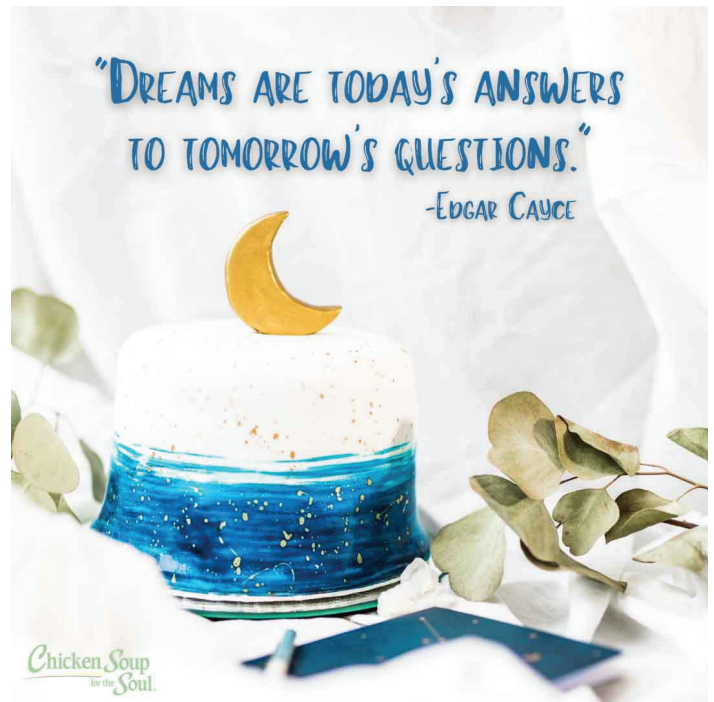


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Update on

GDILIVE.COM

We are letting you know of where things currently stand with GDILIVE.COM. We will be Livestreaming all home football games and volleyball matches. However, to date, we have no sponsors for the home events. That means the games will be not available to the general public. Subscribers to the GDI will still have access to the Livestreams. We will also offer one-time ticket options for \$6 for non-subscribers. Of course, that can all change if we get enough sponsors. To date, the three away football games will be livestreamed to the general public as we do have a sponsor for those games.

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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They still work!

It's been over five months since the flashing lights on Broadway have been operated. They operated for the first time since March 13th as the first day of school for the 2020-21 school year began. Please drive carefully and watch for children crossing roads and streets.

#178 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

The picture looks much like yesterday; the number of cases is staying lower relative to most of the past six weeks, although high relative to earlier in the year, while the number of deaths is staying high relative to the past six weeks, although lower relative to earlier in the year. Today 41,100 new cases were reported, a 0.7% increase that puts us over five and a half million cases to 5,537,700. The number of deaths has risen to 173,958, which is 1245 or 0.7% more than yesterday. Florida became just the fifth state to top 10,000 deaths today, and Nevada set a record for single-day deaths.

States and territories with 25+ daily new cases per 100,000 population include Texas, Georgia, and the US Virgin Islands. States and territories with 10-24 new cases per 100,000 are Guam, Hawaii, Alaska, California, Nevada, Idaho, Utah, Arizona, North Dakota, South Dakota, Kansas, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, Louisiana, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Tennessee, Mississippi, Alabama, Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Florida, and Puerto Rico. States and territories with 1 to 9 daily new cases per 100,000 are the Mariana Islands, Washington, Oregon, Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Nebraska, Michigan, Ohio, Maine, Vermont, New Hampshire, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. And the territory with fewer than 1 daily new case per 100,000 is American Samoa.

Enrollment is going slowly in the Moderna vaccine candidate late-stage clinical trial. The goal is to enroll 30,000 participants, and in the first three weeks, 8375 have been recruited. That number is actually very good at this point, a problem is that enrollments of minority participants are well behind needs. Black people and Latinos are only 15% of enrolled participants so far while these groups account for more than half of cases. An inability to enroll higher proportions from these groups will delay completion of the trial; the Data Safety Monitoring Board overseeing it can slow the trial down by insisting they take more time to recruit more minority participants. People who enroll must meet inclusion criteria, and one important criterion is racial/ethnic group due to the disparate impact of the disease on different groups.

If the people involved in the trial do not have the same risk of exposure and illness as the general population, then the validity of the results would be questionable; so getting these proportions right is important to establishing the safety and efficacy of the vaccine candidate. Outreach to the appropriate communities continues in an attempt to sort this out so the trial can proceed on schedule.

The WHO warned yesterday that young people are becoming the primary drivers of the spread of Covid-19 across the world. Turns out this is not just a US problem; more than half of new infections worldwide are occurring in people younger than 40. This is a particular problem because symptoms are usually milder in the young, so they're often unaware they're infected, even as they spread the infection to more and more others. Takeshi Kasai, the WHO's Western Pacific regional director, said, "This increases the risk of spillovers to the most vulnerable: the elderly, the sick, people in long-term care, people who live in densely populated urban areas and underserved rural areas." Additionally, people under 40 also sometimes get sick and even die from this too; so spread to vulnerable populations is not the only concern here.

Way back in April and periodically since, we've talked about various projects to do virus surveillance by analyzing wastewater. While we don't think sewage is a source of infection, it does appear that the virus shows up in sewage and can be used as a means for identifying incipient outbreaks. Apparently, the CDC and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) are on board with this as a possibility because they've announced the intent to create a national database on wastewater. They're asking health departments to conduct tests and submit data to these federal agencies. There have been indications in the research that this may be useful in tracking outbreaks; so we'll see what this project gives us in the way of additional information relevant to containment.

We talked in June about the idea of pooled testing to stretch our limited testing capacity. Basically, the idea is that you combine samples collected from several people and use just one test for the pooled sample. If it's negative, you can conclude none of them is infected and move on to the next pooled sample, having saved a bunch of individual test kits. Only if it is positive do you have to go back and test each person

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individually. This can reduce by about half the number of tests that need to be run. So how is this going in the US? As with everything in this pandemic, it's not going well.

Why? Because pooling only works when you have a relatively small proportion of people who are positive. When the proportion of positives is high, you end up retesting way too many people, and you're just wasting test kits. And that's where we appear to be at the moment. We were slow to adopt the procedure, receiving FDA approval to begin on July 18, just about the time new cases started to spike again, making it not really a viable option; and now the window where that might have helped has closed until we achieve some degree of control again. This sort of thing becomes frustrating, particularly when it happens again and again.

I should note here that there are parts of the country where pooling is still useful. For example, New York has begun to pool as many as 25 samples for testing because their positivity rate is well below 1%. There are also particular uses for which it is helpful; for example, if you are isolating groups within a school in pods or bubbles, you could test the entire group at once. If anyone tests positive, then everyone in the pod gets isolated anyhow; so it would still make sense to pool. For most uses and in most of the country, however, there's really no point at this time.

Ernie Andrus is a World War II veteran, which establishes him as an official old person in anyone's book. He accomplished something remarkable four years ago in August, 2016 when he completed a three-year, 2200-mile run across the United States from the Pacific Coast in California to the Atlantic Coast in Georgia at the age of 93. Seriously. 93. It will not come as a surprise to anyone here that this was a record: oldest person to complete a coast-to-coast run.

Andrus said, "I'll run until I drop. I always said I'll die with my running shoes on."

He wasn't kidding. He is now a year into the return trip. And he turned 97 today. Really.

He started his first cross-country run as a way to raise money to restore a WWII-era ship like the one he served on, way back when. If all goes well, he'll be back to the Pacific Ocean in time for his 101st birthday, breaking his own record; and if all does not go well, he will still have served as plenty of inspiration for everyone here to do what it takes to make a difference in some small corner of our world.

Andrus only runs three days a week now, even on this trip, which makes you wonder, right? No, not why he's such a wimp, but where he gets that. The man's 97 years old, for God's sake! John Martin, a retired firefighter who runs with Andrus, says, "He thinks he can do it, so why not try? Why doesn't everyone lie like that. If you think you can do something, why not at least try? . . . I think we're going to see San Diego in about four years." While I understand the odds, I'm not betting against him.

Andrus: "I don't know how long I can handle this. I'll be 100 by the time I finish. Who knows what life holds in the next few years." Being proactive about finding that out seems like an excellent approach to life in Covid-19 times. Fare well, Ernie.

And fare well to all of you too. I'll be back tomorrow.

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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. 19	Aug. 20
Minnesota	66,061	66,618
Nebraska	30,825	31,040
Montana	5,846	5,956
Colorado	53,631	53,901
Wyoming	2,850	2,909
North Dakota	8782	8968
South Dakota	10,443	10,566
United States	5,482,823	5,530,247
US Deaths	171,833	173,193

Minnesota	+345	+557
Nebraska	+262	+215
Montana	+54	+110
Colorado	+261	+270
Wyoming	+21	+59
North Dakota	+135	+186
South Dakota	+83	+123
United States	+38,708	+47,424
US Deaths	+1,274	+1,360

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August 19th COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

A male from Minnehaha County in his 70s has died from COVID-19. The hospitalized number dropped by 13 while the state positive numbers went up by 123. The state's positivity rate is 6.9 percent while in Brown County it is 10.6 percent with five positive tests out of the 47 that were performed. It's important to note that while the positive numbers are going up, the hospitalized number remains stable which was Governor Noem's plan from the very beginning. We lost Haakon County from the fully recovered list.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +5 (496) Positivity Rate: 10.6%
Recovered: +3 (435)
Active Cases: +2 (58)
Total Tests: +47 (6450)
Ever Hospitalized: 0 (22)
Deaths: 0 (3)
Percent Recovered: 87.7% (-0.2)

South Dakota:

Positive: +123 (10,566 total) Positivity Rates: 6.9%
Total Tests: 1776 (168,080 total)
Hospitalized: +8 (935 total). 55 currently hospitalized (Down 13 from yesterday)
Deaths: +1 (155 total)
Recovered: +63 (9,189 total)
Active Cases: +59 (1,222)
Percent Recovered: 87.0 - .3
Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 2% Covid, 52% Non-Covid, 45% Available
ICU Bed Capacity: 3% Covid, 67% Non-Covid, 29% Available
Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 14% Non-Covid, 81% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Haakon): Bennett 6-6, Jerauld 40-39-1, Jones 2-2, 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: 3 active cases

Beadle (9): +1 recovered (16 active cases)

Bennett: Full Recovered

Bon Homme: +2 positive (15 active cases)

Brookings (1): +5 positive, +2 recovered (20 active cases)

Brown (3): +5 positive, +3 recovered (58 active cases)

Brule: 3 active cases

Buffalo (3): 5 active cases

Butte (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases)

Campbell: 1 active case

Charles Mix: +1 positive (18 active cases)

Clark: 2 active cases

Clay: +1 positive, +3 recovered (20 active cases)

Codington (1): +10 positive, +1 recovered (54 active cases)

Corson: +1 positive (20 active cases)

Custer: +2 positive (15 active case)

Davison (1): +1 recovered (7 active cases)

Day: +1 recovered (6 active cases)

Deuel: +2 positive (12 active cases)

Dewey: 26 active cases

Douglas: 4 active cases

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Edmunds: +1 recovered (5 active cases)
 Fall River: 3 active cases
 Faulk (1): 3 active cases
 Grant: 7 active cases
 Gregory: +1 recovered (1 active case)
 Haakon: +1 positive (1 active case)
 Hamlin: +2 positive, +1 recovered (16 active cases)
 Hand: 4 active cases
 Hanson: 4 active cases
 Harding: 2 active cases
 Hughes (3): +1 recovered (13 active cases)
 Hutchinson: 7 active cases
 Hyde: 1 active case
 Jackson (1): 1 active case
 Jerauld (1): Fully Recovered
 Jones: Fully Recovered
 Kingsbury: 1 active case
 Lake (5): +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 Lawrence (1): +5 positive, +4 recovered (22 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +15 positive, +4 recovered (91 active cases)
 Lyman (3): 5 active cases
 Marshall: 4 active cases
 McCook (1): +2 recovered (7 active cases)
 McPherson: 1 active case
 Meade (1): +8 positive, +2 recovered (30 active cases)
 Mellette: Fully Recovered
 Miner: Fully Recovered
 Minnehaha (69): +45 positive, +18 recovered, 1 death (416 active cases)

Moody: +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (2): +1 positive (17 active cases)
 Pennington (33): +4 positive, +8 recovered (108 active cases)
 Perkins: 1 active cases
 Potter: 1 active case
 Roberts (1): 11 active cases
 Sanborn: Fully Recovered
 Spink: +3 recovered (3 active cases)
 Stanley: +1 positive (3 active cases)
 Sully: 1 active case
 Todd (5): +1 recovered (6 active cases)
 Tripp: Fully Recovered
 Turner: +1 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases)
 Union (4): +1 positive (21 active cases)
 Walworth: +5 positive (6 active cases)
 Yankton (3): +1 positive, +2 recovered (47 active cases)
 Ziebach: 11 active cases

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

- 4,862 tests (1,687)
- 8,968 positives (+188)
- 7,629 recovered (+87)
- 130 deaths (+2)
- 1,209 active cases (+40)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	376	0
10-19 years	952	0
20-29 years	2359	2
30-39 years	2059	6
40-49 years	1563	7
50-59 years	1549	18
60-69 years	944	27
70-79 years	412	25
80+ years	352	70

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	5243	79
Male	5323	76

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	40	37	395	0	Minimal
Beadle	598	573	1949	9	Moderate
Bennett	6	6	547	0	None
Bon Homme	28	13	841	0	Substantial
Brookings	162	141	2899	1	Moderate
Brown	496	435	4739	3	Substantial
Brule	47	44	772	0	Minimal
Buffalo	109	101	657	3	None
Butte	21	15	835	1	Minimal
Campbell	3	2	100	0	None
Charles Mix	114	96	1455	0	Substantial
Clark	17	15	406	0	Minimal
Clay	142	122	1466	0	Moderate
Codington	183	128	3025	1	Substantial
Corson	49	29	511	0	Substantial
Custer	51	36	828	0	Substantial
Davison	101	93	2495	1	Moderate
Day	29	23	669	0	Moderate
Deuel	26	14	424	0	Substantial
Dewey	60	33	2316	0	Substantial
Douglas	20	16	414	0	Minimal
Edmunds	21	16	428	0	Minimal
Fall River	23	20	1010	0	Minimal
Faulk	29	25	204	1	Minimal
Grant	34	27	756	0	Moderate
Gregory	8	7	411	0	Minimal
Haakon	3	2	298	0	None
Hamlin	34	18	687	0	Substantial
Hand	12	8	308	0	Moderate
Hanson	22	18	229	0	Minimal
Harding	2	0	57	0	Minimal
Hughes	100	85	1858	3	Moderate
Hutchinson	35	28	932	0	Minimal

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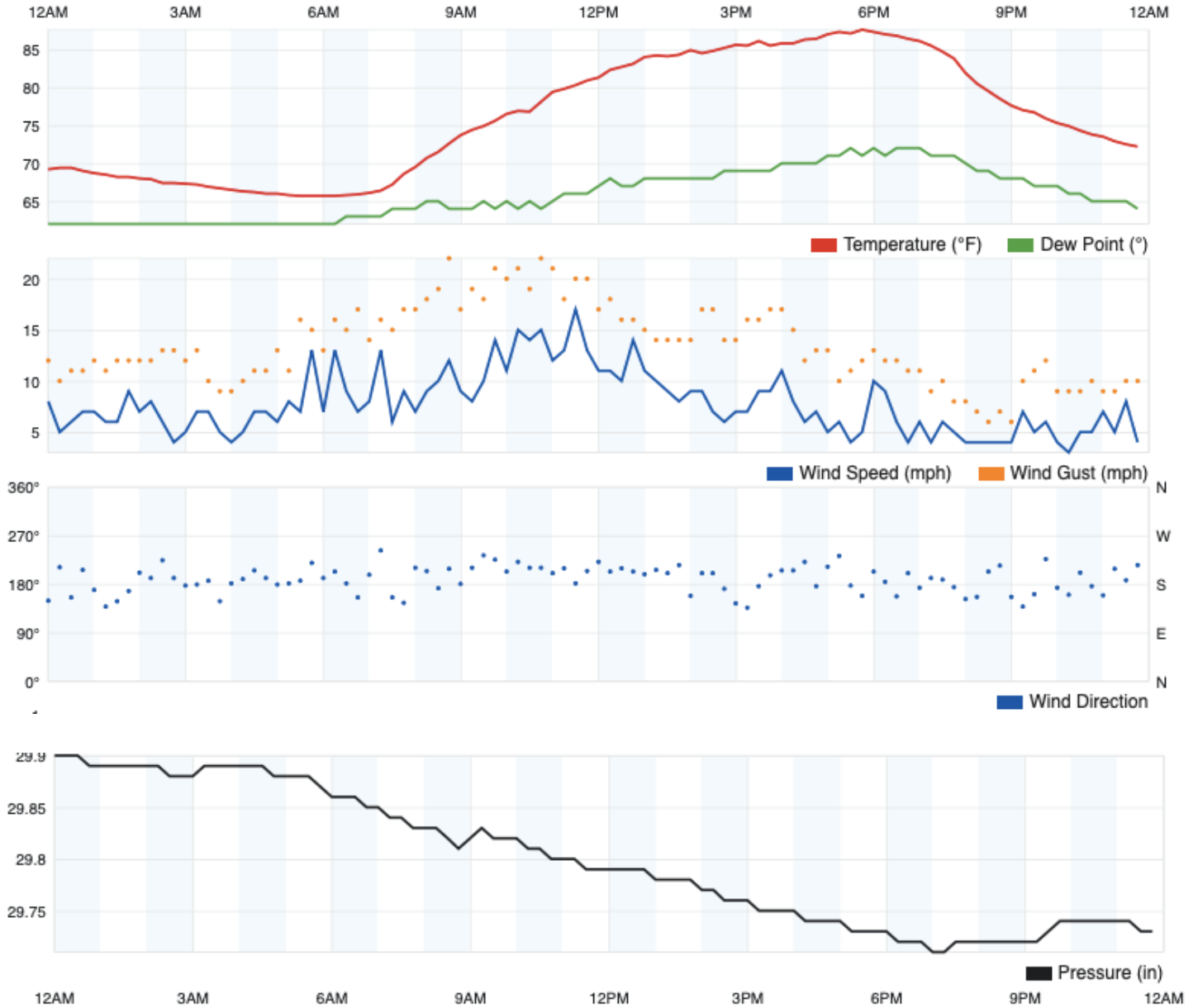
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Hyde	4	3	145	0	Minimal
Jackson	12	10	488	1	Minimal
Jerauld	39	38	277	1	None
Jones	2	2	62	0	None
Kingsbury	15	14	585	0	Minimal
Lake	105	96	986	5	Moderate
Lawrence	82	59	2211	1	Moderate
Lincoln	738	635	7348	2	Substantial
Lyman	91	83	991	3	Minimal
Marshall	12	8	486	0	Minimal
McCook	37	29	671	1	Moderate
McPherson	8	7	227	0	None
Meade	120	89	2075	1	Moderate
Mellette	24	24	393	0	None
Miner	15	15	262	0	None
Minnehaha	4727	4242	29308	69	Substantial
Moody	34	30	667	0	Minimal
Oglala Lakota	159	140	2980	2	Minimal
Pennington	962	821	11441	33	Moderate
Perkins	6	5	196	0	None
Potter	2	1	308	0	Minimal
Roberts	87	75	1907	1	Moderate
Sanborn	13	13	238	0	None
Spink	27	24	1198	0	Minimal
Stanley	17	14	266	0	Minimal
Sully	4	3	88	0	Minimal
Todd	75	66	2276	5	Moderate
Tripp	20	20	626	0	None
Turner	63	48	975	0	Moderate
Union	224	199	2024	4	Moderate
Walworth	23	17	748	0	None
Yankton	159	109	3280	3	Substantial
Ziebach	35	24	317	0	None
Unassigned	0	0	9510	0	

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs








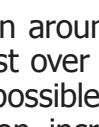
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Today	Tonight	Friday	Friday Night	Saturday
				
Hot	Partly Cloudy	Mostly Sunny then Slight Chance T-storms	Slight Chance T-storms	Hot
High: 92 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 92 °F	Low: 65 °F	High: 92 °F

NWS ABERDEEN

AUGUST 20, 2020

Heat Continues

-  **Today**
A few AM showers or storms near the ND border
-  **Tonight:** A few showers or storms over central SD
-  **Friday**
A few afternoon showers or storms
-  **Friday Night:** Scattered Showers and Storms over E SD & W MN
-  **Saturday**
-  **Sunday**



Temperatures around **10° above average** through early next week!

