal says.

Paul was right. Soon, some 30 states had ratified the ERA, but the '70s saw opposition form, led chiefly by conservative activist Phyllis Schlafly, who argued that women would lose gender-specific legal protections.

The deadline was later extended to 1982, but a needed final three states proved elusive. Momentum faded.

More recently, though, the current shifted again, as the #MeToo movement took hold and women's advocates, buoyed by Democratic victories in statehouses, particularly of female candidates, brought the ERA back to the front burner. Virginia became the 38th state after Nevada in 2017 and Illinois in 2018.

In February, the U.S. House voted overwhelmingly to remove the ratification deadline. But in the Republican-controlled Senate, McConnell is seen as unlikely to bring it to the floor. And legal wrangling continues.

What would Paul think if she knew that in 2020, women would still be agitating for the amendment that was once named for her?

"Unfortunately, I don't think she would be surprised," says Smeal. "She knew how hard this was."

But Smeal remains optimistic, buoyed by what she feels is a cultural shift. "Change is coming," she says.

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## Israelis eager to tighten ties to UAE after historic accord

By ARON HELLER Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — For eager Israelis, anticipation is mounting that Dubai's glitzy Burj Khalifa, the world's tallest building, will soon join the ranks of the Pyramids in Egypt and the ancient ruins in Jordan's Petra as a once-forbidden destination now within reach.

Last week, the United Arab Emirates said it would establish full diplomatic ties with Israel, which would make it just the third Arab nation to do so. The dramatic announcement set off a flurry of excitement in Israel, bringing years of covert business and security ties into the open and adding an appealing tourist destination for travel-happy Israelis.

Israeli TV stations have already dispatched reporters to the oil-rich Persian Gulf nation and local media has been filled with footage of Dubai's shiny skyscrapers, massive malls, artificial islands and sandy beaches. Newspapers have been blaring headlines of a "new Middle East" and publishing tutorial articles about the Emirati economy, landscape and royal family.

The U.S.-brokered deal has been billed as a diplomatic breakthrough that formalizes the burgeoning alliance against Iran. The UAE says it halted Israel's contentious plans to annex up to a third of the West Bank, land sought by the Palestinians.

But for many Israelis, the allure lies mostly in fulfilling their long-time yearning for acceptance in the Middle East.

The prospect of mutual embassies, expanding tourism to the Gulf and solidifying business opportunities with another country that shares its penchant for technology and innovation has Israelis salivating.

"We used to have to 'launder the products' and go through all kinds of intermediaries to do business with Arabs," said Gadi Nir, co-founder and chief executive of Bobo, an Israeli company that makes physiotherapy and rehabilitative products and just signed one of the first deals with a UAE company. "It was always indirect and artificial. Now we can get personal. We don't have to hide under the carpet anymore."

The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace estimates that quiet trade relations between Israel and the Gulf states already exceed \$1 billion a year, with a good chunk in security and cyber-related deals between Israel and the UAE. The figure and the scope of business now looks primed to surge.

Following Thursday's announcement, the Israeli company TeraGroup signed an agreement with an Emirati company, APEX National Investment, to conduct coronavirus research. Communication will also be a lot easier now that the UAE has opened its phone lines to Israel and stopped blocking access to Israeli websites.

The accord between the countries is supposed to include direct flights, less than a three-hour journey, though that could require approval from Saudi Arabia to use its airspace. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Monday work was underway to establish the flight paths.

"It will change Israeli air travel and the Israeli economy with a great wave of tourism in both directions, with investments of great magnitude," he said.

Israeli travel agents say they have already been swamped by calls from Emirati colleagues in anticipation. Israel's president, Reuven Rivlin, joined in the excitement Monday, dispatching a letter to Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan to formally invite him to visit Israel.

The head of Israel's Mossad spy agency was in Abu Dhabi on Monday, according to Israeli Channel 12, apparently to begin laying the groundwork for talks on normalization. And Netanyahu was interviewed for the first time on the Abu Dhabi-based Sky News Arabia channel, where he discussed the deal.

Thursday's surprise statement has instantly set off speculation over which Arab nation will be next, with attention focused on Bahrain, Oman and Sudan. On Monday, Oman and Israel said their foreign ministers had spoken and, according to Israel, agreed to "maintain direct and continual contact."

For Israel, Saudi Arabia — which still has not commented publicly on the UAE's decision — would be the ultimate prize.

The UAE, a federation of seven sheikhdoms, was a natural candidate to lead the way. Founded in 1971, it had no significant history with Jews, no shared border and no direct conflict with Israel.



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Emirati officials had allowed Israeli officials to visit in recent years and the Israeli national anthem was played after an athlete won gold in an Abu Dhabi judo tournament. Israel was set to take part later this year in Expo 2020, the world's fair being hosted by Dubai, but the event was postponed because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The UAE had been leading efforts to drop the Arab world's historic animosity toward Israel as part of burnishing a more progressive image in the West.

Outward-looking Israelis have long been fascinated with the UAE, particularly with the futuristic vibe of Dubai. Israelis who have foreign passports routinely visit, and over a dozen Israeli delegations have been granted special access.

Many Israelis hope ties with the UAE will evolve into a far warmer relationship than those with Egypt and Jordan, which made peace with Israel after decades of war and conflict.

Already there is Emirati interest not only in being customers but in co-investing in technology, said Erel Margalit, a leading Israeli venture capitalist.

"This is a significant political step that obviously needs to be augmented by additional steps of goodwill," said Margalit, a former Israeli lawmaker, who predicted it would bring Israel closer to other Arab nations. "This is not a 100-meter dash, it is a marathon. It's about building relationships for the long term."

One such group that has already made the leap was an Israeli teen delegation that was warmly welcomed at last year's unofficial "Robotics Olympics." Their unabashed display of the Israeli flag and Hebrew language gave the event a sense of a warm-up to normalization.

An eventual peace accord will open the gates to more Israelis, including many with roots in the Arab world. Already, one of Israel's most popular singers, Omer Adam, said he has received a personal invitation to visit from a member of the royal family and that plans are being made for him to stage a concert there.

Another group buoyed by the open diplomatic ties is the small Jewish community of the Emirates, which often found itself squeezed between its host nation and affinity for Israel.

The community has enjoyed the tacit approval of local authorities yet kept a low profile to avoid triggering reactions from the Arab street. The location of the community's primary synagogue had been a closely guarded secret. But now they are opening their doors to outsiders and expressing "gratitude and joy" over the normalization of relations.

Ross Kriel, the president of the Jewish Council of the Emirates, called the announcement a "sea change."