Highs: 87 to 97°
warmest over central SD

Lows: 63 to 68°

Temperatures will remain around 10 degrees above average through at least early next week: Highs 87 to 97 degrees, warmest over central SD. While most locations will stay dry, a few morning showers or thunderstorms will be possible today near the ND border. A few showers or thunderstorms will again be possible Friday afternoon, increasing to a chance of showers and thunderstorms over eastern SD and western MN Friday evening.

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Today in Weather History

August 20, 1904: A destructive, estimated F4 tornado moved ESE from 7 miles WNW of Willow Lake, through the town, and on into Bryant in Hamlin County, South Dakota. Most of the damaged occurred in those two towns. All buildings on at least three farms were blown away. One woman died in Bryant as the tornado swept across the residential west side of town. Another man was killed just west of Willow Lake, as his farm house was scattered for miles.

1886: The 1886 Indianola Hurricane destroyed the town of Indianola, Texas and as such had a significant impact on the history and economic development of Texas. The storm ended the rivalry between Galveston and Indianola as the chief port of Texas. With the abandonment of Indianola and the unwillingness of the former residents to rebuild close to shore, Galveston became the essential Texan port until the 1900 Galveston Hurricane led to the rise of Houston as a major port. It was the fifth hurricane of the 1886 Atlantic hurricane season and one of the most intense hurricanes ever to hit the United States.

1910: The Great Fire of 1910 finally came to an end in Idaho. A record dry August fueled 1736 fires that burned three million acres destroying six billion board feet of timber. The fires claimed the lives of 85 persons, 78 of which were firefighters, and consumed the entire town of Wallace. The smoke spread a third of the way around the world producing some dark days in the U.S. and Canada. The forest fires prompted federal fire protection laws.

1928: A tornado estimated at F4 intensity initially touched down in Winnebago County, Iowa, moved to Freeborn County, Minnesota, and hit the south side of Austin, MN. Five of the six deaths were in Austin with 60 injuries.

1886 - The town of Indianola, TX, was completely destroyed by a hurricane, and never rebuilt. (David Ludlum)

1910 - The big blow up of forest fires finally came to an end in Idaho. A record dry August fueled 1736 fires which burned three million acres destroying six billion board feet of timber. The fires claimed the lives of 85 persons, 78 of which were fire fighters, and consumed the entire town of Wallace. The smoke spread a third of the way around the world producing some dark days in the U.S. and Canada. The forest fires prompted federal fire protection laws. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Half a dozen cities in the Central Plains Region reported record high temperatures for the date, including Pueblo CO with a reading of 102 degrees, and Goodland KS with a high of 104 degrees. Hill City KS reached 106 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Sheridan, WY, reported a record hot temperature reading of 100 degrees. Evening thunderstorms produced golf ball size hail near Fortuna ND, and wind gusts to 70 mph near Webster SD. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Early morning thunderstorms produced heavy rain in southeast Kansas and northeastern Oklahoma, with up to six inches reported around Tulsa OK. Some roads in the Tulsa area were closed by water 10 to 12 feet deep. Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in northern Oklahoma and southern Kansas. Thunderstorms produced winds gusts to 75 mph in Major County OK, and hail two inches in diameter at Jennings KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

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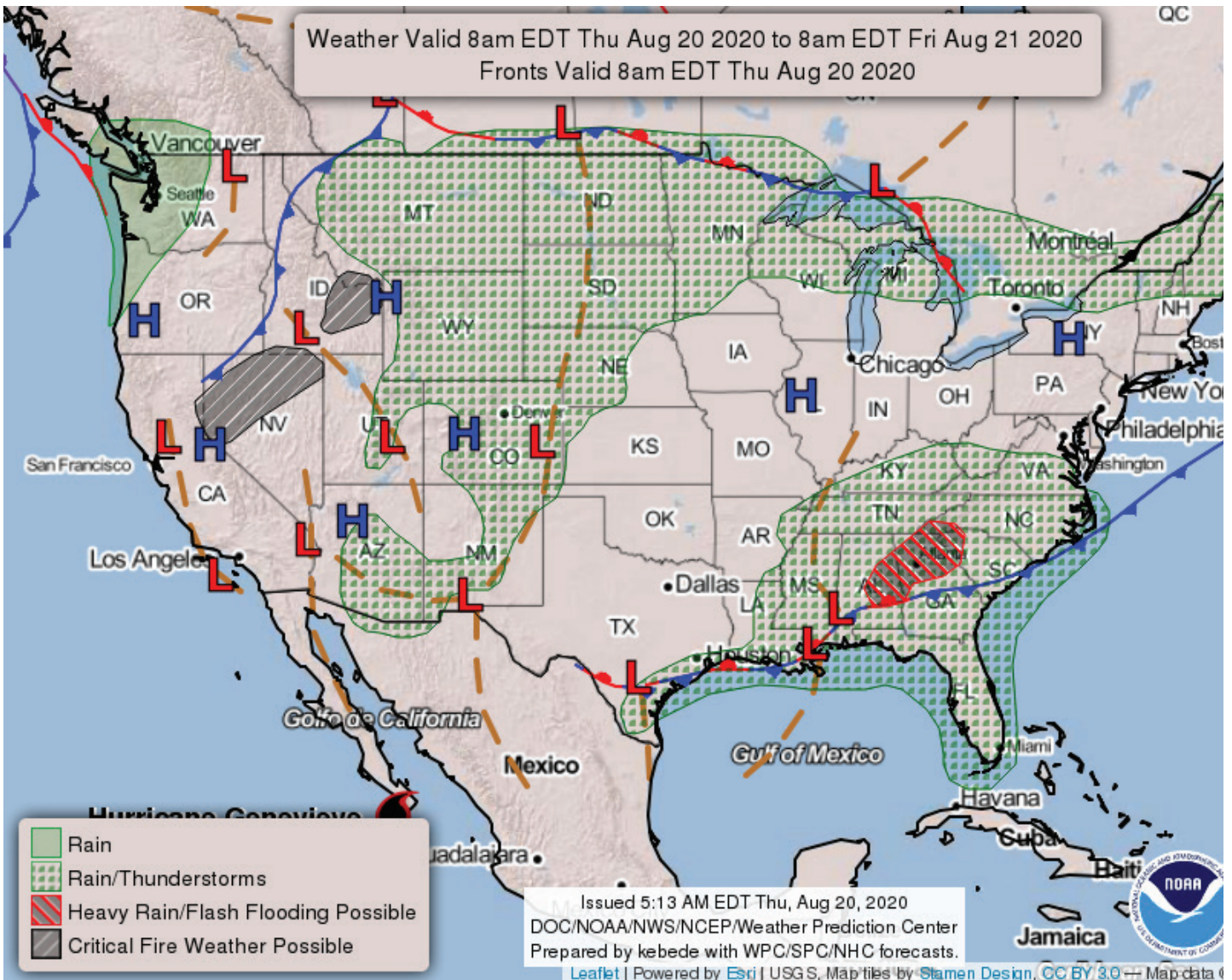
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 88 °F at 5:43 PM
Low Temp: 66 °F at 5:32 AM
Wind: 23 mph at 9:50 AM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 103° in 1976
Record Low: 33° in 1950
Average High: 81°F
Average Low: 56°F
Average Precip in Aug.: 1.48
Precip to date in Aug.: 1.24
Average Precip to date: 15.34
Precip Year to Date: 11.75
Sunset Tonight: 8:32 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 6:42 a.m.



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LET GOD BE THE JUDGE

Young Anthony was ending his prayers before leaving for school. "And, finally, God, thank You for this beautiful day that You have given us. In Jesus' Name, Amen."

"But, Anthony," protested his mother, "this is not going to be a beautiful day. Large thunderstorms are approaching."

"I know, Mom," replied Anthony. "Never judge a day by its weather," he said as he ran out the door.

The Psalmist proclaimed, "This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it!"

Sometimes when we get halfway through a day, we feel that there is nothing to rejoice about or to be thankful for. Our problems mount, and their solutions evade us. Our plans are interrupted by meaningless demands that make no sense at all. Our decisions seem to be wrong, no matter how hard we tried to get them right. Our sorrow overwhelms us, and our guilt appears beyond God's forgiveness. What then? Rejoice? Makes no sense to most people.

But, according to the Psalmist, that's the best thing we can do. When we read the Psalms carefully and allow God to speak to us clearly, we will discover that the authors were open and honest with God about their difficulties. And, when they talked to God sincerely, by the time they came to the close of their prayers, they ended them by giving Him praise. Give Him facts. He'll help!

Prayer: Thank You, God, for always being with us in all of our difficulties. Help us to know and hear Your voice and then accept Your grace as a solution to our problems. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: This is the day the Lord has made. We will rejoice and be glad in it. Psalm 118:24-28

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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

News from the Associated Press

'Best that we can do': DNC viewers adjust to virtual format

By JIM SALTER, STEPHEN GROVES and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

BALLWIN, Mo. (AP) — Nick Zingarelli relished Michelle Obama's speech at the Democratic National Convention this week, especially when the former first lady used President Donald Trump's own words — "It is what it is" — to sum up Democrats' disappointment in his presidency.

But the moment on the first night of the first virtual convention was bittersweet for Zingarelli. A line that good deserved a thunderous applause from a crowded convention hall, he thought.

"Not having that response — yeah, there was something that was taken away from that," said Zingarelli, a 41-year-old lawyer from suburban St. Louis. "But it's the best that we can do in this environment."

In other words, it is what it is.

Many Americans who have tuned in to Democrats' experiment in socially distanced political theater have come away with similar reactions. They believe that a traditional nominating convention — a boisterous and quirky affair staged for a packed audience of hyped-up political activists — had to be sacrificed for safety and public health. But its replacement — a mashup of homemade videos, slickly produced montages and speeches with no applause — takes some getting used to.

Millions of people are still watching Democrats' four-day celebration of their presidential nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden, and his running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris.

They are at home watching on TV and computer screens, or passing around clips of the highlights the day after. Some were in their cars at drive-in movie-style viewing stations Democrats set up in a few states. Some have tried for a social experience by jumping on a Zoom watch party.

Zingarelli organized a video conference for 25 attendees on Monday night and said the communal experience was lively.

"My wife and I were sitting side by side, rocking our Joe Biden aviators from the dollar store, just promoting the fun, and my wife was making signs," Zingarelli, an ardent Biden supporter, said.

Through two nights, television viewership is sharply down from the 2016 convention. Monday's first night reached 19.7 million viewers, the second night 19.2 million; the audience was around 25 million four years ago, the Nielsen company said. It's hard to judge how much is due to the format, since people in general are watching less TV than they did four years ago.

The Biden campaign says an additional 10.2 million streamed the first night. Although that couldn't be independently verified, this year's programs appears tailor-made for that format, easily consumed in snippets and bites. The speeches have been shorter and less formal than the behind-the-podium oratory of conventions past.

The new virtual format has spawned some creative reimagining of old traditions — including a new roll call vote quickly embraced as a success. Viewers praised the montage of clips featuring delegates announcing their states' vote tallies from state landmarks and scenic landscapes.

Laura DeGroff Simoes of Concord, New Hampshire, who voted in the Democratic primary but considers herself an independent, said it's a welcome change that offered a glimpses of the places homebound Americans miss.

"There was much more diversity represented, there were different languages. I loved seeing the backdrop of where people were from," said Simoes, who watched on TV alongside her husband and two sons.

Lynn Hart, a South Dakota farmer who is both Black and a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, would have been in Milwaukee, the original site of the convention, as a first-time delegate. While disappointed about the change, he said there have been perks. The video conference format allows him to network with other Democrats while moving seamlessly between a lineup of meetings.

"I can sit here in my shorts, T-shirt or my pajamas and pick and choose who I listen to," he said.

But some delegates missed the in-person action.

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Jackie Craig, a Minnesota delegate, watched from her home — sometimes from a closet so she wouldn't distract the rest of the family. A self-described "obnoxious extrovert," she said it was a "little deflating" missing the in-person experience.

"I would have been like one of those dogs who wags its tail so hard it probably passed out," Craig, 49, said.

Republicans are watching, too. Carol Wessel Boyer of Troy, Missouri, has been active in GOP politics for decades and knows the kind of bounce conventions can give to a candidate. She doesn't see the virtual DNC generating that sort of excitement, and doesn't expect the Republican version will, either.

"They're just not going to get the enthusiasm you normally pick up from a convention," Boyer said. "It's hard to get excited about something virtually."

Republicans will get their shot next week. President Donald Trump is due to give his nomination acceptance speech at the White House. But GOP convention planners have said little else about the details of their programming or format.

Nanda Nunnally served as a delegate at the 2016 convention in Philadelphia, and she's a delegate again. This time, she's been watching with another delegate, Genevieve Williams, from Williams' home in Neosho, Missouri.

Nunnally, 53, says they miss the crowds, drama and excitement — not just from the soaring speeches and historic moments, but at the parties afterward.

"Now, it was just like, you're on a high note and, 'OK, let's go to bed now,'" she said.

— Groves reported from Sioux Falls, S.D. Ronayne reported from Sacramento, Calif. AP Media Writer David Bauder in New York contributed to this report.

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

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

Dakota Cash

06-18-19-30-34

(six, eighteen, nineteen, thirty, thirty-four)

Estimated jackpot: \$119,000

Lotto America

01-08-17-35-45, Star Ball: 9, ASB: 3

(one, eight, seventeen, thirty-five, forty-five; Star Ball: nine; ASB: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$4.27 million

Mega Millions

Estimated jackpot: \$49 million

Powerball

13-23-47-55-58, Powerball: 23, Power Play: 10

(thirteen, twenty-three, forty-seven, fifty-five, fifty-eight; Powerball: twenty-three; Power Play: ten)

Estimated jackpot: \$22 million

Last inmate who escaped after virus struck prison arrested

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — The last of nine female inmates who escaped from the state women's prison's work center after a confirmed case of COVID-19 at the facility has been arrested.

The Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported Wednesday that 25-year-old Philomene Boneshirt was arrested in Sioux Falls on Tuesday.

Boneshirt was one of nine inmates who walked away from the Pierre Community Work Center on March 23, the same day the state Department of Corrections reported its first COVID-19 case at the women's prison.

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That case was the first and so far only one in a South Dakota prison, although the positive test resulted in placing more than 150 women under observation.

Most of the women who walked away were apprehended days later. Boneshirt was serving seven months for assault and a consecutive year for possession of a control substance. Leaving a non-secure correctional facility without authorization is a felony punishable by up to five years in prison.

South Dakota city mourns urban cornstalk's brief life

Residents of South Dakota's largest city are mourning an urban cornstalk that briefly became a light-hearted beacon of hope during the coronavirus pandemic.

The Argus Leader reported Wednesday that the stalk had been growing up through a crack in the concrete at the intersection of 57th Street and Minnesota Avenue on Sioux Falls' south side. Dubbed the 57th Street Corn, complete with its own Twitter account during its brief lifespan, the plant was a symbol of resiliency and hope as the pandemic rages on, Mayor Paul TenHaken said.

"Finding joy in the small things will continue to help us get through what has been a challenging time in our country," the mayor said. "It was 'amaizing' to see the community rally around the 57th Street corn as a sign of hope over the past few days."

Residents reported Wednesday morning that someone had ripped out the lone stalk, prompting an outcry on social media. Someone attached a sign to a traffic post where the stalk grew that reads "CORN RIP."

The Stockyards Ag Experience, a group working to transform the city's vacant stockyards into an interactive experience, is selling T-shirts commemorating the stalk.

South Dakota reports 123 new COVID-19 cases, one death

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota recorded 123 new cases of COVID-19 and one death on Wednesday.

Over the past two weeks, the rolling average number of daily new cases has increased by 20, an increase of 24%. But the number of people hospitalized from the coronavirus decreased, with 55 COVID-19 patients currently in the hospital statewide.

The most recently reported death was a man in his 70s from Minnehaha County, according to Department of Health data.

While people in their 20s have accounted for the most cases statewide, there have been two deaths in that age group. People 80 and over have accounted for the fewest cases but the most deaths of any age group.

Over the course of the pandemic, 10,566 people have tested positive for COVID-19. About 87% of them have recovered, while 155 have died and 1,222 currently have infections.

Two South Dakota high schools have reported that students involved with sports recently tested positive for COVID-19 as teams begin practices. The Washington High School football team in Sioux Falls has reported a case, and the Stevens High School volleyball team in Rapid City reported that an athlete trying out for the team has tested positive.

Sanders, rising Democrats call for Midwest to unite to win

By SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Sen. Bernie Sanders and others from the liberal wing of the Democratic Party called on Democrats from key Midwestern states Wednesday to work together to not only defeat President Donald Trump, but to also forge ahead with a progressive agenda.

They spoke to activists from five Midwestern states during a virtual meeting coinciding with the third day of the Democratic National Convention. Trump narrowly won two of the states, Wisconsin and Michigan, and just barely lost a third, Minnesota. All three are central to this year's campaign of both Democratic nominee Joe Biden and Trump.

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Democrats from South Dakota and North Dakota also participated on the call, which attracted around 250 viewers at any given time.

"Defeating Trump is not all that this campaign is about," said Sanders, who was speaking from his hometown of Burlington, Vermont. "We have got to lay out a vision for the American people today who are struggling and hurting in a way we have never seen for a very, very long time."

Sanders' message to the Midwestern activists, on a call organized by Wisconsin Democrats, came after he delivered a similar message in a prime time speech Monday at the national convention.

"The day after the election, we've got to rally the American people to create an agenda that works for all and not just large corporations and the 1%," Sanders said. "Don't let anybody fool you, our agenda, the progressive agenda, is the agenda of the American people."

Democrats decided to award the national convention to Milwaukee in part to show a seriousness toward winning back Wisconsin and the Midwest, often referred to as a "blue wall." Trump became the first Republican presidential candidate to carry Wisconsin since Ronald Reagan in 1984, but he did it by the narrowest of margins, less than 23,000 votes. Trump won neighboring Michigan by fewer than 11,000 votes and lost in Minnesota by just 45,000 votes.

The COVID-19 pandemic scuttled plans to put the spotlight on Milwaukee and Wisconsin as Democrats hoped, with the bulk of the convention moving to a virtual delivery. Biden is skipping coming to Milwaukee for his acceptance speech, something Trump and his surrogates have highlighted as they flood the state this week.

"I did hear the Democrats were supposed to have their national convention in Wisconsin, but they couldn't make it," Vice President Mike Pence said on Wednesday during a visit to Tankcraft Corporation in Darien, Wisconsin. "That's really nothing new. I heard on the way here that Joe Biden hasn't been to Wisconsin in 659 days. ... Get used to seeing us, because President Donald Trump and I are going to be back to Wisconsin again and again and again to earn four more years in the White House."

Trump held rallies in Wisconsin and Minnesota on Monday and is scheduled to travel to Pennsylvania, the state of Biden's birth, on Thursday, ahead of the Democrat's acceptance speech. The president's son Eric Trump was in Milwaukee on Tuesday, and Pence's visit was his fifth to Wisconsin this year.

Republicans have been quick to compare Biden not coming to Milwaukee to 2016 nominee Hillary Clinton not campaigning in Wisconsin during the general election. Democrats say the comparison is unfounded, pointing in part to higher television advertising spending by Biden so far in Wisconsin than Clinton at this stage.

The message Wednesday from liberal party leaders was that they must take the Midwest seriously and work together if they hope to defeat Trump.

"We can do this," said Rep. Mark Pocan, who represents the liberal Madison area and is co-chair of the Congressional Progressive Caucus. "We are Midwesterners. We are good, kind people, maybe passive aggressive at times, but goodhearted people who want better for our families and for our neighbors' families."

Sanders and Pocan were joined by Reps. Ayanna Pressley, from Massachusetts, and Rashida Tlaib, of Michigan, along with Sens. Cory Booker, of New Jersey, and Michael Bennett, of Colorado. Democratic Party chairs from Michigan and Minnesota also spoke.

Tlaib, who was elected to Congress in 2018 representing parts of Detroit, said the Midwest would deliver the White House for Biden.

"And they better give us credit for it because I'm going to walk in there and I'm going to say, 'Yeah, don't ever dismiss the Midwest,'" she said.

Follow Scott Bauer on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/sbauerAP>

Man injured at track meet in Sioux Falls files a lawsuit

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A man who was seriously injured when he was hit by a discus at a South Dakota high school track meet has filed a lawsuit seeking damages.

Michael Moses was watching the South Dakota State High School Track Meet with his family in Sioux Falls last year and was standing in the spectator area when a competitor threw a discus that struck the Tea man directly in the face.

Moses collapsed and lost consciousness. His lawsuit against the South Dakota High School Activities Association and the Sioux Falls School District says his nose was broken, teeth were knocked out, his jaw had to be reset and he underwent a bone and gum graft.

Moses has substantial medical and dental bills, according to the lawsuit filed in Minnehaha County which alleges negligence in setting up the discus spectator area.

South Dakota High School Activities Association director Dan Swartos told the Argus Leader he was aware of the incident and that insurance companies are still working on the case. The Sioux Falls School District did not comment.

Analysis: UAE-Israel ties may get Abu Dhabi advanced weapons

By JON GAMBRELL and ARON HELLER Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A U.S.-brokered deal that saw Israel and the United Arab Emirates begin to open diplomatic ties may end up with Abu Dhabi purchasing advanced American weaponry, potentially upending both a longstanding Israeli military edge regionally and the balance of power with Iran.

Despite public objections by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, President Donald Trump on Wednesday told reporters that the Emiratis had expressed interest in buying "quite a few" F-35 stealth fighter jets and such a deal was "under review."

Meanwhile, the UAE has sought for years to buy American armed drones — something now potentially allowed as the Trump administration loosened rules governing those purchases just last month.

Complicated arms deals take time to negotiate and it would take years for the jet fighters and drones to reach the hands of foreign militaries, who then have to train their own pilots to fly them. There's also the question of the November election and whether a possible Joe Biden administration would agree to such a sale.

But Trump has used arms sales as a metric to judge America's relationship with Gulf Arab states. Selling the UAE fighter jets that cost over \$100 million a plane fits that pattern.

"They've definitely got the money to pay for it," Trump said of the oil-rich Emirates on Wednesday.

Netanyahu repeatedly and strenuously denied there was any link between arms deals and opening ties to the Emirates. That was met with skepticism in Israel, particularly amid accusations that he bypassed Israel's defense establishment in agreeing to a past German sale of advanced submarines to Egypt.

Critics have accused Netanyahu of lying over a key element that is believed to have clinched the deal for the UAE. Netanyahu's defense minister and governing partner, former military chief Benny Gantz, said he was kept in the dark about the UAE deal until the last minute. Good governance groups also have called for an investigation.

As a rule, Israel opposes the sale of F-35s and other advanced weapons to any country in the Middle East to maintain what it calls its "qualitative military edge." That includes Egypt and Jordan, the only two other Arab nations that currently have diplomatic ties with Israel, out of the memory of the multiple wars it has fought since the country's creation in 1948. Israel also fears sparking a regional arms race.

"Israel must never forget, not even for a split second, that any dent in its strength is liable to pull the rug out from under its feet in the long term," wrote Amos Gilead, director of the Institute for Policy and Strategy at the Herzliya Interdisciplinary Center. "Intentions are fluid and vulnerable to rapid changes."

A retired general and former top Defense Ministry official, Gilead added in his essay Thursday in the Yediot Ahronot daily newspaper: "Iran used to be Israel's soul mate, and today is a bitter and dangerous enemy."

For the UAE, its pilots have seen the F-35 in action as U.S. Air Force squadrons flying the stealth fighter

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have rotated in and out of Al-Dhafra Air Base near Abu Dhabi since 2019. The Emirati air force has dozens of F-16s and French-made Mirage 2000s already in service.

But the F-35s would provide a far-greater edge over Iran, whose air force largely dates back to purchases made before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and includes some locally built aircraft. The F-35's stealth capability also make it far more difficult for Iranian anti-aircraft batteries, already internationally criticized for shooting down a Ukrainian passenger jet in January, to pick up.

The UAE also has repeatedly sought to purchase armed American Reaper drones. It already has used Chinese-made armed drones on the battlefield in Yemen, where the Emirates joined a Saudi-led coalition fighting the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels there who hold the capital. That war, which began in 2015, has become the world's worst humanitarian crisis.

Responding to questions Thursday about its efforts to purchase the F-35, the Emirati Foreign Ministry said the UAE-Israel agreement will eventually include "a security and defense aspect."

"There is no doubt that this accord removes any political impediment that stands against the cooperation of the defense forces," the ministry said.

In the region, only Israel now flies the fighter jet as a planned purchase by Turkey collapsed over Ankara purchasing a Russian S-400 anti-aircraft missile system.

Anwar Gargash, the Emirati minister of state for foreign affairs, has repeatedly said the UAE's decision to open diplomatic ties with Israel had nothing to do with Iran. In Tehran, state television only mentioned the F-35 in passing online as a "reward for peace," without elaborating.

However, the UAE's autocratic government long has considered Iran its top regional threat and recent tensions between Tehran and Washington have seen a series of incidents near it. Deployed Patriot missile batteries visible from one major Dubai highway remain pointed north toward Iran.

Since Trump unilaterally withdrew from Iran's 2015 nuclear deal, Tehran has slowly broken every limit on its atomic program. While Iran insists its program is peaceful, Western nations fear it could be used to develop nuclear weapons.

Abu Dhabi's crown prince Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, who serves as the UAE's day-to-day ruler, long has warned Israel may strike first to destroy Iran's nuclear program if it isn't contained. That would start a regional war that would see Tehran target the Emirates, he's repeatedly told U.S. officials.

"This is the Middle East and we will do what we need to do," Sheikh Mohammed was quoted in a February 2009 U.S. diplomatic cable published by WikiLeaks. "When the Iranians fire their missiles we will go after them and kill them."

That sounds a lot like Netanyahu, who stood in front of an Israeli F-35 last year to issue a similar warning over Iran.

"Recently, Iran has been threatening the destruction of Israel," Netanyahu said at the time. "It would do well to remember that these planes can reach anywhere in the Middle East, including Iran and certainly Syria."

EDITOR'S NOTE — Jon Gambrell, the news director for the Gulf and Iran for The Associated Press, has reported from each of the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, Iran and other locations across the world since joining the AP in 2006. AP correspondent Aron Heller, based in Jerusalem, has covered the Middle East for the AP since 2005.

Belarus' leader digs in amid continuing protests

By YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

MINSK, Belarus (AP) — Demonstrators again took to the streets of the Belarusian capital and other cities Thursday, keeping up their push for the nation's authoritarian leader to step down after extending his 26-year rule in a vote the opposition saw as rigged.

President Alexander Lukashenko has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and threatened opposition leaders with criminal charges. Following that, a leading opposition figure reported receiving threats

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and being threatened with arrest.

The 65-year-old Belarusian leader dismissed the European Union's criticism of the Aug. 9 vote and told its leaders to mind their own business.

The EU leaders on Wednesday rejected the official results of the election that showed Lukashenko win 80% of the vote and expressed solidarity with protesters. The EU said it's preparing sanctions against Belarusian officials responsible for the brutal post-election police actions.

During the first four days of protests, police detained almost 7,000 people and injured hundreds with rubber bullets, stun grenades and clubs. At least three protesters died.

The crackdown fueled massive outrage and swelled protesters' ranks, forcing authorities to change tactics and stop breaking up crowds that grew to an unprecedented 200,000 on Sunday.

However, after standing back for days, police again beefed up their presence on the streets of the Belarusian capital Wednesday, blocking access to some government buildings and also deploying in numbers outside major factories where workers have been on strike since Monday.

The industrial action that has engulfed major factories across the country cast a tough challenge to Lukashenko, who had relied on blue-collar workers as his core support base.

In a bid to stop the strike from spreading, Lukashenko on Wednesday warned that the participants would face dismissal and ordered law enforcement agencies to protect factory managers from the opposition pressure.

The Belarusian leader also warned members of the Coordination Council who held their first meeting Wednesday that they could face criminal responsibility for their attempt to create "parallel power structures."

The council called for a new presidential vote organized by newly formed election commissions and demanded an investigation into the crackdown on protests and compensation for the victims.

The opposition body consists of top associates of Lukashenko's main challenger, Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya, as well as rights activists and representatives of striking workers. It also includes the nation's most famous author, Svetlana Alexievich, who won the 2015 Nobel Prize in literature.

A leading council member, Pavel Latushko, who was fired earlier this week for siding with protesters, said he had received threats and could move to Russia to avoid being arrested. The facade of his house in Minsk was splashed with red paint overnight.

Vladimir Isachenkov in Moscow contributed to this report.

Follow AP's coverage of the political turmoil in Belarus at <https://www.apnews.com/Belarus>

Russia's Navalny in coma in ICU after alleged poisoning

By DARIA LITVINOVA Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny is in a coma and on a ventilator in a hospital intensive care unit after falling ill from suspected poisoning that his allies believe is linked to his political activity.

The 44-year-old foe of Russia's President Vladimir Putin felt unwell on a flight back to Moscow from Tomsk, a city in Siberia, and was taken to a hospital after the plane made an emergency landing in Omsk, Navalny's spokeswoman Kira Yarmysh said on Twitter.

She told the Echo Moskvyy radio station he must have consumed something from tea he drank at an airport cafe before boarding the plane early Thursday. During the flight, Navalny started sweating and asked her to talk to him so that he could "focus on a sound of a voice." He then went to the bathroom and lost consciousness.

"Looks like Putin is doing really badly — was handed some data on protest sentiment growing explosively — if he made the decision to poison Navalny," the politician's close ally Vladimir Milov said in a tweet.

Navalny is currently being treated at the Omsk ambulance hospital №1, he is in a coma in grave condition. Doctors at the hospital remain tight-lipped about his diagnosis. Anatoliy Kalinichenko, deputy chief

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doctor of the hospital, told reporters that Navalny was in grave, yet stable condition. Kalinichenko said doctors are considering a variety of diagnosis, including poisoning, but refused to give details, citing a law preventing doctors from disclosing confidential patient information.

State news agency Tass reported that police were not considering deliberate poisoning, citing an anonymous source in law enforcement who said "it is not unlikely that he drank or consumed something yesterday himself."

Yarmysh on Twitter bristled at that suggestion: "Of course. It's just the tea was bad. This is what the state propaganda is going to do now — yell that there was no deliberate poisoning, he (did something) accidentally, he (did something) himself."

Navalny's doctor Yaroslav Ashikhmin told the independent Meduza outlet that he is trying to arrange his transfer to a clinic in Hanover or Strasbourg, saying that medics in Europe not only can offer better treatment, but also figure out which toxin Navalny was poisoned with.

Last year, Navalny was rushed to a hospital from prison where he was serving a sentence following an administrative arrest, with what his team said was suspected poisoning. Doctors then said he had a severe allergic attack and discharged him back to prison the following day.

Navalny's Foundation for Fighting Corruption has been exposing graft among government officials, including some at the highest level. Last month, he had to shut the foundation after a financially devastating lawsuit from Yevgeny Prigozhin, a businessman with close ties to the Kremlin.

Belarus' authoritarian President Alexander Lukashenko accused Navalny last week of organizing unprecedented mass protests against his re-election that have rocked Russia's ex-Soviet neighbor since Aug. 9. He did not, however, provide any evidence and that claim was one of many blaming foreign forces for the unrest.

Like many other opposition politicians in Russia, Navalny has been frequently detained by law enforcement and harassed by pro-Kremlin groups. In 2017, he was attacked by several men who threw antiseptic in his face, damaging one eye.

The most prominent member of Russia's opposition, Navalny campaigned to challenge Putin in the 2018 presidential election, but was barred from running.

He set up a network of campaign offices across Russia and has since been putting forward opposition candidates in regional elections, challenging members of Russia's ruling party, United Russia. One of his associates in Khabarovsk, a city in Russia's Far East that has been engulfed in mass protests against the arrest of the region's governor, was detained just last week after calling for a strike at a rally.

In the interview with Echo Moskvyy, Yarmysh said she believed the suspected poisoning was connected to this year's regional election campaign.

Vyacheslav Gimadi, a lawyer with Navalny's foundation, said the team is requesting Russia's Investigative Committee open a criminal probe. "There is no doubt that Navalny was poisoned because of his political stance and activity," Gimadi said in a tweet on Thursday.

Navalny is not the first opposition figure to come down with a mysterious poisoning. In 2018, Pyotr Verzilov, a member of Russia's protest group Pussy Riot, ended up in an intensive care unit after a suspected poisoning and had to be flown to Berlin for treatment. Opposition activist Vladimir Kara-Murza was hospitalized with poisoning symptoms twice — in 2015 and 2017. Both said they believed they were poisoned for their political activity.

Many likely sought jobless aid after federal benefit lapses

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The government will provide its latest snapshot Thursday of the pace of layoffs in the United States, which have declined steadily but remain stuck at a high level with the economy still in the grip of the viral pandemic that erupted in March.

The number of applications that were reported last week fell below 1 million after 20 straight weeks above that level. Yet at roughly 960,000, it was still painfully high. Before the viral outbreak, the weekly

figure had never topped 700,000, even during the Great Recession.

The latest string of layoffs follows the expiration of a \$600 weekly federal check that provided vital support for millions of laid-off Americans. Negotiations in Congress to extend that benefit, though at a lower level of payment, have collapsed. The Trump administration is offering a new \$300-a-week federal benefit, which states need to apply for and must revamp their computer systems to accommodate.

Harris seizes historic moment in accepting VP nomination

By WILL WEISSERT, KAT STAFFORD and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Kamala Harris accepted the Democratic nomination for vice president on Wednesday, cementing her place in history as the first Black woman on a major party ticket and promising she and Joe Biden will rejuvenate a country ravaged by a pandemic and riven by racial and partisan divides.

In an address capping the third night of the virtual Democratic National Convention, the California senator evoked the lessons of her late mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a biologist and Indian immigrant, saying she instilled in her a vision of “our nation as a beloved community — where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from or who we love.”

“In this election, we have a chance to change the course of history,” Harris said. “We’re all in this fight.”

Mixing a former prosecutor’s polish with the deeply personal, Harris also spoke of her Jamaican father and getting a “stroller’s eye view” of the civil rights movement as her parents protested in the streets in the 1960s.

“There is no vaccine for racism,” Harris said. “We have got to do the work.”

Harris addressed a party that has staked its future on bringing together a racially diverse coalition of voters. She was preceded in the convention program by Barack Obama, meaning the nation’s first Black president introduced the woman trying to be the first Black person to hold the vice presidency. Obama said Harris was an “ideal partner” for Biden and was “more than prepared for the job.”

Harris is a former district attorney and California state attorney general. She promised to speak “truths” to the American public. She said she and Biden, who tapped her as his running mate last week, believe in a country where “we may not agree on every detail, but we are united by the fundamental belief that every human being is of infinite worth, deserving of compassion, dignity and respect.”

Democrats hope Harris can galvanize their party’s faithful — who are divided between progressive and moderate wings — and win over swing voters still deciding between Biden and Trump. But she also was introducing herself to a national audience that may not have been paying close attention to the race until now.

“For somebody with her wealth of background and experience, she’s still fresh. She’s still new,” said Ohio Rep. Marcia Fudge, a former chair of the Congressional Black Caucus who endorsed Harris’ 2020 presidential primary run before throwing her support behind Biden in March.

Harris spoke at a convention center in Biden’s home state of Delaware that was empty except for socially distanced reporters and a few campaign staffers. She was introduced by her sister, Maya, her niece Meena and Ella Emhoff, her stepdaughter who calls her “Momala.” At the end of her speech, Biden walked out to join her from a distance and both were soon joined by their spouses.

In sweeping remarks that touched on the legacy of Black women who paved the way for this moment, Harris noted that this week marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote. Except that right, Harris said, came much later for most Black women, who helped secure that victory yet were still prohibited from voting.

“Without fanfare or recognition, they organized, testified, rallied, marched, and fought — not just for their vote, but for a seat at the table,” Harris said. “We’re not often taught their stories. But as Americans, we all stand on their shoulders.”

Harris also blistered Trump, something she’s expected to do frequently as she campaigns with Biden in the coming months — though in-person events may remain impossible as the coronavirus rages. She re-

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called her days in the courtroom when she would declare "Kamala Harris for the people," reviving a slogan from her presidential campaign, while noting, "I know a predator when I see one." She didn't mention the president by name then but didn't spare him later.

"Donald Trump's failure has cost lives and livelihoods," Harris said. She later added, "Right now, we have a president who turns our tragedies into political weapons. Joe will be a president who turns our challenges into purpose."