"I am so moved by the many messages of hope that I have received from Emirati friends of our community on hearing this news," he said. "Our community members look forward to direct flights to Israel and welcoming Israeli friends and visitors to the UAE."

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Follow Aron Heller at [www.twitter.com/aronhellerap](http://www.twitter.com/aronhellerap)

## AP Interview: Iraqi leader says country still needs US help

By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA Associated Press

BAGHDAD (AP) — Iraq's prime minister said Monday ahead of a much anticipated trip to Washington that his country still needs U.S. assistance to counter the threat posed by the Islamic State group and that his administration is committed to introducing security sector reforms as rogue militia groups stage near-daily attacks against the seat of his government.

Mustafa al-Kadhimi said in an exclusive interview with The Associated Press that Iraq currently does not need direct military support on the ground, and that the levels of help will depend on the changing nature of the threat.

Al-Kadhimi is slated to meet with President Donald Trump in Washington this week to conclude a strategic dialogue launched in June to reconfigure U.S.-Iraq ties.

Al-Kadhimi, who is backed by the United States, assumed office in May when Baghdad's relations with Washington were precarious. The January killing of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani and a top Iraqi militia leader, Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, in an American drone strike in Baghdad prompted demands by Shiite lawmakers that U.S. forces leave Iraq.

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Three years since Iraq declared victory over IS, sleeper cells continue to stage attacks across the country's north. Meanwhile, the U.S.-led coalition has been carrying out a planned drawdown this year as Iraqi security forces take the lead in combat and air raids.

"In the end, we will still need cooperation and assistance at levels that today might not require direct and military support, and support on the ground," al-Kadhimi said. He said the cooperation "will reflect the changing nature of terrorism's threat," including continued training and weapons support.

Al-Kadhimi has often had to walk a tightrope amid the U.S.-Iran rivalry. Asked if he was bringing any messages from Tehran following a recent visit there, he said: "We do not play the role of postman in Iraq."

Sworn in as premier in the wake of historic mass anti-government protests, al-Kadhimi's administration inherited a myriad of crises. State coffers in the crude-dependent country were slashed following a severe drop in oil prices, adding to the woes of an economy already struggling with the aftershocks of the global coronavirus pandemic.

State violence used to quell the mass protests that erupted in October brought public trust in the government to a new low. Tens of thousands of Iraqis marched decrying rampant government corruption, poor services and unemployment, leading to the resignation of the previous premier, Adel Abdul-Mahdi.

Al-Kadhimi's administration set a lofty agenda that included enacting economic reform, battling corruption, avenging protesters and bringing arms under the authority of the state. The latter has pitted his government against rogue Iranian-backed militia groups.

Three months in, his administration suffered setbacks. Protests by pensioners stymied plans to cut state salaries as revenues from oil dwindled. Virus cases continue to reach record highs. Militia groups taunt his government with near daily rocket attacks targeting Iraqi bases and the heavily fortified Green Zone, home to the U.S. Embassy, though they rarely cause casualties.

The recent assassination of prominent Iraqi commentator Hisham al-Hashimi and the kidnapping of German art curator Hella Mewis have led many to question the limits of his leadership. Many believe militias are behind those attacks.

Al-Kadhimi said these were perpetrated by those with an interest in profiting from chaos.

"These criminal acts are the result of many years of conflict," he said, blaming poor policies and improper management by his predecessors for undermining the authority of the state. "It is not surprising then that criminals work here and there to destabilize security."

"We are committed to reforming the security establishment and enhancing its ability to deal with these kinds of challenges and holding accountable those who fail to protect civilians and put an end to these outlawed groups," he said.

He said protection of diplomatic missions in the Green Zone and for the U.S.-led coalition had been fortified in response to the repeated rocket fire.

Still, holding to account al-Hashimi's killers remains a key test of his government. The investigation "continues, the case is open," and "many clues found," he said, but it remains confidential.

"My government has pledged to pursue the killers. It has made some progress in uncovering the killers of the demonstrators and has gained popular confidence in its aim to establish the truth," he said. "We will not stop until it is revealed."

Al-Kadhimi's rise, following months of political bickering and deadlock, did not pacify the demands of protesters. But he made it a point to portray himself as their champion: He selected civil activists among his close advisers, set next year as the date for early elections — a key demand of demonstrators — and when two protesters were killed recently he promised them justice within 72 hours.

Making good on a vow to investigate protester deaths, his office produced a number of total lives lost at 560, most under fire from Iraqi security forces.

Critics still say al-Kadhimi's response falls short. A raid on Iranian-backed Kataib Hezbollah, under suspicion of launching the rocket attacks in late June, ended with the release of all but one of those detained. An investigation into slain protesters did not make explicit who their killers actually were. Meanwhile, corruption is widespread.

But al-Kadhimi has plans to face even his toughest detractors.

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To deal with the economic crisis his government is working on a "white paper" to produce reforms. "We are preparing to form a supreme committee linked to the prime minister to follow up on major corruption cases, in addition to major crimes and assassinations."

## Belarus chaos brings a poker-faced response from Russia

By JIM HEINTZ Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — As Belarus experiences spasms of mass protests and a brutal police crackdown, its giant neighbor Russia has been uncharacteristically low key in its response.

When upheavals struck other former Soviet states — notably Georgia and Ukraine — Russia pounced on opportunities to increase its influence. Moscow portrayed those protests as Western-backed efforts that roped in both naive young people and extremist forces, including neo-Nazis, and quickly capitalized on Ukraine's 2014 chaos to annex Crimea and back separatist rebels in the east.

But if Russia has a strategy for Belarus, it's obscure.

Moscow has been tight-lipped about the protests that began after the Aug. 9 election in which official results showed Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko recorded an unlikely 80% landslide to win a sixth term. The first publicly known contact between Lukashenko and Russian President Vladimir Putin since the election came Saturday.

It's possible that the sustained unrest caught the Kremlin flatfooted, expecting the trouble would be short-lived. Or it could be that Russia is struggling to see a clear path forward given that relations between Moscow and Minsk are a shape-shifting mix of cooperation and suspicion.

Previous presidential elections that gave similarly outsized victories to Lukashenko were met with protests, but they were smaller, lasted only a short time, drew largely young crowds and centered in the capital.

This year's outburst has been larger, affected many parts of the country, and, significantly, includes factory hands and other working-class people. The diversity of the crowds and their huge size — more than 200,000 in Minsk on Sunday by some estimates — undercuts the ability of both the Belarusian establishment and Russia to argue that the protests aren't representative of the country as a whole.

Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova last week complained of "clear attempts of external interference in the affairs of a sovereign state to split society" in Belarus, without elaborating. But the brevity of the comment from a woman known for lengthy hectoring made it seem almost cursory; she used more words to discuss Russian journalists detained in the protests.

Lukashenko, too, on Friday claimed that foreign actors from several Western countries, as well as the Russian opposition, were driving the protests. Before the vote, Belarusian authorities arrested 33 Russian security contractors on charges of planning to foment unrest ahead of the election. They let them go last week in an apparent bid to mend the rift with Moscow.

But unlike during the 2003 Rose Revolution in Georgia and the 2004 and 2014 mass protests in Ukraine, there has been little anti-Russia sentiment expressed in Belarus.

Russia and Belarus have an unusually close official relationship, but one in which serious spats often emerge. The two countries signed a union agreement in 1997 calling for close political, economic and military ties, but that stops short of a full merger.

Still, Lukashenko has frequently accused Russia of trying to deprive Belarus of its independence, and he has made sporadic feints at improving relations with the West.

On Saturday, Lukashenko called Putin to consult on the crisis and announced that the Russian leader had agreed to provide security assistance if asked. However, a terse Kremlin readout of the call only emphasized the importance of preserving the union agreement but didn't mention the possibility of security assistance or give any other clues about Russia's stance.

Given Lukashenko's concerns about Russia and his monumental ego, he would have to swallow hard to effectively admit weakness and turn to Russia for help. Russia in turn could exploit his supplicant position to try to marginalize him or even ease him out of power in favor of a less-mercurial leader.

The presence of the Russian mercenaries and the close Russia ties of an opposition aspirant who was denied a place on the ballot and jailed — Viktor Babariko, former head of a Russia-owned bank — hint

that Russia may have been laying a long-game strategy to undermine Lukashenko.

Russia has not indicated how much or what kind of security help it would be willing to send to Belarus if asked. Separately, the Collective Security Treaty Organization, a six-country alliance including Russia and Belarus, said a Belarusian request for assistance would have to be examined by all members, a possible indication of hesitance to rush to Lukashenko's aid.

In the view of analyst Maxim Samorukov, the belief that Russia wants to push out Lukashenko is far-fetched.

"Russia's overriding priority in Belarus is to forestall the country's integration with the West, and the toxic figure of Lukashenko is the best possible obstacle to that process," he wrote in a commentary for the Carnegie Moscow Center.

"His instincts and luck have kept him afloat, as both Russia and the West believe the risks from his downfall would outweigh the benefits," Samorukov said.

But Timothy Ash, an analyst at BlueBay Asset Management, suggests that the geopolitical timing might be right for Putin to be aggressive about Belarus in light of the looming U.S. presidential election in which President Donald Trump faces presumptive Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

"Putin might see all this in the light of U.S. elections — if he is going to move against Belarus, then the timing is great, while Trump is still in power, weak, lacking focus and leadership and before the Russia hawks around Biden come back in," he wrote in a commentary.

## Sharp rise in virus cases in Lebanon after deadly port blast

By BASSEM MROUE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Lebanon is facing a surge in coronavirus cases after a devastating blast at the Beirut port earlier this month killed scores and wounded thousands, prompting medical officials on Monday to call for a two-week lockdown to try to contain the pandemic.

Virus numbers were expected to rise following the Aug. 4, explosion of nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate stored at the port. Around 180 people were killed, more than 6,000 wounded and a quarter of a million left with homes unfit to live in. The blast overwhelmed the city's hospitals and also badly damaged two that had a key role in handling virus cases.

Medical officials had warned of the dangers of crowding at hospitals in the aftermath of the explosion, at funerals, or as people searched through the rubble. Protests and demonstrations also broke out after the blast as Lebanese vented their anger at authorities.

On Monday, the Health Ministry registered 456 new cases and two deaths, a new daily record after Sunday's 439 virus cases and six fatalities. The new infections bring to 9,337 the total number of cases in the small country of just over 5 million. Lebanon has reported a total of 105 fatalities.

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

The U.N. force deployed in southern Lebanon along the border with Israel reported 22 of its peacekeepers have tested positive. UNIFIL said it has been tracing and testing personnel who had potentially been in direct contact with an individual who tested positive last week. It says none of the peacekeepers have experienced symptoms.

Separately, the U.N. agency for Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said four Palestinians died of the virus over the weekend — doubling to eight the number of fatalities in Palestinian refugee camps.

Strict measures imposed last spring had kept the number of cases under control in Lebanon, but they surged after a lockdown and nighttime curfew were lifted and the country's only international airport reopened in early July.

Health Minister Hamad Hassan warned the true number could be far higher. Following a meeting Monday with medical officials who demanded another two-week lockdown, he urged everyone to wear masks, saying the virus has now spread in every city and almost every village in Lebanon.



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"It is a matter of life and death," Hassan said, adding that soon private and public hospitals might not be able to accept more patients.

Lebanon's health sector has been challenged by the pandemic that hit amid an unprecedented economic and financial crisis. The explosion in Beirut's port only increased the pressure on Beirut's hospitals, knocking out at least three of them.

Dr. Firas Abiad, director general of Rafik Hariri University Hospital, which is leading the fight against coronavirus, described the situation as "extremely worrisome," warning that without a lockdown, the numbers will continue to rise "overwhelming the hospital capacity."

Hassan urged every expatriate or foreigner returning to Lebanon not to leave their hotels until they are tested and cleared. People traveling to Lebanon will be required to be tested both before and upon arrival.

He also called for field hospitals and said some public hospitals will exclusively handle virus patients.

Petra Houry, medical adviser to outgoing Prime Minister Hassan Diab, tweeted that the COVID-19 positive rate has increased from 2.1% to 5.6% in just four weeks.

"The virus doesn't differentiate between us," she said, warning that a 5% rate is a "real threat."

Iran, which has the region's largest and deadliest coronavirus outbreak, meanwhile reported 165 more deaths, bringing its overall death toll to 19,804. The Health Ministry has reported a total of 345,450 cases.

## Quarantine requirements may delay return to in-person school

By PAT EATON-ROBB and MIKE CATALINI Associated Press

Shannon Silver had planned to take her family on a trip from her home in Connecticut to visit relatives in Ohio just before the start of the school year for her two children.

But she and her husband reversed course when people traveling from Ohio were added to a list of those who must quarantine for 14 days upon entering Connecticut. That requirement might have meant her 10-year-old son would miss the first day of sixth grade at St. Matthew School in Bristol.

"We weren't going to do that, especially at the beginning of the school year," Silver said. "Plus, he really didn't want to miss the last two weeks of summer by having to quarantine."

The family instead went to see other relatives in Colorado, which wasn't on the list.

As states around the country require visitors from areas with high rates of coronavirus infections to quarantine upon arrival, children taking end-of-summer vacations to hot spots are facing the possibility of being forced to skip the start of in-person learning at their schools.

More than a dozen states have such travel advisories, including many in the Northeast along with Alaska, Kentucky and Ohio.

More than 30 states are on the list issued by Connecticut, New York and New Jersey in an attempt to prevent another surge of COVID-19 in the region, which was among the hardest hit early in the pandemic. As schools in the Northeast prepare to open early next month, officials are urging parents to be mindful of that guidance while planning any Labor Day getaways.

In Connecticut, where infection numbers are among the lowest in the country, more than half of schools are planning to open for in-person learning. Gov. Ned Lamont made it clear this month that neither students nor teachers would be exempt from quarantine if they visit a hot spot.

"Don't go to South Florida; don't go to Phoenix, Arizona, and skip El Paso, Texas, and I would stay away from Southern California for a while too," said Lamont, a Democrat. "I would stay close to home. I think there are some amazing places you can visit here and do it a lot safer."

Bill Smith, a high school teacher at Southern Regional High School in Ocean County, New Jersey, said he canceled a research trip that was planned as part of his graduate degree from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland.

"This is the first summer in years that I have not traveled outside of the state," Smith said. "I have been more than happy to follow any and all guidelines that help protect the health and safety of those around me."

Pat Toben-Cropper, of Herndon, Virginia, is planning to drive her daughter, Kylie Cropper, back to college

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this month at the Institute of Art and Design at New England College in Manchester, New Hampshire. She said because of the travel advisories in the Northeast, she was unable to get a hotel reservation north of Pennsylvania.

"It became this logistical nightmare," she said.

But enforcing the rules can be challenging. In New Jersey, Democratic Gov. Phil Murphy said recently he can't bar people from traveling and hoped they would heed the quarantine advice. New York has been stopping some out-of-state travelers at checkpoints to ensure they are abiding by the quarantine — a move that has come under criticism.

Both New York and New Jersey also are holding out hope for many school districts to offer in-person learning this fall, although Murphy recently authorized the state's more than 600 school districts to implement virtual options.

New Jersey's school reopening plan doesn't directly address students who are in quarantine when the year begins.

Some school districts, like Willingboro, have reminded families to quarantine if they're returning from states listed on the advisory. Others, like the state's largest in Newark, don't directly mention the advisory in their return-to-school plans.

Nancy Deering, the ombudsman for Newark's public schools, said the plan is "fluid" and guidance could be added at some point. She pointed to the fact that teachers and staff must produce a negative test and undergo a symptom screening to return to school in person.

But schools will simply have to trust that students who have traveled to hot spots are coming clean and following the rules.

Walter Willett, the superintendent of schools in Tolland, Connecticut, said he fears that students might lie, so they can attend in-person classes. His schools are making sure that every class has an online learning option and will try to ensure kids don't miss a beat if they need to quarantine.

"We have to be vigilant in protecting each other and, please, if you are in one of these situations, know that you will be supported. It's important for the families to know that we have remote learning, online learning for them and that it's not a permanent thing," Willett said.

Many of the travel restrictions in place are moving targets, complicating planning for families. Last week, for instance, a handful of states were removed — including nearby Rhode Island and the Silvers' destination of Ohio — and a few more added to the tristate area's list.

Erin McCall, of Avon, Connecticut, said she also was going to postpone a trip to Ohio, before it was removed from the list. She said she now plans to keep her son home this fall anyway because the safety line always seems to be moving.

"Everything is put on hold, vacation, going back to school, because everything is changing so rapidly," she said. "If I had more confidence in the school system and its ability to sterilize everything and make everything safe, then maybe I'd change my plans. But I don't."

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This story has been corrected to show that the name of one of the writers is Mike Catalini, not Mike Catlaini.

## Q&A: What's happening at the US Postal Service, and why?

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

The U.S. Postal Service is warning states it cannot guarantee that all ballots cast by mail for the Nov. 3 election will arrive in time to be counted, even if ballots are mailed by state deadlines. That's raising the possibility that millions of voters could be disenfranchised.

It's the latest chaotic and confusing development involving the agency, which has found itself in the middle of a high-stakes election year debate over who gets to vote in America, and how. Those questions are particularly potent in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic, which has led many Americans to consider voting by mail instead of heading to in-person polling places.

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The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommends mail ballots as a way to vote without risking exposure to the virus at the polls. But President Donald Trump has baselessly excoriated mail ballots as fraudulent, worried that an increase could cost him the election. Democrats have been more likely than Republicans to vote by mail in primary contests held so far this year.

Some questions and answers about what's going on with the post office and the upcoming election:  
WHAT'S WRONG WITH THE POST OFFICE?

The Post Office has lost money for years, though advocates note it's a government service rather than a profit-maximizing business.

In June, Louis DeJoy, a Republican donor and logistics company executive, took over as the new postmaster general and Trump tasked him with trying to make the Postal Service more profitable. Doing so would also squeeze businesses such as Amazon. Its chief executive, Jeff Bezos, has come under criticism from Trump because of the coverage the president has received from The Washington Post, which Bezos owns.

DeJoy cut overtime, late delivery trips and other expenses that ensure mail arrives at its destination on time. The result has been a national slowdown of mail.

The Postal Service is hoping for a \$10 billion infusion from Congress to continue operating, but talks between Democrats and Republicans over a broad pandemic relief package that could have included that money have broken down.

On Thursday, Trump frankly acknowledged that he's starving the postal service of that money to make it harder to process an expected surge of mail-in ballots. Trump on Saturday attempted to re-calibrate his position. He said that he supports more funding for the postal service but refuses to capitulate to other parts of the Democrats' relief package — including funding for cash-strapped states.

WHY DOES THIS MATTER IN AN ELECTION YEAR?

Mail-in ballots have exploded in popularity since the pandemic spread in mid-March, at the peak of primary season. Some states have seen the demand for mail voting increase fivefold or more during the primaries. Election officials are bracing for the possibility that half of all voters — or even more — will cast ballots by mail in November.

Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Utah and Washington state have universal mail voting, and California, Nevada and Vermont are starting universal mail voting in November. But the rest have little experience with such a volume of ballots cast through the mail.