The Biden campaign is hoping Harris can excite young voters and people of color, especially after months of protests over institutional racism and police brutality that swept the country. She's known for her tough questioning in the Senate, particularly during confirmation hearings of two Trump nominees, Brett Kavanaugh for Supreme Court justice and William Barr for attorney general. She also caused a stir by broadsiding Biden during a primary debate last summer over his opposition to busing in the 1970s to integrate public schools.

But things didn't always go smoothly. Harris launched her presidential bid with expectations that she would electrify the field, only to see her campaign struggle to find a consistent message and fizzle months before the first votes were cast.

Some voters are paying particularly close attention to Harris because she could be called upon to step into the role of party standard-bearer as soon as 2024, should Biden — who will be 81 by then — opt not to seek a second term. Biden hasn't expressly said he'd serve just a single term, but he has talked about being a bridge to a new generation.

Harris said her mother instilled in her and her sister values that charted the course of their lives.

"She raised us to be proud, strong Black women," Harris said. "And she raised us to know and be proud of our Indian heritage."

The campaign is deeply personal for Harris in others ways, too. She spoke Wednesday of her friendship with the former vice president's son Beau, who died of brain cancer in 2015. He and Harris became close while both were state attorneys general.

"I knew Joe as vice president. I knew Joe on the campaign trail," she said. "But I first got to know Joe as the father of my friend."

Weissert reported from Washington and Stafford from Detroit.

Democrats pound their message: To oust Trump, you must vote

By STEVE PEOPLES, MICHELLE L. PRICE and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Former President Barack Obama warned that American democracy could falter if President Donald Trump is reelected, a stunning rebuke of his successor that was echoed by Kamala Harris at the Democratic Convention as she embraced her historic role as the first Black woman on a national political ticket.

Obama, himself a barrier breaker as the nation's first Black president, pleaded with voters Wednesday night to "embrace your own responsibility as citizens — to make sure that the basic tenets of our democracy endure. Because that's what is at stake right now. Our democracy."

Throughout their convention, the Democrats have summoned a collective urgency about the dangers of Trump as president. In 2016, they dismissed and sometimes trivialized him. Now they are casting him as an existential threat to the country. The tone signals anew that the fall campaign between Trump and Joe Biden, already expected to be among the most negative of the past half-century, will be filled with rancor and recrimination.

Yet on the third night of the Democrats' four-day convention, party leaders also sought to put forward a cohesive vision of their values and policy priorities, highlighting efforts to combat climate change and tighten gun laws. They drew a sharp contrast with Trump, portraying him as cruel in his treatment of immigrants, disinterested in the nation's climate crisis and in over his head on virtually all of the nation's most pressing challenges.

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Democrats also demonstrated a hope that Biden, a 77-year-old white man, can revive the coalition that helped put Obama into office, with minorities, younger voters and college-educated women blunting Trump's lock on many white and rural voters.

The evening marked a celebration of the party's leading women, including remarks from Hillary Clinton, the first woman to become a major ticket presidential nominee; House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who challenged Biden during the primary and is now supporting his campaign.

Harris, a 55-year-old California senator and the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, addressed race and equality in a personal way Biden cannot when he formally accepts his party's presidential nomination on Thursday.

"There is no vaccine for racism. We have got to do the work," Harris said, her words emphatic though she was speaking in a largely empty arena near Biden's Delaware home.

"We've got to do the work to fulfill the promise of equal justice under law," she added. "None of us are free until all of us are free."

Just 75 days before the election, Biden must energize the disparate factions that make up the modern Democratic Party — a coalition that spans generation, race and ideology. And this fall voters must deal with concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic that has created health risks for those who want to vote in person — and postal slowdowns for mail-in ballots, which Democrats blame on Trump.

Democrats hope that Harris and Obama in particular can help bridge the divide between those reassured by Biden's establishment credentials and those craving bolder change.

The pandemic forced Biden's team to abandon the traditional convention format in favor of an all-virtual affair that has eliminated much of the pomp and circumstance that typically defines political conventions. It was completely silent, for example, as Harris took the stage to make history at the Chase Center in downtown Wilmington. She was flanked by American flags but no family, and her audience consisted of a few dozen reporters and photographers.

After two nights that featured several Republicans, the proceedings on Wednesday emphasized core Democratic values on areas like climate change and gun violence that particularly resonate with younger voters.

On guns, Biden wants to repeal a law shielding firearm manufacturers from liability lawsuits, impose universal background checks for purchases and ban the manufacture and sale of assault weapons and high capacity magazines. On climate, Biden has proposed a \$2 trillion plan to invest in clean energy and end carbon emissions from U.S. power plants by 2035, even though his proposals don't go as far as activists' preferred Green New Deal.

Wednesday night, former Arizona Rep. Gabby Giffords reflected on her own journey of pain and recovery from a severe brain injury nearly a decade after being shot while meeting with constituents. She urged America to support Biden.

"I struggle to speak, but I have not lost my voice," Giffords said. "Vote, vote, vote."

It's Trump's turn next. The Republican president, who abandoned plans to host his convention in North Carolina and in Florida, is expected to break tradition and accept his nomination from the White House lawn.

In the meantime, he's seeking to take attention from Biden. Trump will stop near his Democratic rival's birthplace of Scranton, Pennsylvania, on Thursday. He's also participating in a prime-time interview with Fox News Channel host Sean Hannity.

Hillary Clinton, Trump's 2016 rival, implored Democrats to turn out in larger numbers in November to block his reelection.

"For four years, people have said to me, 'I didn't realize how dangerous he was.' I wish I could go back and do it over.' Or worst, 'I should have voted,'" said Clinton, the first woman nominated president by a major party. "Well, this can't be another woulda coulda shoulda election."

"Vote like our lives and livelihoods are on the line," she added, "because they are."

Obama spoke harshly of Trump, too.

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"Donald Trump hasn't grown into the job because he can't," Obama said, speaking from the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, a backdrop chosen to reinforce what the former president sees as the dire stakes of the moment.

"I have sat in the Oval Office with both of the men who are running for president," Obama continued, describing Biden as his brother. "I never expected that my successor would embrace my vision or continue my policies. I did hope, for the sake of our country, that Donald Trump might show some interest in taking the job seriously."

Obama confidants say that the former president's support for Biden is unequivocal, but he worries about enthusiasm among younger voters, particularly younger voters of color. Democrats concede that one of the reasons Trump won the presidency in 2016 was because those voters didn't show up in the same large numbers as when Obama was on the ballot.

Beyond the carefully scripted confines of the virtual convention, there were modest signs of tension between the moderate and progressive wings of Biden's Democratic Party.

In particular, some progressives complained that pro-Biden Republicans such as Ohio Gov. John Kasich have been featured more prominently than the party's younger progressive stars like New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Climate activists also complained that the party appeared ready to drop a provision in the platform that calls for an end to fossil fuel industry subsidies and tax breaks.

Sen. Warren, a favorite of progressives for demanding bold change, spoke for around five minutes.

And while Warren urged people to vote for Biden and gave a hearty endorsement for several of his economic and child care plans, she hinted that she would not retreat from her push for a more progressive agenda should her party retake the White House.

"We all need to be in the fight to get Joe and Kamala elected," Warren said. "And after November, we all need to stay in the fight to get big things done."

Price reported from Las Vegas and Peoples from New York. AP Washington Bureau Chief Julie Pace contributed to this report.

5 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. OBAMA: AMERICAN DEMOCRACY COULD FALTER IF TRUMP REELECTED

Former President Barack Obama warns that American democracy could falter if President Donald Trump is reelected.

2. BIDEN'S LONG PATH TO A POTENTIALLY CRUCIAL PRESIDENCY

When Joe Biden steps to the podium as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, he will offer himself to a wounded, meandering nation as balm — and as a bridge.

3. TRUMP EAGER TO TROLL BIDEN OUTSIDE SCRANTON BIRTHPLACE

President Donald Trump, in what can only be described as piece of campaign trolling, will stage an event just outside the former vice president's birthplace in Scranton, Pennsylvania,

4. VICTIMS WANT GOLDEN STATE KILLER TO LIVE IN FEAR IN PRISON

Since death row isn't an option for serial killer and rapist Joseph DeAngelo, his victims want him sent to the toughest possible prison in California to live in daily terror of other inmates.

5. RUSSIA'S NAVALNY IN COMA AFTER ALLEGED POISONING

Russian opposition politician Alexei Navalny is in a coma and on a ventilator in a hospital intensive care unit in Siberia after falling ill from suspected poisoning during a flight, his spokeswoman says.

For Joe Biden, long path to a potentially crucial presidency

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

When Joe Biden steps to the podium Thursday night as the Democratic Party's presidential nominee, he will offer himself to a wounded, meandering nation as balm — and as a bridge.

A 77-year-old steeped in the American political establishment for a half-century, Biden cannot himself embody the kind of generational change that Presidents John F. Kennedy or Bill Clinton represented. Even with wide-ranging proposals for government action on health care, taxation and the climate crisis, he will never be the face of a burgeoning progressive movement. As a white man, Biden cannot know personally the systemic racism now at the forefront of a national reckoning over centuries-old social and economic inequities.

But the former vice president, six-term senator and twice failed presidential candidate draws plenty on lived experience — two generations spent on each end of Pennsylvania Avenue, a record that mixes partisan street-fighting with bipartisan deal-making and bonhomie, and a personal journey of middle-class mores, individual struggle and family heartbreak.

That is how he is presenting himself as the person to lead the country beyond the tumultuous tenure of President Donald Trump.

"There's great seriousness of purpose here," said Valerie Biden Owens, the candidate's younger sister and, until his current White House bid, perennial campaign manager. "We are in a time of struggle. We are in a time a grief," she continued, nodding to the novel coronavirus, its economic fallout and the reckoning on race. "All of this has come together. My brother appreciates it. He can feel it."

The electorate ultimately will decide whether Biden in fact offers a bridge back to a pre-Trump version of normal, a path forward to a more equitable society or some combination. Voters' most immediate consideration, though, may be that he is not the incumbent.

"Everything that Donald Trump is, my brother is the polar opposite. I don't have to make him bigger than he is," said sister Val. "Joe's the right person at the right time for all the right reasons."

Biden has used his convention to showcase what his campaign hopes will be a winning coalition.

Prime-time hours have been generously sprinkled with Republicans. A video highlighted Biden's friendship with the late Sen. John McCain, the 2008 GOP presidential nominee. Former Ohio Gov. John Kasich endorsed Biden and assured anti-Trump Republicans that he had no worries Biden might make a "sharp left turn" in office.

Biden, though, spent recent months working with primary runner-up Bernie Sanders and other progressives tweaking his policy slate leftward. Those moves reflect Biden's increasing emphasis on wide wealth and opportunity gaps he says have been "laid bare" by the pandemic's economic effects.

Sanders repeated his support for Biden on Monday and emphasized Biden's agenda as he urged skeptical progressives to vote affirmatively for the Democratic nominee, not just against Trump.

Younger Democrats to Biden's left, several who are non-white, have helped fill out the program. It's a public projection of what Biden tells top Democrats privately in frank acknowledgment of his age: He wants to elevate a new generation, one that looks wholly different from the all-male, nearly all-white Senate Democratic Caucus he joined in 1973.

He underscored the point by selecting California Sen. Kamala Harris as his running mate, making her the first Black woman to join a major party's national ticket.

Biden sees no inherent conflicts in his wide-net approach, arguing over nearly 16 months of campaigning that the country must relearn how to govern by some semblance of consensus, and that starts with bringing varied voices to the negotiating table.

Part of Biden's ability to make seemingly disparate appeals is that his policy pitches remain secondary to the personal pitch, amplified during the convention, that he is a decent, compassionate man of faith, a practicing Roman Catholic.

While he likes to project an "Uncle Joe" persona, he still flashes the short fuse that was more common decades ago. In Iowa, he told one climate activist to "vote for somebody else." He challenged a man who

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questioned his age to a push-ups contest.

Still, empathy more than anger has defined Biden's life, as the vice president who buried an adult son stricken by cancer, the young widower and father who lost his first wife and infant daughter in a car accident, and the schoolboy mocked by classmates and a nun for a severe stutter.

His sister points to that childhood crucible as seminal — and newly applicable in Biden's campaign against Trump amid the backdrop of a changing electorate.

"When you are bullied, you have a choice to make," Biden Owens said. "You can become a bully yourself and step on people who don't look like you or don't speak like you or whose value you don't even begin to understand. Or you can choose to realize we are in this together and develop empathy, which is what Joe did. He appeals to your better instincts."

Biden's candidacy has met criticism since he launched his bid April 25, 2019, but he heads into the final 75 days of the campaign unscathed by second-guessing.

It's a truism there are no second acts in presidential politics. Biden is on his third. His first White House bid in 1988 flamed out over plagiarism allegations. On his second attempt 20 years later, he barely nudged 1% in Iowa and watched Barack Obama soar to the nomination.

When Obama tapped Biden as his running mate, it looked like his career capstone. Biden has said he wouldn't have run this time if Trump weren't president. But he did, and he stood out immediately.

In a primary presumed to be about Democrats' ideological rift between progressives and the center-left establishment, Biden took aim at Trump. Sure, Biden sided with the mainstream liberals and moderates on policy, but in his stem-winding, sometimes poorly focused speeches he lamented that Trump was damaging "the soul of the nation." He often referenced a 2018 book "How Democracies Die."

None of his rivals, even with routine excoriations of the president, offered themselves quite so plainly as the antidote.

Early on, it didn't work. Biden finished fourth in Iowa, fifth in New Hampshire, and was in danger of collapse. But South Carolina's Black voters, a constituency not significantly represented in the first two nominating states, stood by his candidacy and propelled him to the nomination.

The critical moment came with an endorsement from House Majority Whip Jim Clyburn, the highest-ranking Black member of Congress and a towering figure in South Carolina.

"I know Joe," Clyburn said in an emotional appeal. "But more importantly, Joe knows us."

Biden took complete control of the nomination about the same time public health officials urged a national lock-down. So he's spent much of the spring and summer in the same place where he recorded his launch video last spring: his home in Delaware. Yet even with Trump mocking him for "hiding in his basement," Biden will conclude his convention with a discernible lead in national and most battleground state polls.

Biden will accept the nomination Thursday night without the usual trappings — the boisterous arena, the balloons. He'll speak instead directly into the camera as a relative handful of aides, family and media look on.

"We don't look at this ... as a victory lap," Biden Owens said, recalling the celebration when he narrowly won his first Senate race before his 30th birthday. "We stormed the convention center in Delaware, in Dover, with high school marching bands. We burst onto the floor with the bands and the cheering." This year, she said, the "convention reflects the moment."

North Korea sets rare party meeting after economic shortfall

By KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — With unusual candor, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un admitted that U.S.-led sanctions, the pandemic and devastating floods have hurt his country's dismal economy as his ruling party scheduled a rare congress in January to set development goals for the next five years.

Kim announced his first five-year development plan with goals of improving North Korea's power supply and agricultural and manufacturing production during the last Workers' Party congress in 2016, its first in 36 years.

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But at Wednesday's meeting of the party's decision-making Central Committee, Kim acknowledged economic shortcomings caused by "unexpected and inevitable challenges in various aspects and the situation in the region surrounding the Korean Peninsula," the North's official Korean Central News Agency reported Thursday.

Experts say the coronavirus derailed some of Kim's major economic goals after North Korea imposed a lockdown that significantly reduced trade with China — its major ally and economic lifeline — and likely hampered its ability to mobilize its workforce.

In a closed-door briefing to South Korean lawmakers on Thursday, Seoul's spy agency said the stress of managing state affairs caused Kim to recently delegate some of his powers to a select group of senior officials, including his sister Kim Yo Jong, who is now chiefly involved in shaping policies toward Washington and Seoul.

Lawmaker Ha Tae-keung said officials from the National Intelligence Service, which has a mixed track record in reading developments in North Korea's secretive ruling elite, insisted that Kim Jong Un's rule over his country remains absolute. There are no signs that Kim is experiencing health problems or is grooming his sister as his successor, Ha paraphrased NIS officials as saying.

Kim Byung-kee, another lawmaker who attended the briefing, said the NIS believes North Korea's foreign currency reserves are being depleting rapidly because of prolonged border controls imposed under its anti-virus campaign which have led to cutbacks in construction and other activities.

The NIS did not confirm the lawmakers' comments.

Last week, Kim Jong Un sacked his premier after an evaluation of the Cabinet's performance in economic policies. He also said the country was facing a dual challenge of fending off COVID-19 and repairing damage from torrential rain that lashed the country in recent weeks, destroying thousands of homes and nearly 100,000 acres of crops. Kim insisted North Korea will keep its borders shut and reject any outside help.

"North Korea had originally planned to lavishly celebrate its economic achievements (from Kim's first five-year plan) at the Oct. 10 celebration of the 75th anniversary of the party's founding ... but couldn't foresee the huge setbacks" caused by COVID-19 and floods, said Cheong Seong-Chang, a senior analyst at South Korea's Sejong Institute.

While scheduling the new party congress for January likely reflects hope that the pandemic will ease by then, North Korea may struggle to fully revive cross-border trade, especially if its poor healthcare system continues to raise concern, Cheong said.

The Workers' Party said North Korea's economy has "not improved in the face of the sustaining severe internal and external situations and unexpected manifold challenges" and that development goals have been "seriously delayed and the people's living standard (has) not been improved remarkably."

The party congress in January will "set forth a correct line of struggle and strategic and tactical policies" after reviewing the experience of the last five years, it said in a statement published on KCNA.

The report didn't directly mention nuclear diplomacy with the United States, which has stalled over disagreements in exchanging sanctions relief and denuclearization steps. But It's possible Kim could use the party congress, which would take place after the U.S. presidential election in November, to announce a new foreign policy approach toward the United States and South Korea.

Kim's economic setbacks have left him with nothing to show for his high-stakes summitry with President Donald Trump. Their diplomacy deteriorated after the collapse of their talks last year in Vietnam, when the Americans rejected North Korea's demand for major sanctions relief in exchange for a partial surrender of its nuclear capabilities.

Some experts say the North is likely to avoid serious negotiations with the United States before the election since U.S. leadership could change.

"By January, (Kim) will know the result of the U.S. presidential election so may update North Korea's position on denuclearization talks," said Leif-Eric Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul.

"However, North Korea continues to expand its capabilities despite economic challenges and independent of diplomatic signaling. While much of the world is focused on the pandemic and contentious elections,

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the Kim regime is advancing its nuclear, missile and cyber programs for coercion, not just deterrence.”

During the 2016 congress, Kim declared his country will not use its nuclear weapons first unless its sovereignty is threatened and he proposed talks with the South. South Korea had employed a hard line until the 2017 inauguration of President Moon Jae-in, a dovish liberal who met Kim three times in 2018. But bilateral relations have cooled during the stalemate in U.S. nuclear diplomacy and Seoul’s refusal to defy the sanctions.

‘Best that we can do’: DNC viewers adjust to virtual format

By JIM SALTER, STEPHEN GROVES and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

BALLWIN, Mo. (AP) — Nick Zingarelli relished Michelle Obama’s speech at the Democratic National Convention this week, especially when the former first lady used President Donald Trump’s own words — “It is what it is” — to sum up Democrats’ disappointment in his presidency.

But the moment on the first night of the first virtual convention was bittersweet for Zingarelli. A line that good deserved a thunderous applause from a crowded convention hall, he thought.

“Not having that response — yeah, there was something that was taken away from that,” said Zingarelli, a 41-year-old lawyer from suburban St. Louis. “But it’s the best that we can do in this environment.”

In other words, it is what it is.

Many Americans who have tuned in to Democrats’ experiment in socially distanced political theater have come away with similar reactions. They believe that a traditional nominating convention — a boisterous and quirky affair staged for a packed audience of hyped-up political activists — had to be sacrificed for safety and public health. But its replacement — a mashup of homemade videos, slickly produced montages and speeches with no applause — takes some getting used to.

Millions of people are still watching Democrats’ four-day celebration of their presidential nominee, former Vice President Joe Biden, and his running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris.

They are at home watching on TV and computer screens, or passing around clips of the highlights the day after. Some were in their cars at drive-in movie-style viewing stations Democrats set up in a few states. Some have tried for a social experience by jumping on a Zoom watch party.

Zingarelli organized a video conference for 25 attendees on Monday night and said the communal experience was lively.

“My wife and I were sitting side by side, rocking our Joe Biden aviators from the dollar store, just promoting the fun, and my wife was making signs,” Zingarelli, an ardent Biden supporter, said.

Through two nights, television viewership is sharply down from the 2016 convention. Monday’s first night reached 19.7 million viewers, the second night 19.2 million; the audience was around 25 million four years ago, the Nielsen company said. It’s hard to judge how much is due to the format, since people in general are watching less TV than they did four years ago.

The Biden campaign says an additional 10.2 million streamed the first night. Although that couldn’t be independently verified, this year’s programs appears tailor-made for that format, easily consumed in snippets and bites. The speeches have been shorter and less formal than the behind-the-podium oratory of conventions past.

The new virtual format has spawned some creative reimagining of old traditions — including a new roll call vote quickly embraced as a success. Viewers praised the montage of clips featuring delegates announcing their states’ vote tallies from state landmarks and scenic landscapes.

Laura DeGroff Simoes of Concord, New Hampshire, who voted in the Democratic primary but considers herself an independent, said it’s a welcome change that offered a glimpses of the places homebound Americans miss.

“There was much more diversity represented, there were different languages. I loved seeing the backdrop of where people were from,” said Simoes, who watched on TV alongside her husband and two sons.

Lynn Hart, a South Dakota farmer who is both Black and a member of the Yankton Sioux Tribe, would have been in Milwaukee, the original site of the convention, as a first-time delegate. While disappointed

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about the change, he said there have been perks. The video conference format allows him to network with other Democrats while moving seamlessly between a lineup of meetings.

"I can sit here in my shorts, T-shirt or my pajamas and pick and choose who I listen to," he said.

But some delegates missed the in-person action.

Jackie Craig, a Minnesota delegate, watched from her home — sometimes from a closet so she wouldn't distract the rest of the family. A self-described "obnoxious extrovert," she said it was a "little deflating" missing the in-person experience.

"I would have been like one of those dogs who wags its tail so hard it probably passed out," Craig, 49, said.

Republicans are watching, too. Carol Wessel Boyer of Troy, Missouri, has been active in GOP politics for decades and knows the kind of bounce conventions can give to a candidate. She doesn't see the virtual DNC generating that sort of excitement, and doesn't expect the Republican version will, either.

"They're just not going to get the enthusiasm you normally pick up from a convention," Boyer said. "It's hard to get excited about something virtually."

Republicans will get their shot next week. President Donald Trump is due to give his nomination acceptance speech at the White House. But GOP convention planners have said little else little about the details of their programming or format.

Nanda Nunnely served as a delegate at the 2016 convention in Philadelphia, and she's a delegate again. This time, she's been watching with another delegate, Genevieve Williams, from Williams' home in Neosho, Missouri.

Nunnely, 53, says they miss the crowds, drama and excitement — not just from the soaring speeches and historic moments, but at the parties afterward.

"Now, it was just like, you're on a high note and, 'OK, let's go to bed now,'" she said.

Groves reported from Sioux Falls, S.D. Ronayne reported from Sacramento, Calif. AP Media Writer David Bauder in New York contributed to this report.

Water already dwindling, Egypt's farmers fear impact of dam

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

SECOND VILLAGE, Egypt (AP) — In the winter of 1964, Makhluif Abu Kassem was born in this agricultural community newly created at the far end of Egypt's Fayoum oasis. His parents were among the village's first settlers, moving here three years earlier from the Nile Valley to carve out a new life as farmers.

It was a bright and prosperous start. The region was fertile, and for four decades they made their living growing corn, cotton and wheat.

Now 55, Abu Kassem looks out what's left of his shriveling farm, surrounded by barren wasteland that was once his neighbors' farmland — victims of dwindling irrigation in recent years.

"There used to be enough water to make all this area green. ... Now, it is as you see," he said.

In the past, he and other villagers irrigated their farms through canals linked to the Nile River, Egypt's lifeline since ancient times. It provides the country with a thin, richly fertile stretch of green land through the desert.

But years of mismanagement, corruption and increasing population led to the loss of at least 75% of farmland in the village and the surrounding areas, according to Abdel-Fattah el-Aweidi, head of Gazaer Qouta Agriculture Association, overseeing the area.

Now, Abu Kassem fears that a dam Ethiopia is building on the Blue Nile, the Nile's main tributary, could add to the severe water shortages already hitting his village if no deal is struck to ensure a continued flow of water.

"The dam means our death," he said.

The exact impact of the dam on downstream countries Egypt and Sudan remains unknown. For Egyptian farmers, the daunting prospect adds a new worry on top of the other causes of mounting water scarcity.

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Egypt is already spreading its water resources thin. Its booming population, now over 100 million, has one of the lowest per capita shares of water in the world, at around 550 cubic meters per year, compared to a global average of 1,000.

Ethiopia says the electricity that will be generated by its Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam is a crucial lifeline to bring its nearly 110 million citizens out of poverty.

Egypt, which relies on the Nile for more than 90% of its water supplies, including drinking water, industrial use and irrigation, fears a devastating impact if the dam is operated without taking its needs into account.

It wants to guarantee a minimum annual release of 40 billion cubic meters of water from the Blue Nile while Ethiopia fills the dam's giant reservoir, according to an irrigation official. That would be less than the 55 billion cubic meters Egypt usually gets from the Nile, mostly from the Blue Nile. The shortage would be filled by water stored behind Egypt's Aswan High Dam in Lake Nasser, which has a gross capacity of 169 billion cubic meters of water.

"If the dam is filled and operated without coordination between Egypt and Ethiopia, its impact will be destructive to the whole Egyptian society and the state will not be able to address its repercussions," said Egypt's former Irrigation Minister Mohammed Nasr Allam.

It is estimated that a permanent drop of 5 billion cubic meters of Nile water to Egypt would cause the loss of 1 million acres of farmland, or 12% of the country's total, he said.

Sudan says the project could endanger its own dams, though it would also see benefits from the Ethiopian dam, including cheap electricity and reduced flooding.

Abu Kassem's village, with the bland bureaucratic name of Second Village, was one of multiple agricultural communities created in Egypt in the 1960s by the socialist government of President Gamal Abdel-Nasser. Built on reclaimed desert, it depends for irrigation on the Yusuf Canal, which flows from the Nile through Fayoum, fanning out in a series of channels.

The villagers enumerated the variety of crops they used to farm, ranging from cotton and vegetables to wheats and grains.

Now most of the village's lands are barren. Almost all the Nile water that used to reach it is diverted into other agricultural projects or used for the growing population before it reaches Second Village, farmers say. Similar shortages of water have grown more common even in communities in the Nile Valley and the Delta, where farmers also face increasing salinity.

To irrigate, the village farmers now depend on wastewater from nearby towns, which is a mix of agricultural drainage and sewage.

On Abu Kassem's 16-acre farm, only a single acre is now cultivated. His family tried growing corn, but the plants died. They, like most others in the area, switched to growing olive trees, which use less water. But even those suffer.

"These trees haven't seen water in over 40 days," Abu Kassem said, showing a shriveled fruit.

With the water waning, many of the village's 12,000 people have left, including Abu Kassem's three brothers and his four sons.

Ihsan Abdel-Azim, 53, the wife of one of Abu Kassem's brothers, moved with her family to work as door-men in Cairo in 2001.

"We had had no choice at the time," the mother of five said, sitting among her grandchildren during a visit to the village earlier this month. "Cultivating the farm became insufficient to feed my children. All roads led that way."

Years-long negotiations among Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia failed to reach a deal on the dam. The dispute reached a tipping point earlier this week when Ethiopia announced it completed the first stage of the filling of the dam's 74 billion-cubic-meter reservoir.

That sparked fear and confusion in Sudan and Egypt. Both have repeatedly insisted Ethiopia must not start the fill without reaching a deal first.

Ethiopian Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed said the filling occurred naturally, "without bothering or hurting anyone else," from torrential rains flooding the Blue Nile.

Sticking points in the talks have been how much water Ethiopia will release downstream during the fill-

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ing if a multi-year drought occurs and how the three countries will resolve any future disputes. Egypt and Sudan have pushed for a binding agreement, while Ethiopia insists on non-binding guidelines.

In recent years, the Egyptian government accelerated its efforts to modernize the country's irrigation systems, including lining canals and encouraging farmers to adopt drip and spray irrigation, which use less water.

The government also slashed cultivation of water-consuming crops, such as rice, and threatened to fine farmers who grow such crops in areas not specified for its cultivation.

President Abdel Fattah el-Sissi said in televised comments late in July that his government allocated more than \$62.5 billion for investments to preserve water until 2037.

He reiterated warnings that the Nile is "a matter of life" for Egypt and acknowledged the anxiety gripping the country.

"I am also concerned," he declared.

Asia Today: India has record high of 69,000 more infections

NEW DELHI (AP) — India counted another record high of new coronavirus infections Thursday as it ramped up testing to more than 900,000 a day.

The 69,652 new cases pushed India's total past 2.8 million, of which 2 million have recovered, the Health Ministry said.

The country also recorded 977 coronavirus fatalities in the past 24 hours, raising total deaths to 53,866, the ministry said.

COVID-19 illnesses and deaths are thought to be far higher around the world due to limited testing and other factors.

India has conducted 3 million tests for the virus, but experts have urged increasing its testing capacity greatly, given India has the world's second-highest population of 1.4 billion people.

It has the third-most cases in the world, behind the United States and Brazil, and has the fourth highest number of deaths behind the U.S., Brazil and Mexico.

India's nationwide lockdown imposed in late March began easing in May and is now largely being enforced in high-risk areas.

On Wednesday, authorities ordered reopening of hotels and weekly markets in the Indian capital that were closed for nearly four months. The situation improved in the Indian capital with only 12 deaths reported in the past 24 hours.

Delhi has about 11,000 active cases after more than 139,000 people were infected.

Four of India's 28 states now account for 63% of total fatalities and 54.6% of the caseload. Western Maharashtra state and three southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are the worst-hit regions.

In other developments in the Asia-Pacific region:

— South Korea reported 288 new cases, its third straight day over 200, as health authorities scramble to slow an outbreak in the greater capital area. The Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said 230 of the new cases came from the Seoul metropolitan region, where health workers have struggled to track transmissions tied to various places and groups, including churches. As of noon Thursday, 676 cases have been linked to a huge northern Seoul church led by a vocal conservative activist. Sarang Jeil Church's pastor, Jun Kwang-hun, marched in downtown Seoul over the weekend, shared a microphone with other protesters and was later hospitalized after testing positive. At least 17 other protesters have tested positive so far. Separately, the Education Ministry said 240 infections have been confirmed among students and teachers since the country reopened elementary, middle- and high-schools in May.

— Australian lawmakers for the first time can attend Parliament remotely due to new rules introduced in response to the coronavirus pandemic. Australia's Parliament resumes in Canberra beginning Monday for two weeks. Lawmakers can participate in debates and ask questions by video with the House Speaker's approval, but they will not be able to vote on legislation, second motions or move amendments to legisla-

tion. Some lawmakers are spending two weeks in hotel quarantine ahead of Parliament resuming.

— Health officials in Australia's hot spot state said the daily new COVID-19 tally would have to be substantially lower before authorities would consider easing the lockdown in the city Melbourne. "I won't give you a figure, but single digits or even low double digits," Victoria state Deputy Chief Health Officer Allen Cheng said, though he was encouraged by a downward trend. Victoria Premier Daniel Andrews said if the city was reopened even at half the current figures, "you wouldn't have defeated the second wave. You'd just be beginning the process of a third wave." Victoria reported 240 new cases and 13 deaths Thursday, an increase from the previous day but continuing a recent decline. Melbourne has been under Australia's toughest pandemic lockdown restrictions for two weeks.

The Latest: Harris makes history in accepting VP nomination

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris has made history night as the first Black woman to accept a spot on a major party's presidential ticket.

In her highly anticipated address capping the third night of the virtual Democratic National Convention, Harris mixed her polish as a former prosecutor with deeply personal tales of her upbringing to argue that she and Joe Biden can rejuvenate a country ravaged by a pandemic and deeply divided by partisan bitterness.

Harris evoked the lessons of her late mother, Shyamala Gopalan, a biologist and Indian immigrant, saying Wednesday that she instilled in her a vision of "our nation as a beloved community -- where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we love."

"There is no vaccine for racism," Harris said. "We have got to do the work."

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

- Democratic convention takeaways: Make history, pound Trump
- Harris makes history with vice presidential acceptance speech
- Obama speaks at DNC from Museum of the American Revolution
- Hillary Clinton returns to DNC championing women in politics
- Democrats use Trump's 'It is what it is' to make their case

Follow AP's election coverage at <https://apnews.com/Election2020>

HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

President Donald Trump offered a running angry commentary of the Democratic convention as top party officials laced into his leadership.

In all-caps missives, Trump took to Twitter to push back as former President Barack Obama accused him of "treating the presidency as anything but one more reality show that he can use to get the attention he craves."

"HE SPIED ON MY CAMPAIGN, AND GOT CAUGHT," Trump tweeted falsely. Federal officials surveilled associates of Trump's 2016 campaign through legally obtained court warrants as part of a counterintelligence investigation into Russian election interference.

"WHY DID HE REFUSE TO ENDORSE SLOW JOE UNTIL IT WAS ALL OVER, AND EVEN THEN WAS VERY LATE? WHY DID HE TRY TO GET HIM NOT TO RUN?" Trump added, referencing his predecessor's decision to wait until the Democratic primary was largely wrapped up before throwing his weight behind Joe Biden.

Trump also untruthfully characterized Kamala Harris' criticism of Biden, saying, "BUT DIDN'T SHE CALL HIM A RACIST??? DIDN'T SHE SAY HE WAS INCOMPETENT??" Harris specifically said Biden wasn't racist, and she didn't call him incompetent.

Some of the most influential women in Kamala Harris' life are introducing her as the Democratic vice presidential nominee.

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They are Harris' younger sister, Maya Harris; her niece, Meena Harris; and her step-daughter, Ella Emhoff. Maya Harris has long been one of Harris' closest political advisers.

Emhoff is the daughter of Harris' husband, Doug Emhoff, and affectionately calls Harris "Momala."

At Wednesday's Democratic National Convention, Meena Harris called her aunt a role model who taught her she could do anything she wanted, and a role model to so many women and girls of color around the world. Maya Harris says she'll have Harris' back the way Harris had hers as children growing up.

Kamala Harris has been formally nominated as Democrats' pick for vice president, becoming the first Black woman to do so for a major political party.

The 55-year-old California senator ran unsuccessfully in the Democratic presidential primary, dropping out months before the first votes were cast.

Joe Biden emerged on top of the once-crowded primary field, clinching the nomination and tapping Harris as his running mate last week.

By joining the party's ticket, Harris also becomes just the third woman and first Asian-American to seek the vice presidency. She is a daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants.

A former state attorney general, Harris became close to Biden's son Beau while he was attorney general of Delaware. Beau Biden died of brain cancer in 2015, and Harris was elected to the Senate the following year.

Former President Barack Obama has delivered a searing take down of Donald Trump while presenting Joe Biden and Kamala Harris as the ones who will "lead this country out of these dark times."

Obama made the case for electing his former vice president and Harris, a California senator, during a live address to the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday from the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. He implored people to vote, arguing American democracy is at stake.

"This administration has shown that it will tear our democracy down if that's what it takes to win," Obama said, urging voters to "leave no doubt about what this country that we love stands for."

Obama is among the headliners on the convention's third night and is speaking before Harris. They are both barrier-breaking figures, he as the nation's first Black president and Harris as the first Black woman on a major party ticket.

Former presidential candidate Elizabeth Warren says Joe Biden can hold his own on having a plan for nearly every policy challenge, large and small.

The Massachusetts senator said Wednesday night in her Democratic National Convention speech: "I love a good plan, and Joe Biden has some really good plans — plans to bring back union jobs in manufacturing and create new union jobs in clean energy."

Warren spoke from an early education center in Springfield, Massachusetts, and said Biden will guarantee affordable, quality child care for all families.

She says the pandemic has laid bare another central theme of her presidential campaign, that the nation's economic system "has been rigged to give bailouts to billionaires and kick dirt in the face of everyone else."

She says, "Joe's plan to 'build back better' includes making the wealthy pay their fair share, holding corporations accountable, repairing racial inequities and fighting corruption in Washington."

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi is accusing President Donald Trump of "disrespect for facts, for working families and for women in particular," disrespect she says she's "seen firsthand."

Pelosi spoke Wednesday night during the Democratic National Convention with the Golden Gate Bridge as a backdrop. She said Trump's disrespect is "written into his policies toward our health and our rights, not just his conduct."

She contrasted Joe Biden as having a "heart full of love for America" against Trump's "heartless disregard for America's goodness."

Pelosi also listed a litany of bills House Democrats have passed, including LGBTQ protections, gun vio-

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lence measures and a coronavirus relief bill and charged that Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and Trump are "standing in the way" of those reforms.

She closed by predicting this fall that Democrats will increase their majority in the House and win back control of the Senate.

Hillary Clinton is reminding people of her 2016 loss despite winning 3 million more votes than Donald Trump as she urges Democrats not to sit the election out so he can't "sneak or steal his way to victory."

Addressing the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday from her home in Chappaqua, New York, Clinton says she hoped Trump would put his ego aside and be the president America needs, but that hasn't happened.

Recalling a moment when Trump asked Black voters in 2016 what they had to lose by supporting him, Clinton said: "Now we know."

Clinton says she knows about "the slings and arrows" that vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris will face as a Black woman on the ticket.

"Believe me: This former district attorney and attorney general can handle them all," she added.

Former Arizona Rep. Gabby Giffords is calling on Americans to speak out to combat gun violence, "even when you have to fight to find the words."

Struggling to speak herself, Giffords recounted her difficulty recovering from the 2011 shooting that nearly took her life.

Giffords said during brief remarks at the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday night: "Confronted by paralysis and aphasia, I responded with grit and determination."

The former congresswoman added: "Today I struggle to speak. But I have not lost my voice."