Timely mail is key to voting by mail. In states without universal mail-in voting, applications for mail ballots are generally sent out to voters by mail. They're returned, again, by mail. Then the actual ballots are sent to voters by mail, and returned, again, by mail, usually by Election Day.

Late last month, Thomas J. Marshall, the post office's general counsel and executive vice president, sent states a letter warning that many of them have deadlines too tight to meet in this new world of slower mail.

Pennsylvania, for example, allows voters to request a mail ballot by Oct. 27. Marshall warned that voters there should put already completed ballots in the mail by that date to ensure they arrive by Nov. 3.

This has been a potential problem since the Obama administration, when the post office relaxed standards for when mail had to arrive. But it's particularly acute when the volume of mail ballots is expected to explode in states such as Pennsylvania, which only approved an expansion of mail voting late last year. It's also acute when the president has said openly he wants to limit votes by his rivals by keeping them from voting by mail.

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?

It's unclear. The first question is whether there will be a coronavirus relief bill that could help fund the post office. Republicans and Democrats are far apart on the measure and Congress has gone home for a few weeks.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is calling the chamber back into session this week to address the Postal Service.

A vote is expected Saturday on legislation, the "Delivering for America Act," that would prohibit any changes in mail delivery or services for 2020. Congress is on summer recess and had not been expected

to return until September. The Senate remains away.

If there's no resolution of the coronavirus aid, the matter is sure to come up during negotiations in September to continue to fund the federal government. The government will shut down if Trump doesn't sign a funding bill by Sept. 30.

States can also act to change their mail balloting deadlines. That's what Pennsylvania did this past week, with the state asking a court to move the deadline for receiving mail ballots back to three days after the Nov. 3 vote, provided the ballots were placed in the mail before polls close on Election Day.

Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren and some other Democratic lawmakers are also seeking a review of DeJoy's policy changes. In response to the letter, spokeswoman Agapi Doulaveris of the U.S. Postal Service Office of Inspector General said the office is "conducting a body of work to address the concerns raised." She declined to elaborate.

Associated Press writers Anthony Izaguirre in Charleston, West Virginia, and Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

## Politics slows flow of US virus funds to local public health

By MICHELLE R. SMITH, LAUREN WEBER, HANNAH RECHT and LAURA UNGAR Associated Press and Kaiser Health News

As the novel coronavirus began to spread through Minneapolis this spring, Health Commissioner Gretchen Musicant tore up her budget to find funds to combat the crisis. Money for test kits. Money to administer tests. Money to hire contact tracers. And yet even more money for a service that helps tracers communicate with residents in dozens of languages.

While Musicant diverted workers from violence prevention and other core programs to the COVID-19 response, state officials debated how to distribute \$1.87 billion Minnesota received in federal aid.

As she waited, the Minnesota Zoo got \$6 million in federal money to continue operations, and a debt collection company outside Minneapolis received at least \$5 million from the federal Paycheck Protection Program, according to federal data.

It was not until Aug. 5 — months after Congress approved aid for the pandemic — that Musicant's department finally received \$1.7 million, the equivalent of \$4 per Minneapolis resident.

"It's more a hope and a prayer that we'll have enough money," Musicant said.

Since the pandemic began, Congress has set aside trillions of dollars to ease the crisis. A joint Kaiser Health News and Associated Press investigation finds that many communities with big outbreaks have spent little of that federal money on local public health departments for work such as testing and contact tracing. Others, like in Minnesota, were slow to do so.

For example, the states, territories and 154 large cities and counties that received allotments from the \$150 billion Coronavirus Relief Fund reported spending only 25% of it through June 30, according to reports that recipients submitted to the U.S. Treasury Department.

Many localities have deployed more money since that June 30 reporting deadline, and both Republican and Democratic governors say they need more to avoid layoffs and cuts to vital state services. Still, as cases in the U.S. top 5.4 million and confirmed deaths soar past 170,000, Republicans in Congress are pointing to the slow spending to argue against sending more money to state and local governments to help with their pandemic response.

"States and localities have only spent about a fourth of the money we already sent them in the springtime," Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said Tuesday. Congressional Democrats' efforts to get more money for states, he said, "aren't based on math. They aren't based on the pandemic."

Negotiations over a new pandemic relief bill broke down last week, in part because Democrats and Republicans could not agree on funding for state and local governments.

KHN and the AP requested detailed spending breakdowns from recipients of money from the Coronavirus Relief Fund — created in March as part of the \$1.9 trillion CARES Act — and received responses from 23



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states and 62 cities and counties. Those entities dedicated 23% of their spending from the fund through June to public health and 7% to public health and safety payroll.

An additional 22% was transferred to local governments, some of which will eventually pass it down to health departments. The rest went to other priorities, such as distance learning.

So little money has flowed to some local health departments for many reasons: Bureaucracy has bogged things down, politics have crept into the process, and understaffed departments have struggled to take time away from critical needs to navigate the red tape required to justify asking for extra dollars.

"It does not make sense to me how anyone thinks this is a way to do business," said E. Oscar Alleyne, chief of programs and services at the National Association of County and City Health Officials. "We are never going to get ahead of the pandemic response if we are still handicapped."

Last month, KHN and the AP detailed how state and local public health departments across the U.S. have been starved for decades. Over 38,000 public health worker jobs have been lost since 2008, and per capita spending on local health departments has been cut by 18% since 2010. That's left them underfunded and without adequate resources to confront the coronavirus pandemic.

"Public health has been cut and cut and cut over the years, but we're so valuable every time you turn on the television," said Jan Morrow, the director and 41-year veteran of Ripley County health department in rural Missouri. "We are picking up all the pieces, but the money is not there. They've cut our budget until there's nothing left."

## POLITICS AND RED TAPE

Why did the Minneapolis health department have to wait so long for CARES Act money?

Congress mandated that the Coronavirus Relief Fund be distributed to states and local governments based on population. Minneapolis, with 430,000 residents, missed the threshold of 500,000 people that would have allowed it to receive money directly.

The state of Minnesota, however, received \$1.87 billion, a portion of which was meant to be sent to local communities. Lawmakers initially sent some state money to tide communities over until the federal money came through — the Minneapolis health department got about \$430,000 in state money to help pay for things like testing.

But when it came time to decide how to use the CARES Act money, lawmakers in Minnesota's Republican-controlled Senate and Democratic-controlled House were at loggerheads.

Myron Frans, commissioner of Minnesota Management and Budget, said that disagreement, on top of the economic crisis and pandemic, left the legislature in turmoil.

Then following the police killing of George Floyd, the city erupted in protests over racial injustice, making a difficult situation even more challenging.