Since the shooting, Giffords has become a leading gun control advocate and frequently speaks out on the issue. She told viewers that Joe Biden was there for her after the shooting and that they must participate in the November election to be "on the right side of history."

"We can let the shooting continue, or we can act," she said, adding: "We can vote."

Kamala Harris kicked off the third night of the virtual Democratic National Convention by saying viewers may have heard "about obstacles and misinformation, and folks making it harder for you to cast your ballot."

"I think we need to ask ourselves why don't they want us to vote," Harris said Wednesday. "When we vote, things get better. When we vote, we address the need for all people to be treated with dignity and respect in our country."

She did not say what those possible obstacles were, but Democrats have accused President Donald Trump of deliberately trying to disrupt operations at the Postal Service in a year when more people are expected to vote by mail because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Harris urged viewers to send a text message to the Biden campaign to receive information on how to vote and deadlines for obtaining mail-in ballots, which vary by state.

Later Wednesday, she is expected to accept the Democratic vice presidential nomination.

President Donald Trump is pushing back against a reproach from former President Barack Obama, who is set to speak at the Democratic National Convention.

Trump said in a Wednesday evening news conference that the reason he is now in the White House is because Obama and Joe Biden, his opponent this November, did not do a good job.

Trump said, "They did such a bad job that I stand before you as president."

He said if they had done a good job, he wouldn't have even run for president in 2016. He says, "I would have been very happy. I enjoyed my previous life very much."

Excerpts of Obama's remarks released ahead of Wednesday's convention show he will portray his successor as having unleashed America's "worst impulses" and treated the presidency as a reality show "to get the attention he craves."

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Kamala Harris plans to use her history-making speech at the virtual Democratic National Convention to say she will help Joe Biden promote "a vision of our nation as a beloved community – where all are welcome, no matter what we look like, where we come from, or who we love."

The California senator will become the first Black woman to accept a spot on a major party's presidential ticket when she formally becomes Biden's running mate with her address later Wednesday. Her party hopes the moment can galvanize Democratic voters heading into the fall campaign against President Donald Trump.

She will call on the country to elect a "president who will bring all of us together — Black, white, Latino, Asian, Indigenous — to achieve the future we collectively want," according to excerpts released beforehand. "We must elect Joe Biden."

Harris also plans to criticize Trump, saying, "Right now, we have a president who turns our tragedies into political weapons."

"Joe will be a president who turns our challenges into purpose," Harris will say.

Former President Barack Obama is set to implore voters to back his former vice president for the nation's top job, arguing that "our democracy" is on the line.

Obama will address the virtual Democratic National Convention on Wednesday night from the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia. Excerpts of his speech were released in advance.

Obama says President Donald Trump has "shown no interest in putting in the work" or "treating the presidency as anything but one more reality show that he can use to get the attention he craves."

Convention organizers have titled the third night of their event "United America," saying speakers will reflect Democrats' argument that Joe Biden and his running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, can unify the country after a divisive four years under Trump.

Hillary Clinton is using her return to the Democratic National Convention to issue a stark warning about the 2020 election.

According to excerpts released Wednesday, Clinton plans to reflect in her speech on her 2016 election loss to President Donald Trump and urge Americans not to take the election's outcome for granted.

She will say, "For four years, people have said to me, 'I didn't realize how dangerous he was.' 'I wish I could go back and do it over.' Or worst, 'I should have voted.' Well, this can't be another woulda coulda shoulda election."

Four years after she made history as the first woman nominated for president by a major party, Clinton will nod to another enduring legacy: the millions of women inspired by her 2016 bid who marched, ran for office and have become a powerful force in taking on Trump.

Her presence Wednesday night comes as California Sen. Kamala Harris becomes the first Black woman to accept a spot on a major presidential ticket and one day after the 100th anniversary of women's suffrage.

Northern California wildfires threatening thousands of homes

By HAVEN DALEY and JANIE HAR Associated Press

VACAVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Wildfires raged through Northern California on Wednesday, threatening thousands of homes and blackening the skies near San Francisco as crews struggled to surround them despite steep terrain and blistering heat.

The fires, many caused by lightning and sometimes pushed by strong winds, had burned hundreds of thousands of acres as they chewed through brushland, rural areas, canyon country and dense forest to the north, east and south of San Francisco. Fires also carved their way through the wine country and the Sierra Nevada.

In addition to about two dozen major blazes, small fires kept erupting, though most were quickly stopped.

In central California, a pilot on a water dropping mission in western Fresno County died Wednesday morning when his helicopter crashed about an hour from New Coalinga Municipal Airport.

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The pilot, whose name has not been released, was working with Guardian Helicopters, based in Fillmore, which had a contract with the state fire agency, Cal Fire, to provide emergency services on a call-when-needed basis, said Zoe Keliher, an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

Hundreds of fires have erupted since the start of the week as a heat wave accompanied by humid air created a dangerous mix of triple-digit temperatures and thunderstorms that flashed lightning.

California had recorded nearly 11,000 strikes in 72 hours, Gov. Gavin Newsom said Wednesday.

Two fires in Solano County prompted evacuation orders for 8,000 residents near the Russian River Wednesday and residents of Healdsburg, which has a population of about 12,000, were warned late Wednesday night to be ready to flee.

Ash and smoke filled the air in San Francisco from at least seven fires — known as the LNU Lightning Complex — that had burned more than 100 buildings, including some homes, and threatened 25,000 others in Napa, Sonoma, Lake, Yolo and Solano counties.

Fire officials said there was “extreme fire behavior.”

“Fires are making runs in multiple directions and impacting multiple communities. A critically dry airmass is moving over the area bringing strong winds,” a Cal Fire statement said Wednesday night.

Four people had been injured, Cal Fire reported, but didn’t supply details except to say they weren’t firefighters.

Travis Air Force Base ordered non-mission essential personnel to evacuate, officials said.

Residents in nearby Vacaville, a city of about 100,000 located between San Francisco and Sacramento, were roused before dawn Wednesday by orders to flee.

Police and firefighters went door-to-door in a frantic scramble to warn residents to evacuate as flames encroached.

Karen Hansen had fled late Tuesday as flames approached her small farm.

“The whole sky was red orange and it was coming over the hill there and it was massive. I’ve never seen anything like it and it only took a few minutes to get here,” she said.

The family fled with some animals but had to leave two beloved horses. They returned Wednesday to find the house and barn destroyed, but Hansen was thrilled to see that her horses had survived.

“I’m not upset about the house. I’m just happy that my horses and animals are alive and my daughter,” she said.

John Gardiner, 60, stayed up all night after receiving an alert from a neighbor of oncoming fire just before midnight Wednesday.

“It was incredible — things swirling, winds just whipping through like a howling, ripping sound and then you could hear explosions going off,” he said. “You can taste smoke in your mouth.”

His house survived — for the moment.

In eastern San Francisco Bay, a cluster of 20 separate lightning-sparked fires called the SCU Lightning Complex threatened about 3,800 buildings in Santa Clara, Alameda, Contra Costa, San Joaquin and Stanislaus counties.

Five to seven people were injured in one of the fires in Stanislaus County, Sheriff Jeff Dirkse told the Sacramento Bee.

One had major burn injuries and all were taken by ambulance for treatment, he said.

Someone evacuating on Monday had reported that workers at an illegal marijuana farm were still at the ranch but he couldn’t confirm if any were among the patients.

In addition, Cal Fire said two “first responders” to the fires had been injured but didn’t release details.

Fire crews were hampered by dense, dry brush in steep country, by smoke and haze that trapped heat, and by winds that at times gusted to 30 mph, Cal Fire reported. They spent Wednesday struggling to prevent flames from reaching buildings.

To the south of San Francisco in San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, about 22,000 people were ordered to evacuate because of a fire burning in dense wooded parkland that threatened communities, Cal Fire spokesman Jonathan Cox said.

At least 20 homes had burned, fire officials said.

Resources were strapped, he said, given the number of fires burning in California.

Some firefighters were working 72-hour shifts instead of the usual 24 hours.

"We're in the unfortunate position where firefighters are going to be spending several days out on the fire line," Cox said. "It's grueling, it's exhausting."

In Southern California, an 8-day-old blaze near Lake Hughes in northern Los Angeles County mountains continued to be a threat to 4,570 structures after destroying 21 buildings. It was 38% contained.

Har reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writer Juliet Williams, Olga R. Rodriguez and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Democrats pound their message: To oust Trump, you must vote

By STEVE PEOPLES, MICHELLE L. PRICE and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Former President Barack Obama warned that American democracy could falter if President Donald Trump is reelected, a stunning rebuke of his successor that was echoed by Kamala Harris at the Democratic Convention Wednesday night as she embraced her historic role as the first Black woman on a national political ticket.

Obama, himself a barrier breaker as the nation's first Black president, pleaded with voters to "embrace your own responsibility as citizens – to make sure that the basic tenets of our democracy endure. Because that's what is at stake right now. Our democracy."

Throughout their convention, the Democrats have summoned a collective urgency about the dangers of Trump as president. In 2016, they dismissed and sometimes trivialized him. Now they are casting him as an existential threat to the country. The tone signals anew that the fall campaign between Trump and Joe Biden, already expected to be among the most negative of the past half century, will be filled with rancor and recrimination.

Yet on the third night of the Democrats' four-day convention, party leaders also sought to put forward a cohesive vision of their values and policy priorities, highlighting efforts to combat climate change and tighten gun laws. They drew a sharp contrast with Trump, portraying him as cruel in his treatment of immigrants, disinterested in the nation's climate crisis and over his head on virtually all of the nation's most pressing challenges.

Democrats also demonstrated a hope that Biden, a 77-year-old white man, can revive the coalition that helped put Obama into office, with minorities, younger voters and college-educated women blunting Trump's lock on many white and rural voters.

The evening marked a celebration of the party's leading women, including remarks from Hillary Clinton, the first woman to become a major ticket presidential nominee; House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, who challenged Biden during the primary and is now supporting his campaign.

Harris, a 55-year-old California senator and the daughter of Jamaican and Indian immigrants, addressed race and equality in a personal way Biden cannot when he formally accepts his party's presidential nomination on Thursday.

"There is no vaccine for racism. We have got to do the work," Harris said, her words emphatic though she was speaking in a largely empty arena near Biden's Delaware home.

"We've got to do the work to fulfill the promise of equal justice under law," she added. "None of us are free until all of us are free."

Just 76 days before the election, Biden must energize the disparate factions that make up the modern Democratic Party – a coalition that spans generation, race and ideology. And this fall voters must deal with concerns over the COVID-19 pandemic that has created health risks for those who want to vote in person — and postal slowdowns for mail-in ballots, which Democrats blame on Trump.

Democrats hope that Harris and Obama in particular can help bridge the divide between those reassured by Biden's establishment credentials and those craving bolder change.

The pandemic forced Biden's team to abandon the traditional convention format in favor of an all-virtual

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affair that has eliminated much of the pomp and circumstance that typically defines political conventions. It was completely silent, for example, as Harris took the stage to make history at the Chase Center in downtown Wilmington. She was flanked by American flags but no family, and her audience consisted of a few dozen reporters and photographers.

After two nights that featured several Republicans, the proceedings on Wednesday emphasized core Democratic values on areas like climate change and gun violence that particularly resonate with younger voters.

On guns, Biden wants to repeal a law shielding firearm manufacturers from liability lawsuits, impose universal background checks for purchases and ban the manufacture and sale of assault weapons and high capacity magazines. On climate, Biden has proposed a \$2 trillion plan to invest in clean energy and end carbon emissions from U.S. power plants by 2035, even though his proposals don't go as far as activists' preferred "Green New Deal."

Wednesday night, former Arizona Rep. Gabby Giffords reflected on her own journey of pain and recovery from a severe brain injury nearly a decade after being shot while meeting with constituents. She urged America to support Biden.

"I struggle to speak, but I have not lost my voice," Giffords said. "Vote, vote, vote."

It's Trump's turn next. The president, who abandoned plans to host his convention in North Carolina and Florida, is expected to break tradition and accept his nomination from the White House lawn.

In the meantime, he's seeking to take attention from Biden. Trump will stop near his Democratic rival's birthplace of Scranton, Pennsylvania on Thursday. He's also participating in a prime-time interview with Fox News host Sean Hannity.

Hillary Clinton, Trump's 2016 rival, implored Democrats to turn out in larger numbers in November to block the president's reelection.

"For four years, people have said to me, 'I didn't realize how dangerous he was.' 'I wish I could go back and do it over.' Or worst, 'I should have voted,'" said Clinton, the first woman nominated president by a major party. "Well, this can't be another woulda coulda shoulda election."

"Vote like our lives and livelihoods are on the line," she added, "because they are."

Obama spoke harshly of Trump, too.

"Donald Trump hasn't grown into the job because he can't," Obama said, speaking from the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, a backdrop chosen to reinforce what the former president sees as the dire stakes of the moment.

"I have sat in the Oval Office with both of the men who are running for president," Obama continued, describing Biden as his brother. "I never expected that my successor would embrace my vision or continue my policies. I did hope, for the sake of our country, that Donald Trump might show some interest in taking the job seriously."

Obama confidants say that the former president's support for Biden is unequivocal, but he worries about enthusiasm among younger voters, particularly younger voters of color. Democrats concede that one of the reasons Trump won the presidency in 2016 was because those voters didn't show up in the same large numbers as when Obama was on the ballot.

Beyond the carefully scripted confines of the virtual convention, there were modest signs of tension between the moderate and progressive wings of Biden's Democratic Party.

In particular, some progressives complained that pro-Biden Republicans such as Ohio Gov. John Kasich have been featured more prominently than the party's younger progressive stars like New York Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez.

Climate activists also complained that the party appeared ready to drop a provision in the platform that calls for an end to fossil fuel industry subsidies and tax breaks.

Sen. Warren, a favorite of progressives for demanding bold change, spoke for around five minutes.

And While Warren urged people to vote for Biden and gave a hearty endorsement for several of his economic and child care plans, she hinted that she would not retreat from her push for a more progres-

sive agenda should her party retake the White House.

"We all need to be in the fight to get Joe and Kamala elected," Warren said. "And after November, we all need to stay in the fight to get big things done."

Price reported from Las Vegas and Peoples from New York. AP Washington Bureau Chief Julie Pace contributed to this report.

Biden friend Sen. Coons to elevate faith on convention stage

By ELANA SCHOR Associated Press

Chris Coons is cut from the same cloth as Joe Biden in many ways: He occupies the same Senate seat from Delaware that Biden held for 36 years, is a Democrat known for seeking bipartisan collaboration where possible and is open about his faith's influence on his life.

When Coons speaks to the Democratic National Convention on Thursday before Biden's speech accepting the party's presidential nomination, his remarks will focus on faith — attesting in highly personal fashion to his longtime friend's belief in God. The theme and timing of Coons' speech on the pandemic-altered convention schedule underscore Democrats' interest in engaging with religious voters on the basis of shared values with Biden.

"For Joe, faith isn't a prop or a political tool," Coons is set to say, according to prepared remarks shared with The Associated Press ahead of time. "Joe knows the power of prayer, and I've seen him in moments of joy and triumph, of loss and despair, turn to God for strength."

That message comes as President Donald Trump tries to turn voters of faith away from Democrats by casting them as opponents of religion, lobbing baseless claims earlier this month that Biden would "hurt the Bible" and is "against God."

The rebuttal that Coons is delivering on Thursday comes from anything but a hyper-partisan messenger.

In fact, Coons laid a hand on the president in prayer in 2017 and 2019 while serving as co-chair of the bipartisan National Prayer Breakfast, despite voicing what he described as his "intense disagreement" with Trump's ban on travel from several majority-Muslim nations.

"I still pray for President Trump," Coons, 56, told AP on Wednesday. "That's in some ways because we're called to, regardless of who our leaders are."

Coons added of Trump that while "I'm done believing that any amount of human persuasion or engagement can change the trajectory of his heart," belief in the divine encompasses "the possibility of anyone changing."

A lifelong Presbyterian, Coons attended Yale Divinity School and has held the lay church leadership position of ordained elder. He is a presence at both of the Senate's two regular prayer gatherings, where Republicans and Democrats commune in spiritual fellowship apart from the partisan battles of the day.

Coons is also one of the more vocal Democrats when it comes to coaxing fellow party members to be more open about faith. It's a task that hasn't always come easily, particularly after decades of Republican rhetoric about religion's place in policymaking defining the discussion on more GOP-friendly terms. But Coons is optimistic about Biden's ability to reshape such issues in a way that Democrats can connect to their spiritual beliefs.

Democrats have been quiet for too long about the connection between faith and politics in part because they struggle with how to acknowledge "people of all faiths and people of no particular religion," Coons said.

"And how to frame (our) agenda ... as being inspired by faith," he added. "Joe Biden, almost uniquely, brings that into sharp focus."

Coons' speech will tie the Roman Catholic former vice president's faith to his hopes for the future, envisioning "a world with less suffering and more justice, where we're better stewards of creation, where we have a more just immigration policy and where we call out and confront the original sins of this nation, the sins of slavery and racism."

Coons is also set to elevate people without a religious affiliation as a high priority for the nominee: Biden

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will "be a president for Americans of all faiths, as well as people of conscience who practice no particular faith."

It comes on the last night of a Democratic convention that already has featured multiple nods to religious conviction, from Jill Biden declaring her husband's faith "unshakable" to vice presidential nominee Sen. Kamala Harris invoking the biblical teaching to "walk by faith, and not by sight." That inclusion of religion and its moral underpinnings point to how easily the intermingling of faith and policy has come to Biden, who wore rosary beads that belonged to his late son Beau for years after his death from brain cancer.

Biden's campaign, meanwhile, has invested in outreach to religious voting blocs — including sectors of a white evangelical community that has long been a core part of Trump's base. Biden's faith engagement director, Josh Dickson, is a former Republican who's outspoken about his evangelical beliefs.

Further outreach has taken place away from TV networks carrying the convention. Coons noted that the party's interfaith caucus heard from Minnesota Attorney General Keith Ellison, a practicing Muslim, and California Rep. Jared Huffman, who identifies as a humanist, in addition to himself and New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker, a Christian.

When it comes to speaking for Biden about faith, though, Coons will have the most prominent forum. "You'll hear a lot about his observations, as a person of faith, about what makes Joe Biden tick," said Virginia Sen. Tim Kaine, a Catholic who was the Democratic vice presidential nominee in 2016. "These are things that America really should know."

Associated Press religion coverage receives support from the Lilly Endowment through the Religion News Foundation. The AP is solely responsible for this content.

California wildfires chase people from homes into smoky air

By HAVEN DALEY and JANIE HAR Associated Press

VACAVILLE, Calif. (AP) — Crews worked in blistering heat Wednesday to beat back wildfires that ignited across Northern California, sending thousands of people from their homes into smoky air, briefly halting traffic on an interstate and killing a pilot on a firefighting mission.

Hundreds of fires were burning across California, including 23 major fires or groups of fires that Gov. Gavin Newsom blamed on "extraordinary weather" and "all of these lightning strikes." He said the state has recorded nearly 11,000 lightning strikes in 72 hours and knows of 367 fires.