Democratic Gov. Tim Walz favored targeting some of the money to harder-hit communities, a move that might have helped Minneapolis, where cases have surged since mid-July. But lawmakers couldn't agree. Negotiations dragged on, and a special session merely prolonged the standoff.

Finally, the governor divvied up the money using a population-based formula developed earlier by Republican and Democratic legislative leaders that did not take into account COVID-19 caseloads or racial disparities.

"We knew we needed to get it out the door," Frans said.

The state then sent hundreds of millions of dollars to local communities. Still, even after the money got to Minneapolis a month ago, Musicant had to wait as city leaders made difficult choices about how to spend the money as the economy cratered and the list of needs grew.

"Even when it gets to the local government, you still have to figure out how to get it to local public health," Musicant said.

Meanwhile, some in Minneapolis have noticed a lack of services. Dr. Jackie Kawiecki has been providing help to people at a volunteer medical station near the place where Floyd was killed — an area that at times has drawn hundreds or thousands of people per day. She said the city did not do enough free, easy-to-access testing in its neighborhoods this summer.

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"I still don't think that the amount of testing offered is adequate, from a public health standpoint," Kawiecki said.

A coalition of groups that includes the National Governors Association has blamed the spending delays on the federal government, saying the final guidance on how states could spend the money came late in June, shortly before the reporting period ended. The coalition said state and local governments had moved "expeditiously and responsibly" to use the money as they deal with skyrocketing costs for health care, emergency response and other vital programs.

New York's Nassau County was among six counties, cities and states that had spent at least 75% of its funds by June 30.

While most of the money was not spent before then, the National Association of State Budget Officers says a July 23 survey of 45 states and territories found they had allocated, or set aside, an average of 74% of the money.

But if they have, that money has been slow to make it to many local health departments.

As of mid-July in Missouri, at least 50 local health departments had yet to receive any of the federal money they requested, according to a state survey. The money must first flow through local county commissioners, some of whom aren't keen on sending money to public health agencies.

"You closed their businesses down in order to save their people's lives and so that hurt the economy," said Larry Jones, executive director for the Missouri Center for Public Health Excellence, an organization of public health leaders. "So they're mad at you and don't want to give you money."

The winding path federal money takes as it makes its way to states and cities also could exacerbate the stark economic and health inequalities in the U.S. if equity isn't considered in decision-making, said Wizdom Powell, director of the University of Connecticut Health Disparities Institute.

"Problems are so vast you could unintentionally further entrench inequities just by how you distribute funds," Powell said.

## 'EVERYTHING FELL BEHIND'

The amounts eventually distributed can induce head-scratching.

Some cities received large federal grants, including Louisville, Kentucky, whose health department was given \$42 million by April, more than doubling its annual budget. Because of the way the money was distributed, Louisville's health department alone received more money from the CARES Act than the entire government of the city of Minneapolis, which received \$32 million in total.

Philadelphia's health department was awarded \$100 million from a separate fund from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Honolulu County, where cases have remained relatively low, received \$124,454 for every positive COVID-19 case it had reported as of Aug. 9, while El Paso County in Texas got just \$1,685 per case. Multnomah County, Oregon — with nearly a quarter of its state's COVID-19 cases — landed only 2%, or \$28 million, of the state's \$1.6 billion allotment.

Rural Saline County in Missouri received the same funding as counties of similar size, even though the virus hit the area particularly hard. In April, outbreaks began tearing through a Cargill meatpacking plant and a local factory. By late May, the health department confirmed 12 positive cases at the local jail.

Tara Brewer, Saline's health department administrator, said phone lines were ringing off the hook, jamming the system. Eventually, several department employees handed out their personal cell phone numbers to take calls from residents looking to be tested or seeking care for coronavirus symptoms.

"Everything fell behind," Brewer said.

The school vaccination clinic in April was canceled, and a staffer who works as a Spanish translator for the Women, Infants and Children nutritional program was enlisted to contact trace for additional coronavirus exposures. All food inspections stopped.

It was late July when \$250,000 in federal CARES Act money finally reached the 11-person health department, Brewer said — four months after Congress approved the spending and three months after the county's first outbreak.

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That was far too late for Brewer to hire the army of contact tracers that might have helped slow the spread of the virus back in April. She said the money already has been spent on antibody testing and reimbursements for groceries and medical equipment the department had bought for quarantined residents.

Another problem: Some local health officials say that the laborious process required to qualify for some of the federal aid discourages overworked public health officials from even trying to secure more money and that funds can be uneven in arriving.

Lisa Macon Harrison, public health director for Granville Vance Public Health in rural Oxford, North Carolina, said it's tough to watch major hospital systems — some of which are sitting on billions in reserves — receive direct deposits, while her department received only about \$122,000 through three grants by the end of July. Her team filled out a 25-page application just to get one of them.

She is now waiting to receive an estimated \$400,000 more. By contrast, the Duke University Hospital System, which includes a facility that serves Granville, already has received over \$67.3 million from the federal Provider Relief Fund.

"I just don't understand the extra layers of onus for the bureaucracy, especially if hundreds of millions of dollars are going to the hospitals and we have to be responsible to apply for 50 grants," she said.

The money comes from dozens of funds, including several programs within the CARES Act. Nebraska alone received money from 76 federal COVID relief funding sources.

Robert Miller, director of health for the Eastern Highlands Health District in Connecticut, which covers 10 towns, received \$29,596 of the \$2.5 million the state distributed to local departments from the CDC fund and nothing from CARES. It was only enough to pay for some contact tracing and employee mileage.

Miller said that he could theoretically apply for a little more from the Federal Emergency Management Agency, but that the reporting requirements — which include collecting every receipt — are extremely cumbersome for an already overburdened department.

So he wonders: "Is the squeeze worth the juice?"

Back in Minneapolis, Musicant said the new money from CARES allowed the department to run a free COVID-19 testing site Saturday, at a church that serves the Hispanic community about a mile from the site of Floyd's killing.

It will take more money to do everything the community needs, she says, but with Congress deadlocked, she's not sure they'll get it anytime soon.

Smith is a writer for The Associated Press, and Weber, Recht and Ungar are writers for KHN. AP writers Camille Fassett and Steve Karnowski contributed to this report.

This story is a collaboration between The Associated Press and KHN, which is a nonprofit news service covering health issues. It is an editorially independent program of the Kaiser Family Foundation. KHN is not affiliated with Kaiser Permanente.

## Sons use e-books to help virus-stricken dad, other patients

By JILL LAWLESS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Geoff Woolf gave his sons a love for literature. When he got sick with COVID-19, they turned to books to help him — and others.