Five to seven people were injured in a fire in Stanislaus County, southeast of San Francisco, Sheriff Jeff Dirkse told the Sacramento Bee.

One had major burn injuries and all were taken by ambulance for treatment, he said.

Someone evacuating on Monday had reported that workers at an illegal marijuana farm were still at the ranch but he couldn't confirm if any were among the patients.

Two fires in Solano County prompted evacuation orders for 8,000 residents near the Russian River. In Healdsburg, with a population of about 12,000, people were warned late Wednesday to be ready to flee.

Ash and smoke filled the air in San Francisco, which is surrounded by wildfires to the north, east and south. The LNU Lightning Complex is made up of several fires in five counties north of San Francisco, including in Vacaville, a city of about 100,000 people between San Francisco and Sacramento.

Nearby Travis Air Force Base ordered non-mission essential personnel to evacuate, officials said.

The fire had consumed nearly 194 square miles (502 square kilometers) Wednesday night, an area larger than the size of San Jose.

It jumped Interstate 80 Wednesday afternoon, briefly blocking traffic in both directions.

Several thousand people in the small communities of Angwin and Deer Park were ordered evacuated.

Police and firefighters warned residents before dawn to evacuate as flames encroached on Vacaville. At least 50 structures were destroyed, including some homes, and 50 were damaged.

"The whole sky was red orange and it was coming over the hill there and it was massive. I've never seen anything like it and it only took a few minutes to get here," said Karen Hansen.

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She evacuated her Vacaville home late Tuesday as flames rushed toward their small farm, packing up her smaller animals but unable to bring along two beloved horses. They returned Wednesday to find the house and barn destroyed, but Hansen was thrilled to see that her horses survived.

"I'm not upset about the house. I'm just happy that my horses and animals are alive and my daughter," she said.

In eastern San Francisco Bay, a cluster of 20 separate lightning-sparked fires called the SCU Lightning complex was threatening about 1,400 structures in rugged terrain with dense brush. The fires have torched 133 square miles (344 square kilometers).

To the south of San Francisco in San Mateo and Santa Cruz counties, about 22,000 people were ordered to evacuate because of a fire in dense wooded parkland, Cal Fire spokesman Jonathan Cox said.

At least 20 homes had burned, fire officials said.

About 22 fires are part of the complex and most were in relatively remote, dense brush until strong winds overnight Tuesday pushed them into more populated areas, merging some of the fires together.

Resources are strapped, he said, given the number of fires.

"We're in the unfortunate position where firefighters are going to be spending several days out on the fire line," he said. "It's grueling, it's exhausting."

In central California, a pilot on a water dropping mission in western Fresno County crashed his helicopter about an hour from New Coalinga Municipal Airport right after 8:45 a.m. Wednesday.

The pilot, whose name has not been released, was working with Guardian Helicopters, based in Fillmore, which had a contract with CalFire to provide emergency services as needed, said Zoe Keliher, an investigator with the National Transportation Safety Board.

Robert Satz, a pilot and safety manager at the company, said he received word about the crash around 10:30 a.m. He said he had no further details and declined to identify the pilot.

The Fresno County Sheriff's search-and-rescue team was summoned shortly after 11 a.m. to recover the body of the pilot, but it has not reached the crash site because it is in the fire zone, said department spokesman Tony Botti said.

"They're trying to methodically and safely get them in and hopefully not get exposed to the fire," he said.

The cluster of wine country fires threaten an area that only last year grappled with another massive blaze that forced 200,000 to flee — a task made more complicated this year because of the pandemic.

"This is an incredibly emotional and stressful time for most of us who've endured a number of wildfires over the last few years," said Sonoma County Sheriff Mark Essick.

In Solano County's Vacaville, John Gardiner, 60, stayed up overnight after receiving a neighbor's alert of oncoming fire just before midnight. His house and neighbors' homes were safe, but he worried that could change with crews anticipating hot winds.

"It was incredible — things swirling, winds just whipping through like a howling, ripping sound and then you could hear explosions going off," he said. "You can taste smoke in your mouth."

Victoria Gregorich, 54, said her family loaded the car and left their Vacaville home after deputies told them to evacuate around 12:30 a.m. The fire destroyed her greenhouse, but the house was spared. Her neighbors were not so lucky.

"It's devastating," she said. "I just thank God we have our home."

Elvis Castaneda, 28, and his father, Silverio, spent the night moving ranching equipment to a safer location, removing vegetation and making firebreaks with their tractor around friends' properties.

"We couldn't see the flames, but the sky was pretty orange, and we knew it was coming our way," Elvis Castaneda said.

He said he drove home at 3 a.m. and started packing documents, photos, passports and his guns after hearing that his girlfriend's family, who live 2 miles (3 kilometers) away, were told to evacuate and move all their farm animals to safety. He got the order to leave after dawn Wednesday.

South of Carmel, nearly 50 miles (80 kilometers) of scenic Highway 1 along the coast was closed due to fires.

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In Southern California, an 8-day-old blaze grew to nearly 50 square miles (106 square kilometers) near Lake Hughes in northern Los Angeles County mountains.

Chewing through century-old fir, oak and pine, the fire continued to be a threat to 4,570 structures after destroying a dozen. Dangerously hot weather and rough terrain challenged firefighters' efforts to increase containment, currently estimated at 36%.

Har reported from San Francisco. Associated Press writer Juliet Williams, Olga R. Rodriguez and Daisy Nguyen in San Francisco contributed to this report.

Reds broadcaster Thom Brennaman suspended for anti-gay slur

KANSAS CITY, Mo. (AP) — Reds broadcaster Thom Brennaman has been suspended from working Cincinnati's games after using an anti-gay slur on air Wednesday night, prompting the team to apologize for the "horrific, homophobic remark."

Brennaman used the slur moments after the Fox Sports Ohio feed returned from a commercial break before the top of the seventh inning in the first game of a doubleheader at Kansas City. Brennaman did not seem to realize he was already on air. He later apologized.

The Reds took the 56-year-old Brennaman off the broadcast in the fifth inning of the second game.

"The Cincinnati Reds organization is devastated by the horrific, homophobic remark made this evening by broadcaster Thom Brennaman," the team said in a statement. "He was pulled off the air, and effective immediately was suspended from doing Reds broadcasts. We will be addressing our broadcasting team in the coming days."

"In no way does this incident represent our players, coaches, organization, or our fans. We share our sincerest apologies to the LGBTQ+ community in Cincinnati, Kansas City, all across this country, and beyond. The Reds embrace a zero-tolerance policy for bias or discrimination of any kind, and we are truly sorry to anyone who has been offended," it said.

Brennaman opened the fifth inning with an apology spoken directly to camera before handing off play-by-play duties.

"I made a comment earlier tonight that I guess went out over the air that I am deeply ashamed of," he said. "If I have hurt anyone out there, I can't tell you how much I say from the bottom of my heart, I am very, very sorry."

After pausing to announce a home run by Cincinnati's Nick Castellanos, Brennaman added: "I don't know if I'm going to be putting on this headset again" and apologized to the Reds, Fox Sports and his coworkers.

Reds reliever Amir Garrett tweeted about Brennaman's words shortly after the end of the second game:

"To the LGBTQ community just know I am with you, and whoever is against you, is against me," he wrote. "I'm sorry for what was said today."

"LGBTQ+ community, as a member of the Reds organization, I am so sorry for the way you were marginalized tonight," injured Reds reliever Matt Bowman said on Twitter. "There will always be a place for you in the baseball community and we are so happy to have you here."

Brennaman and the Reds announcers were working from Great American Ball Park in Cincinnati, even though the doubleheader against the Royals was in Kansas City. Remote broadcasts have become the norm in the baseball this year because of coronavirus protocols.

The son of Hall of Fame broadcaster Marty Brennaman, Thom has called major league games for 33 years and has been with Fox Sports for the past 27, covering primarily baseball and football.

"I can't begin to tell you how deeply sorry I am," Brennaman said. "That is not who I am and never has been. I like to think maybe I could have some people who can back that up. I am very, very sorry and I beg for your forgiveness."

Broadcast partner Chris Welsh told Brennaman "You're a good man, partner. Hang in there." Alternate play-by-play man Jim Day took over the broadcast.

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

Obama, in scathing Trump rebuke, warns democracy on the line

By JULIE PACE AP Washington Bureau Chief

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former President Barack Obama painted a unsparing portrait of American democracy on the brink if President Donald Trump wins in November, warning in a scathing, and at times emotional, address Wednesday that his successor is both unfit for office and apathetic to the nation's founding principles.

"This administration has shown it will tear our democracy down if that's what it takes to win," Obama said in unflinching remarks on the third night of the Democratic convention. He spoke from Philadelphia, where the United States Constitution was drafted and signed.

Obama's address amounted to one of the most sweeping condemnations ever of a sitting president by one of his predecessors. It was aimed squarely at jolting Democrats, as well as Republicans who are skeptical of Trump, ahead of the November election, casting the contest not simply as a choice between two politicians or two parties, but as a test of the endurance of American ideals.

Through much of Trump's presidency, Obama has been restrained in his public comments, hewing to the tradition of former Oval Office occupants giving space to the current commander in chief. Yet he has become more pointed in his criticism in recent months, and his remarks Wednesday revealed the full extent of both his personal disregard for the current president and his belief that Trump presents an existential threat to democracy in the United States.

Obama said he had initially held out hope that Trump would grow into the job of president — but he has now concluded that Trump not only hasn't, he simply can't. Instead, he said Trump has focused on using the presidency to benefit his friends and family and turned the nation's most powerful office into "one more reality show that he can use to get the attention he craves."

Trump, who appeared to be watching in real time, responded with all-caps tweets, questioning why Obama waited until after the Democratic presidential primary was over to endorse Biden. Obama maintained throughout the primary that he would not endorse a candidate in the large field.

Obama's address also amounted to a call to action to a weary and anxious nation, particularly younger Americans frustrated with a government that may often appear out of touch with their interests. Democrats see Obama as a bridge to those voters in the 2020 race, someone who can speak both to Biden's character and to the urgency of progressives pushing for more sweeping change to the nation's economic and domestic policies.

He called out in particular to young people who took to the streets of American cities earlier this year to protest police brutality against Black Americans, casting them as the heirs to the legacy of civil rights leaders such as Georgia Rep. John Lewis, who died earlier this summer.

"You can give our democracy new meaning," he said. "You're the missing ingredient — the ones who will decide whether or not America becomes the country that fully lives up to its creed."

Obama cast Biden and his running mate, Kamala Harris, as well positioned to help that younger generation of activists power through many of the changes they seek. Yet there is an inherent tension in Obama, whose own political rise was fueled by the power of barrier-breaking, generational change, touting Biden, a 77-year-old white man who has spent a career in politics, for the presidency.

Indeed, many of Obama's public comments since leaving the White House have focused on encouraging a new generation of political leaders to step up, both in America and around the world. He drew particular attention during the 2020 Democratic primary when he said many of the world's problems have been due to "old people, usually old men, not getting out of the way."

With the general election now in full swing, Obama confidants say that while the former president's support for Biden is unequivocal, he does worry about enthusiasm among younger voters, particularly younger voters of color. He's well aware that one of the reasons Trump currently occupies the Oval Office is that those voters did not show up in the same large numbers in 2016 for Hillary Clinton as they did

when he was on the ballot.

Obama spoke two nights after his wife, former first lady Michelle Obama, headlined the opening night of the convention and delivered her own condemnation of Trump. She urged Democrats to show up to vote the way they did in 2008 and 2012, the elections that sent her husband to the White House on the strength of high turnout among young people, women and voters of color.

The fact that the Obamas were headliners on two of the four nights of the Democratic celebration speaks to the crucial role they have in helping Biden try to reassemble that coalition — and the challenge the Democratic Party has in building a new bench of other leaders who can do the same.

“When you think about folks who have the capacity to really unify us, there are only a few people,” said Yvette Simpson, chief executive of Democracy for America, a progressive political action committee. “Certainly Barack Obama and Michelle Obama are among them.”

Indeed, the former president has enviable popularity, both among Democrats and all Americans. A Fox News poll conducted in May found 93% of Democrats had a favorable opinion of Obama, as did 63% of all registered voters.

Despite that strong support, there has been some rethinking of Obama’s legacy among some of his party’s most liberal activists, who argue he didn’t go far enough in overhauling the nation’s health care system and gave too much away to Republicans in fiscal negotiations. Obama himself has acknowledged there was more he wanted to do, but argued he was hamstrung by the realities of a Republican-controlled House, and eventually Senate, for much of his tenure.

But some of Obama’s more recent comments have energized liberals, who see signs of him embracing some of the tactics of his party’s activist wing. Progressives cheered in particular when Obama called for eliminating the Senate filibuster rules requiring 60 votes on major pieces of legislation, calling it a “Jim Crow relic” that is holding up rewriting voting rights laws. His surprise comments came during his eulogy at the funeral of the late civil rights leader and Georgia Rep. John Lewis.

“That’s the guy we remember from the election of 2008,” Simpson said. “It encouraged me that he might be the guy that pulls Joe Biden along a little bit.”

Follow Julie Pace at <http://twitter.com/jpaceDC>

Trump eager to troll Biden outside his Scranton birthplace

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — On Joe Biden’s big day, President Donald Trump is planning to show up in his rival’s old backyard.

Trump, in what can only be described as piece of campaign trolling, on Thursday afternoon was staging an event just outside the former vice president’s birthplace in Scranton, Pennsylvania, mere hours before Biden formally accepts the Democratic nomination for president.

The political tradition of a presidential candidate lying low during the other party’s convention has eroded over the decades but — to the private delight of Trump’s advisers — the president’s trip looked to be a particularly in-your-face piece of counter-programming designed to rattle an opponent.

The campaign said Trump’s speech would cover “a half-century of Joe Biden failing America.” The event points to the importance of Pennsylvania as a battleground state — and to the urgency of the president’s effort to close the gap in the polls.

“Joe Biden is hiding and taking voters for granted but the Trump campaign won’t make the same mistake,” said Trump campaign spokeswoman Samantha Zager. “Biden’s socialist agenda would kill jobs and hurt families in the Keystone State, which is exactly why he won’t confront voters in his hometown.”

Biden’s speech will come hours later from his Delaware hometown and, as the culmination of the four-day convention, will surely dominate headlines and cable news chyrons. But Trump has offered a robust slate of competing activity, holding multiple in-person events this week meant to draw a contrast with the largely virtual campaign that Biden has conducted during the coronavirus pandemic.

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He visited two other battlegrounds — Wisconsin and Arizona — as well as Minnesota, one of the few blue states from 2016 that Trump's team feels like he may have a chance to flip this fall. But Trump's campaign has been warily watching his standing falter in the trio of Rust Belt states that carried him to the presidency in 2016.

The so-called Blue Wall of Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin, meant to provide electoral college insurance for Hillary Clinton, instead all broke for Trump by slim margins. He captured Pennsylvania by a mere 44,000 votes four years ago and has since then clashed with the state's Democratic governor over efforts to reopen its economy.

Many in the Trump campaign have all but written off Michigan, a state battered by the virus, and whose governor has repeatedly fought with the president. But advisers believe Pennsylvania, like Wisconsin, remains in play and could be captured again if the economy continues to rebound.

The number of GOP registrations in Pennsylvania has outpaced Democrats this cycle and many political observers believe that the state, which features many white, older voters, could become stronger for Republicans. But Trump has stubbornly trailed Biden, whose team aims to return Pennsylvania to the blue column, where it had been from 1992 until 2016.

The former vice president is particularly suited in the Democratic field to carry Pennsylvania, with his deep ties to Scranton and messages catering to white working-class voters and Black voters in Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. Scranton is in Lackawanna County, which went for Clinton in 2016, and Biden's team hopes to increase turnout there.

The Biden campaign dismissed Trump's visit as a lame campaign gambit.

Trump "put the health of countless families across the Keystone State in danger and plunged the strong economy he inherited from the Obama-Biden Administration into a tailspin," said Biden spokesman Andrew Bates. "This sideshow is a pathetic attempt to distract from the fact that Trump's presidency stands for nothing but crises, lies, and division."

The Trump campaign has been concerned about an exodus of suburban voters, particularly women, in the areas around Philadelphia.

In an attempt to offset that, the Trump campaign has prioritized turnout among rural and exurban voters. It has also prepared to blanket the airwaves with attack ads that link Biden to China, hoping to tarnish the Democrat with an association to the country where the pandemic originated and by playing up his ties to globalization and trade deals blamed by some for closing factories and shedding manufacturing jobs in the state.

Top campaign advisers have briefed the president that his support had slipped in battleground states, particularly among seniors in states with aging populations like Pennsylvania. But advisers believe that Trump has begun to reverse that momentum in part due to his efforts to link Biden to radical left elements of the Democratic Party.

Trump has also been campaigning as an avid supporter of fracking in Pennsylvania, where the technique unleashed an oil and gas boom.

Trump and TV ads by a pro-Trump super PAC, America First Action, accuse Biden of wanting to ban fracking. Biden calls that entirely false and has said a ban would likely be politically and legally impossible. He says he wants to bar permits for new oil and gas drilling on public lands, which account for less than a tenth of production.

Associated Press writer Ellen Knickmeyer in Oklahoma City contributed to this report.

WHAT TO WATCH: Joe Biden's big moment at the DNC

By MICHELLE L. PRICE Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — Democratic Party luminaries, rising stars, former presidents and presidential contenders have been making a pitch for Joe Biden over three days of an atypical convention. Now the presidential nominee will make his case himself.

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Biden will speak Thursday night from Wilmington, Delaware, as he closes out the fourth night of the all-virtual Democratic National Convention, starting at 9 p.m. ET.

The novel coronavirus forced organizers to put on a remote event with delegates and politicians beaming in via video from around the country, zapping the energy from what's usually a political jamboree. But the event has also given Biden a chance to present a curated vision of his party and principles, showcasing a diverse Democratic coalition and a still-open door to bipartisan governing that many see as a relic of a different Washington.

The theme for Thursday night is "America's Promise" and the programming includes musical performances by The Chicks, John Legend and Common.

What to watch on the last night of the convention:

BIDEN'S MOMENT

With no physical gathering place, Biden will deliver his speech as the Democratic presidential nominee without a cheering crowd, a standing ovation or waves of balloons and confetti breaking over his head. Biden's been boxed into a more subdued position because of a virus that has shocked the U.S. economy and killed over 170,000 Americans. To persuade voters to put in him charge, expect him to use his speech to underline the gravity of the virus and the moment and draw on lessons of tenacity over tragedy that he's experienced in his own life.

TRUMP

Throughout the week, President Donald Trump has worked to counter the Democratic program with trips and jabbing at Biden. In addition to airing his thoughts on Twitter, the president held rallies in Wisconsin and Minnesota on Monday and spoke in Arizona on Tuesday. On Thursday, he travels to Pennsylvania, the state of Biden's birth, ahead of the Democrat's acceptance speech.

BLOOMBERG

Billionaire and former Democratic presidential candidate Mike Bloomberg, who spent more than \$500 million of his own fortune on a short-lived presidential run, is billed to speak shortly before Biden.