The 73-year-old retired lawyer was hospitalized in London in March, and within days he was on a ventilator in intensive care. Unable to visit, his family could only watch from afar with frustration and dismay.

Then sons Nicky, a 33-year-old journalist, and Sam, a 28-year-old actor, had an idea: Maybe literature could help him and other patients.

"He always said if he was in hospital for a long time, he would be able to deal if he had a book," Sam said.

The brothers loaded an e-reader with Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice" — "his comfort read," according to Sam — and played it for their unconscious father.

Doctors said, "We can't tell you he'll definitely hear it. But we also can't tell you he won't," Sam said. "There is power in hearing a voice."

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The brothers set out to acquire more devices for other patients. As they came to terms with the likelihood of losing their father, they saw the project, which they named Books for Dad, as a legacy.

Nicky and Sam recruited a team of volunteers to load e-readers, donated by audiobooks company Audible, with content, including classic novels, thrillers and podcasts. They delivered an initial batch of 20 — disinfected and individually bagged — to the hospital treating their father, along with single-use headphones donated by British Airways. Soon they were distributing dozens more to other hospitals around the U.K.

Books for Dad is a boon to hospitals looking for ways to keep patients stimulated. Often patients are too sick to read a book, and some don't have their own electronic devices. Even if they do, patchy WiFi can hamper audio and video streaming.

Lisa Anderton, head of patient experience at University College London Hospital, said the "brilliant" initiative can help both coronavirus and other patients.

Hospitalization is stressful even in the best of times, and the ability to "pop your headphones on and just listen to something that takes you somewhere else, I think really changes how people feel and how people cope with what can be an alien as well as a very busy environment," Anderton said.

From the initial donation, Books for Dad has kept growing, and the brothers plan to distribute 5,000 e-readers to British hospitals over the next six months and add books for children and young adults to their content.

As the project expanded, Geoff Woolf had secondary infections, organ failure and a major stroke. Doctors began to discuss the possibility of switching off life support.

Then, after almost four months of hospitalization including 67 days on a ventilator, he began to improve. In late July he was discharged from Whittington Hospital, workers applauding as he was wheeled out of the ward en route to a specialized neurological hospital where his recovery continues.

His sons know he has a long road ahead.

"But considering the place where he was, which was 'Goodbye,' it is remarkable that he has come back to a state where he is aware, he understands what's going on," Sam said. "Communication is very difficult. But he has comprehension, and with comprehension there's the capacity for a life worth living."

What the brothers once thought would be a project honoring a life cut short has now become a legacy of their love for their father, they said.

"And how much his love of literature meant to us," Nicky added, "and how meaningful it was to be able to pass that on to other people."

While nonstop news about the effects of the coronavirus has become commonplace, so, too, have tales of kindness. "One Good Thing" is a series of AP stories focusing on glimmers of joy and benevolence in a dark time. Read the series here: <https://apnews.com/OneGoodThing>

## Black creatives in Italian fashion demand cultural reform

By COLLEEN BARRY Associated Press

MILAN (AP) — The only Black designer belonging to Italy's influential fashion council is demanding a "long overdue cultural reform" from her colleagues under the slogan: Do Black Lives Matter in Italy?

The conversation has gotten off to a rocky start.

Stella Jean, a Haitian-Italian designer born and raised in Rome, launched her appeal this summer. She asked the Italian National Fashion Chamber and the global powerhouses steering it, including Prada, Ferragamo and Zegna, to back their social media pledges supporting the Black Lives Matter movement with concrete, transparent commitments toward greater racial diversity.

In response, Jean received a letter from the council president saying that addressing racial disparity within Italian fashion was not within the body's area of responsibility, despite the fact that members had backed a diversity manifesto in December. According to the letter, such initiatives "pertain instead to parliament, the government or any other bodies."

Exasperated, Jean has decided not to preview a runway collection at Milan Fashion Week until "they



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demonstrate awareness of the problem.”

“When you talk with them, they have no bad intentions, I know them. But they say something like ‘What are you talking about, Stella? We have never heard about racism in Italy. It is not an Italian story, it is about the U.S., the U.K., other countries. Not Italy,’” Jean told The Associated Press. “My response is: ‘Why do you see all these people filling squares from the north to the south of this country for Black Lives Matter, this entire generation of invisible new Italians?’”

Soccer, another important Italian cultural institution, recognized that Italy has a problem with racism and worked to eliminate it.

Racially charged gaffes by Italian fashion houses have been well-documented, from Gucci’s Blackface sweater to Prada’s Little Black Sambo bag charm to Dolce&Gabbana videos that were seen by many as mocking Asians. This summer, Marni, another major fashion house, apologized after being called out for its images of a Black man with chains around his ankles.

Jean and the co-author of her appeal, Milan-based U.S. designer Edward Buchanan, said in interviews that the issue is deeper than just culturally insensitive designs. But they say those gaffes highlight the lack of diversity in Italian fashion houses and the “pervasive racism and prejudice” in the industry despite “significant funds allocated to provide sensitive training.”

“These ‘mistakes’ can be better recognized, labeled and addressed as ‘decisions,’” Jean asserts.

Their push is to open doors to Black Italians who would like to work in fashion but don’t see themselves represented and don’t see a way in. They also are demanding data on Black personnel employed in decision-making roles in fashion houses — not models or marketing staff who they say “are sadly more often than not displayed for show.”

“We want to send a resume to a headhunter and not have it shut down because you are a Black designer,” Buchanan said.

In their appeal, they spoke for dozens more whose names did not appear but include Italian and Italy-based Black creators like Michelle Ngonmo, who launched an AFRO Fashion Week Milano on her own after failing to get the backing of the fashion industry, and Louis Pisano, a writer and influencer who has worked in Italian fashion for a decade. Pisano cites incidents like having his fashion show invitations scrutinized while white influencers are waved into events.

Many more “are hesitant to speak out for fear of a professional lynching,” Jean said.

A frequent refrain from Black creatives in Italian fashion is that they are often the only person of color in the workplace. They also see their opportunities and access limited by their skin color.

Buchanan, the designer of his own luxury knitwear label, Sansovino 6, started out in Italy more than 25 years ago launching ready-to-wear at Bottega Veneta, and has worked with Calvin Klein and Donna Karan. Now when he is called for consulting jobs, it is exclusively for streetwear or urban brands, despite his luxury credentials. Meanwhile, white colleagues with similar resumes now hold creative director positions at major brands.

“I am absolutely happy with the scale of my career. But I can say honestly that opportunity has not come to me because of the color of my skin,” Buchanan said.

Stella chafes at the Africa Hub, which promoted five brands during Milan Fashion Week in February. She says it gave a market space but no runway visibility to brands including Ghana-based Studio 189, co-founded by Rosario Dawson and Abrima Erwia, which has previously shown at New York Fashion Week.

“Why do we need a special area like you are visiting a safari?” Jean asked.

The president of Italy’s fashion council, Carlo Capasa, defended the Africa Hub, saying it was set up alongside a section to support China, which was mostly missing from Milan Fashion Week due to the coronavirus pandemic, and some young Italian brands. The only Black designer to present a runway show at Milan that round, which Jean skipped, was the British brand A-COLD-WALL.

Capasa told AP that the council would produce data on diversity inside fashion houses, and that a progress report on the diversity manifesto would be made in December. He said the global Black Lives Matter protests had created a sense of urgency behind diversity pledges but added that “making deep cultural

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changes requires time," citing the need for multi-year programs "to include all minorities."

"What happens inside a fashion house mirrors the social construction of the country. Italy is different from the United States," Capasa said. "In every country, inclusion and diversity assumes a slightly different meaning."

Jean emphasized that she is trying to prompt change from within as the only Black designer to belong to the council since its formation in 1958. Her eponymous brand, rooted in multiculturalism, has grown steadily since her Milan runway debut seven years ago.

While she won't show in September, she has asked Capasa to host a Black Lives Matter event to kick off "the immediate launch of a long-overdue fashion cultural reform."

Follow all AP coverage of racial injustice at <https://apnews.com/Racialinjustice>.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, Aug. 18, the 231st day of 2020. There are 135 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 18, 1920, the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, guaranteeing all American women's right to vote, was ratified as Tennessee became the 36th state to approve it.

On this date:

In 1587, Virginia Dare became the first child of English parents to be born in present-day America, on what is now Roanoke Island in North Carolina. (However, the Roanoke colony ended up mysteriously disappearing.)

In 1838, the first marine expedition sponsored by the U.S. government set sail from Hampton Roads, Virginia; the crews traveled the southern Pacific Ocean, gathering scientific information.

In 1846, during the Mexican-American War, U.S. forces led by Gen. Stephen W. Kearny occupied Santa Fe in present-day New Mexico.

In 1894, Congress established the Bureau of Immigration.

In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson issued his Proclamation of Neutrality, aimed at keeping the United States out of World War I.

In 1963, James Meredith became the first Black student to graduate from the University of Mississippi.

In 1969, the Woodstock Music and Art Fair in Bethel, New York, wound to a close after three nights with a mid-morning set by Jimi Hendrix.

In 1983, Hurricane Alicia slammed into the Texas coast, leaving 21 dead and causing more than a billion dollars' worth of damage.

In 1993, a judge in Sarasota, Fla., ruled that Kimberly Mays, the 14-year-old girl who had been switched at birth with another baby, need never again see her biological parents, Ernest and Regina Twigg, in accordance with her stated wishes. (However, Kimberly later moved in with the Twiggs.)

In 2009, former South Korean President and Nobel Peace laureate Kim Dae-jung (kih-m day-joong) died in Seoul.

In 2014, Missouri Gov. Jay Nixon ordered the National Guard to Ferguson, a suburb of St. Louis convulsed by protests over the fatal shooting of a Black teen. Don Pardo, 96, a durable radio and television announcer known for his introductions with a booming baritone on "Saturday Night Live" and other shows, died in Tucson, Arizona.

In 2017, Steve Bannon, President Donald Trump's top White House strategist, was forced out of his post by Trump; Bannon returned immediately as executive chairman to Breitbart News, which he led before joining Trump's campaign. (Bannon would step down as Breitbart chairman in January 2018 after the release of a book in which he criticized Trump and members of his family.)

Ten years ago: General Motors filed the first batch of paperwork to sell stock to the public again, a sig-

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nificant step toward shedding U.S. government ownership a year after the automaker had filed for bankruptcy. A bull leapt into the packed grandstands of a bullring in northern Spain and ran amok, charging and trampling spectators and leaving dozens of people injured. (The bull was brought under control by handlers and was later killed.)

Five years ago: The Food and Drug Administration approved Addyi (ADD'-ee), the world's first prescription drug designed to boost sexual desire in women. Bud Yorkin, a director and producer who helped forge a new brand of topical TV comedy with the 1970s hit "All in the Family," died in Los Angeles at age 89.

One year ago: Kathleen Blanco, who became Louisiana's first female governor only to see her political career derailed by the devastation of Hurricane Katrina, died in hospice care in Lafayette, Louisiana at the age of 76; she'd struggled for years with cancer. Broadcaster Jack Whitaker, who reported on events ranging from the first Super Bowl to Secretariat's Triple Crown, died in Devon, Pennsylvania; he was 95.

Today's Birthdays: Former first lady Rosalynn (ROH'-zuh-lihn) Carter is 93. Movie director Roman Polanski is 87. Olympic gold medal decathlete Rafer Johnson is 85. Actor-director Robert Redford is 84. Actor Henry G. Sanders is 78. Actor-comedian Martin Mull is 77. Rhythm-and-blues singer Sarah Dash (LaBelle) is 75. Rock musician Dennis Elliott is 70. Country singer Jamie O'Hara is 70. Comedian Elayne Boosler is 68. Country singer Steve Wilkinson (The Wilkinsons) is 65. Actor Denis Leary is 63. Actor Madeleine Stowe is 62. Former Treasury Secretary Timothy Geithner (GYT'-nur) is 59. ABC News reporter Bob Woodruff is 59. The former president of Mexico, Felipe Calderon, is 58. Bluegrass musician Jimmy Mattingly is 58. Actor Adam Storke is 58. Actor Craig Bierko (BEER'-koh) is 56. Rock singer-musician Zac Maloy (The Nixons) is 52. Rock singer and hip-hop artist Everlast is 51. Rapper Masta Killa (Wu-Tang Clan) is 51. Actor Christian Slater is 51. Actor Edward Norton is 51. Actor Malcolm-Jamal Warner is 50. Actor Kaitlin Olson is 45. Actor-writer-director Hadji is 44. Rock musician Dirk Lance is 44. Actor-comedian Andy Samberg (TV: "Saturday Night Live") is 42. Country musician Brad Tursi (Old Dominion) is 41. Actor Mika Boorem is 33. Actor Maia Mitchell is 27. Actor Madelaine Petsch is 26. Actor Parker McKenna Posey is 25.