The 78-year-old moderate and former Republican being given a spot to help to close out the Democratic convention is striking. The party has promoted its diverse coalition and embraced a national reckoning on systemic racism and sexual misconduct.

One of the former New York mayor's most notable appearances during the presidential campaign came as he was pilloried on the debate stage by Democrats over his past support for the controversial stop-and-frisk policing practice and its disproportionate effect on minorities and nondisclosure agreements his company struck with women alleging discrimination or harassment.

The businessman has built up goodwill on the left for having poured hundreds of millions of dollars into fighting climate change and gun violence, two issues he will likely touch on.

FORMER CANDIDATES AND CONTENDERS

Three of the Democrats who also sought the White House this year will speak. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker and former South Bend, Indiana, Mayor Pete Buttigieg will speak early, followed later in the evening by Andrew Yang, whose outsider presidential campaign was marked by a buzzy online following and a platform to give Americans a universal basic income. Several women who were considered potential running mates for Biden are also slated to appear: Atlanta Mayor Keisha Lance Bottoms, Wisconsin Sen. Tammy Baldwin and Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth. Other speakers include California Gov. Gavin Newsom, Delaware Sen. Chris Coons and members of the Biden family.

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.

A celebrity-studded afterparty hosted by Andy Cohen is scheduled to be shown immediately after Biden's speech on the official livestream.

Trump: US demands restoration of UN sanctions against Iran

By MATTHEW LEE, DEB RIECHMANN and EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Trump administration is set to demand the restoration of all international sanctions on Iran in a move that will further isolate the U.S. at the United Nations, test the credibility of the U.N. Security Council and possibly deal a fatal blow to one of former President Barack Obama's signature foreign policy achievements.

At President Donald Trump's direction, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will travel to New York on Thursday to notify the world body that the U.S. is invoking the "snapback" mechanism in the Security Council resolution that endorsed the 2015 Iran nuclear deal.

"The United States intends to restore virtually all of the previously suspended United Nations sanctions on Iran," Trump said on Wednesday. "It's a snapback."

As set out by the resolution enshrining the 2015 deal, snapback would re-impose U.N. sanctions that were eased in exchange for curbs on Iran's nuclear program. But the U.S. move faces steep opposition and could prompt a revolt from the council's other members. None of them believes the U.S. has the standing to do it because Trump withdrew from the nuclear deal two years ago.

Thus, invoking snapback will set the stage for a contentious dispute at the world body with the U.S. insisting it has done something that no one else recognizes as valid. It's possible the U.S. call will simply be ignored by other U.N. members — an outcome that could call into question the Security Council's relevance and ability to enforce its own legally binding decisions.

But Trump and Pompeo have made no secret of their intention to pursue the controversial diplomatic move particularly in the wake of the administration's embarrassing defeat last week at the Security Council on extending the arms embargo on Iran that expires in October. The U.S. won just one other "yes" vote, with China and Russia opposed and the 11 other members abstaining.

As with the arms embargo, Russia and China bitterly oppose reimposing other U.N. sanctions on Iran. So do other Security Council members, including U.S. allies Britain and France, which are hoping to preserve the nuclear deal in the event Trump loses his bid for a second term in November's presidential election and his Democratic opponent Joe Biden rejoins the agreement.

The Europeans fear that the re-imposition of sanctions may prompt Iran to quit the nuclear deal entirely and plow ahead with efforts to develop atomic weapons. The Trump administration says it quit the deal precisely because it eased sanctions, opening major revenue streams for Iran while gradually easing restrictions on its nuclear activities that money could pay for.

Trump said that when the United States entered the deal, it was clear that the U.S. always would have the right to invoke a re-imposition of the U.N. sanctions. He also predicted that if he wins reelection, Iran will come begging to his administration to make a new deal.

That's not how other countries see it.

China has said that since the U.S. is no longer a party to the nuclear deal it "has no right to demand the Security Council to activate the rapid reinstatement of sanctions." Russia has accused the administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran that runs counter to international law.

The Europeans have also rejected the U.S. position, which holds that the U.N. sanctions will be automatically restored 30 days after snapback has been invoked. That's because the U.S. would veto any resolution that attempts to prolong the sanctions relief during that period.

The administration's view is that once those 30 days have passed, any country that doesn't enforce the U.N. sanctions will be hit with U.S. penalties for violating a binding U.N. Security Council action.

"This will be a fully valid enforceable Security Council resolution and we have every expectation that it will be enforced just like every other Security Council resolution that is in place," Pompeo said Wednesday. "We will be in full compliance with that and we have every expectation that every country in the world will live up to its obligations."

What the administration's position does not account for, however, is a scenario in which the rest of the world simply ignores the United States on the grounds that it no longer has legal standing to invoke

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snapback.

There is also the theory that America's sanctions architecture won't be able to effectively handle such a massive enforcement exercise on its own and other countries may hedge their bets pending the outcome of the Nov. 3 U.S. presidential election. Biden has said he would try to revive the agreement.

The U.S. argument is highly controversial. Not only has it been ridiculed by the Chinese, Russians and Europeans, not even the biggest Iran hawks in the United States all agree with it.

Former Trump national security adviser John Bolton, who has long held anti-Iran positions, has called the argument "too cute by half" and said the U.S. lost its snapback standing when it withdrew from the deal. He said moving ahead is not worth the damage it could do to veto power in the council.

In a rare moment of agreement, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif praised Bolton this week. "At least he is consistent — a trait notably absent in this U.S. administration," Zarif tweeted.

Former U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, a lead negotiator of the nuclear deal during the Obama administration, said, "It was never expected that someone who withdrew from the (deal) would have standing to in fact bring the snapback provision."

Lederer reported from the United Nations.

Democratic convention takeaways: Make history, pound Trump

By BILL BARROW and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

There has been one persistent theme in the Democratic National Convention so far: to portray President Donald Trump in highly personal ways as one unsuited for the White House both in skills and temperament. And no one, not even former President Barack Obama, has been holding back.

Here are some key takeaways from the third night of the convention.

OBAMA, GLOVES OFF

Former President Barack Obama came to power on the airy notions of "hope and change." He governed with a largely calm and cerebral air, and continued that in his post-White House years.

On Wednesday, Obama dispensed with decorum and delivered a direct hit on Trump, a striking condemnation and a call to Americans, particularly young ones, to not let democracy be taken from them.

"Donald Trump hasn't grown into the job because he can't," Obama said. "And the consequences of that failure are severe. 170,000 Americans dead. Millions of jobs gone. Our worst impulses unleashed, our proud reputation around the world badly diminished, and our democratic institutions threatened like never before."

The former president spoke from the Museum of the American Revolution in Philadelphia, a calculated venue for his warning that his successor is a threat to democracy in the United States. He talked about how flawed the country's founding documents were, but how its residents have never given up trying to make them live up to their ideals.

And Obama urged the country to keep doing so this election. "Do not let them take away your power," he said. "Do not let them take away your democracy."

Obama has long been known as an oratorical virtuoso. This speech, a somber address, was as powerful as any of them, and stands as a grim bookend to his hopeful paean to American unity that launched him during the 2004 convention.

HARRIS ABSORBS HISTORY, TELLS HER STORY

Kamala Harris made history under historic circumstances. She became the first Black woman to be nominated as vice president on a major-party ticket. But she had to make her acceptance speech, an American classic big-room affair, to a largely empty ballroom due to the pandemic.

Her speech had a lower-key tenor than Obama's. She used the moment to talk more about the issues that will play out in the campaign while also making surgical appeals to constituencies that she and Joe Biden will need to win in November.

She tied her story to the nation's long history of racial injustice and civil rights progress. And she, a 55-year-old Black woman who is also of south Asian descent, pitched her partnership with Biden, a 77-year-

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old white man, as the next step.

"Joe and I believe that we can build that beloved community ... one that is strong and decent, just and kind. One in which we can all see ourselves," she said. "We're all in this fight. You, me, Joe together."

She contrasted that with Trump and "failed leadership" that she said has "cost lives and livelihoods" amid the COVID-19 pandemic and its economic fallout.

Harris immediately embraced the weight of her nomination, invoking her late mother, an Indian immigrant and cancer researcher. She offered homage to Black and female civil rights leaders from earlier eras. "We all stand on their shoulders," she said.

But she also issued a challenge about the nation's ongoing reckoning with racial injustices. "Let's be clear: There is no vaccine for racism. We have got to do the work," she said.

Now the challenge will be for her to further excite women of color and draw anti-Trump, college-educated whites in metro areas, as Biden hopes. Harris' formal introduction should serve notice that should be viewed as more than Biden's backup, and that she's comfortable in a big role.

CONVENTION OF THE WOMAN

It wasn't the year of the woman for Democrats — during the party's hard-fought primary, Biden and his main rival, Sen. Bernie Sanders, easily bested several female aspirants for the party's presidential nomination. But it's been the convention of the woman.

On Wednesday, the party showed off the first female Speaker of the House, its vice presidential nominee and its prior presidential nominee — the first woman to have that role for a major party.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi celebrated that women make up nearly a quarter of the House, but she quickly shifted to hitting Trump over missing the moment. "I've seen firsthand Donald Trump's disrespect for facts, for working families and for women in particular," she said.

Democrats are increasingly dependent on female voters, as a gender gap grows in U.S. politics. That often helps the party, because there are more women voting than men. And the combination of Trump and the #MeToo movement has turned that gap into a chasm, even with a 77-year-old white man as nominee.

GIFFORDS: SPEAK OUT

Former Arizona congresswoman Gabby Giffords, shot in the head in a mass shooting in 2011, provided an emotional high point. Giffords had serious brain damage after the attack, struggled to walk and speak and founded a gun control group in her name.

On Wednesday, a video showed her playing the French horn — an instrument she played as a child and has been working to relearn — and laboring to put together sentences. Then she looked directly at the camera and spoke about the importance of grit and not giving up. "Words once came easily, today I struggle to speak, but I have not lost my voice," she said, in remarks her office said took hours to prepare because of her disability. "America needs all of us to speak out, even when you have to fight to find the words."

Of Biden, Giffords said in her slow, careful new voice: "He was there for me. He'll be there for you, too."

Her husband, former astronaut Mark Kelly, is the Democratic Senate candidate in Arizona.

Wednesday's speech was the longest Giffords has given since she was shot, according to the organization she founded.

CLINTON, THIS TIME A FOOTNOTE

For a historic candidate who won the presidential popular vote by more than 3 million ballots but lost in the Electoral College, Hillary Clinton seemed more like a convention footnote.

But she was there Wednesday to offer a clear reminder that every vote matters, and that staying home or choosing a third-party candidate could hand Trump a second term.

Clinton was only allotted five minutes to speak, a reminder that, while she remains popular with a segment of the party, she's also seen as a flawed politician who blew a winnable race to Trump.

Her speech was laden with regret.

"For four years, people have said to me, 'I didn't realize how dangerous he was.' 'I wish I could go back and do it all over.' Or worse, 'I should have voted,'" Clinton said. "Well, this can't be another woulda coulda shoulda election."

She ruefully alluded to how she won the popular vote, yet lost the election. "Joe and Kamala can win by 3 million votes and still lose. Take it from me. So we need numbers so overwhelming Trump can't sneak

or steal his way to victory.”

She did take a swing at Trump: “I wish Donald Trump knew how to be a president, because America needs a president right now.”

Ex-official says former Mexico president directed corruption

By RAFAEL CABRERA Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — In some of the most explosive accusations in recent Mexican political history, the former head of the state-owned oil company directly accused former President Enrique Peña Nieto and his treasury secretary of directing a scheme of kickbacks and embezzlement directly from the president’s office.

Emilio Lozoya, the former head of Petroleos Mexicanos who himself faces corruption charges, alleges Peña Nieto and Luis Videgaray used the state-owned Pemex as a conduit to “fulfill promises made during the (2012) campaign,” among other allegations he makes in a leaked 60-page document whose authenticity was confirmed by Mexican authorities Wednesday.

“Enrique Peña Nieto and Luis Videgaray Caso created a scheme of corruption in the federal government, in which the common denominator was that all the people who supported in some way the presidential campaign had to be recompensed or repaid,” usually in the form of cushy government contracts, Lozoya wrote.

Lozoya also accused Peña Nieto and Videgaray of extortion, fraud and embezzlement.

“The president and the afore-mentioned treasury secretary used me to create a criminal conspiracy aimed at enriching themselves, not only by (taking) government funds, but also by extorting money from individuals and companies, fraud and deceit,” he wrote.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of Lozoya’s testimony, and its authenticity was confirmed first by two people with knowledge of the investigation and then by the federal Attorney General’s Office.

Lozoya was captured in southern Spain in February and extradited to Mexico in July to face charges he took over \$4 million in bribes from Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht. But Mexican prosecutors announced they had reached an agreement with Lozoya in which he could avoid jail in return for testifying about corruption in Peña Nieto’s 2012-2018 administration.

Lozoya worked as international relations coordinator of Peña Nieto’s campaign in 2012, and he told investigators the bribes paid by Odebrecht to Mexican officials were aimed at not only winning more lucrative public works contracts for the construction giant, but also at influencing Mexico’s planned sweeping energy reform, enacted once Peña Nieto was in office.

Lozoya’s job on the campaign was to obtain funding from foreign companies that could be used to pay foreign and Mexican consultants and to help position Peña Nieto’s image internationally.

In early 2012, Videgaray, who was Peña Nieto’s campaign manager, allegedly told Lozoya to request \$6 million from Odebrecht and tell the company it would be rewarded when Peña Nieto won. Part of that reward would presumably be the openings for private companies contained in the 2013 energy reform of the state-controlled sector.

“As part of the approval of the Pact for Mexico reforms, Enrique Peña Nieto and Luis Videgaray Caso told me in February 2013 that large quantities of money would have to be paid to the opposition so that they would vote in favor of certain structural reforms of interest for President Enrique Peña Nieto,” Lozoya wrote. The cash was to be distributed in transparent plastic bags, so the politicians could see the bills, and in fact a video leaked earlier this week showed one such transaction.

Lozoya named at least a dozen leading opposition figures as participating in bribes, including the 2018 presidential candidate of Peña Nieto’s party, José Antonio Meade, who had enjoyed a friendly relationship López Obrador. Lozoya said about \$300,000 was given to Meade and other politicians.

Meade wrote in his Twitter account Wednesday: “I will not contribute to media scandals ... I have devoted my public life to building a better country, always with absolute honor and legality.”

The opposition politicians mentioned by Lozoya include a half dozen former senators, among them the current governor of the border state of Tamaulipas, Francisco García Cabeza de Vaca. Lozoya also ac-

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cused then-congressman Ricardo Anaya, who went on to become the 2018 presidential candidate for the conservative National Action Party, and other leading National Action figures.

Lozoya said former President Carlos Salinas de Gortari also participated, allegedly acting on behalf of National Action, known as the PAN, though the ex-president was a member of Peña Nieto's Institutional Revolutionary Party. Lozoya wrote that "the attitude of the PAN members in obtaining resources (money) was brutal," and that the party's members received about \$4 million in bribes from one company.

There has been wide speculation the case will tar the opposition of current President Andrés Manuel López Obrador, who has termed the case a "historic" step in his fight against corruption.

National Action responded in a statement Wednesday that "Emilio Lozoya is a strategic ally of the president to denigrate the PAN, because it is an alternative to the failure" of López Obrador's policies.

"Regarding the leaked testimony, we repeat our stance: if there is compelling evidence, we will take compelling action," the party stated, a reference to previous promises to expel any member caught in acts of corruption.

Neither Videgaray nor his assistant at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have responded to emails seeking comment. Peña Nieto's former chief of staff also did not respond. The Tamaulipas governor, García Cabeza de Vaca, did not respond to an email seeking comment.

Lozoya said Peña Nieto and Videgaray personally questioned him about a deal to buy an outdated fertilizer plant at an excessive price from one private company, asking him in a meeting at the president's office in 2013 "why is it taking so long."

He said the two were particularly interested in the deal and that Videgaray rushed through a review of the deal and told him not to worry about the price being paid, which ended up being several times the plant's real value. Lozoya said he was "surprised" by their level of interest in the deal, and said Peña Nieto and Videgaray negotiated the purchase with the plant's owner.

"It was evident that Luis Videgaray Caso had a personal interest in getting the deal done, either because he would obtain some possible illicit benefit, or to pay off favors from the past."

It was an apparent attempt by Lozoya to shift the blame from himself.

According to charges filed against Lozoya earlier this year, the Mexican firm, Altos Hornos de Mexico, sold the overpriced old fertilizer plant to Pemex after allegedly paying Lozoya around \$3.4 million in bribes 2012. According to prosecutors, the money went through accounts controlled by Lozoya and his sister, and they used most of it to buy a house in an upscale neighborhood in the capital.

In the testimony, Lozoya claimed he was "intimidated" into signing off on the purchase of the fertilizer plant, known as Agronitrogenados, by the president and Videgaray.

"Luis Videgaray Caso took over leadership of the decisions regarding the purchase of Agronitrogenados, arguing, and I quote 'This is the president's business, you just do what you are told. I speak for him.'"

Lozoya even suggested the bribery and kickback scheme was meant to finance future campaigns by the Institutional Revolutionary Party, which governed Mexico for 70 years in the 20th century and returned to power in 2012 after a 12-year absence.

"Sometimes they (businessmen) had to give money back after the deals to benefit future PRI electoral campaigns, or for the personal benefit of Enrique Peña Nieto and Luis Videgaray Caso," according to the document.

Associated Press writers Mark Stevenson, E. Eduardo Castillo and Christopher Sherman contributed to this report.

At home and in US, Jamaicans celebrate Kamala Harris' VP nod

By SHARLENE HENDRICKS Associated Press

ORANGE HILL, Jamaica (AP) — Residents of this small town in the farming country of northern Jamaica watched elated Wednesday night as Kamala Harris, daughter of one of the many Orange Hill residents who emigrated to the U.S., accepted the Democratic nomination for vice president.

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"This is a proud moment for us as knowing that she is family. She's making history!" said Harris' cousin Newton Harris, a 29-year-old legal consultant in the office of the Attorney General of Jamaica.

"As long as she remains the faithful servant of those who need her advocacy the most, she'll go far and history will be kind to her," said Newton Harris, who was watching the Democratic National Convention online at home.

Economist Donald Harris was raised in Orange Hill and emigrated to the United States, where he married Indian immigrant Shyamala Gopalan and had two daughters. His close relationship with Kamala and her sister ended with his divorce from their mother in 1972, according to father and daughter, but Kamala continued to travel to Jamaica as a young woman.

Accepting the vice presidential nomination Wednesday night, she spoke at length about her mother but mentioned her father and Jamaica only briefly. Nonetheless, her relatives in Orange Hill said they clearly saw the influence of the Harris family on the first Black woman named to a major U.S. party presidential ticket. Former Vice President Joe Biden chose Harris as his running mate last week.

Known for their roles in business and politics, the Harrises count among their ranks the candidate's great-grandmother Christiana Brown, owner of a popular dry goods store. Her great-aunt Thelma Harris served as a town councilor for the Jamaican Labor Party in the 1970s, when it was relatively rare for women to be in politics in Jamaica, family members told The Associated Press. Other relatives have also held local positions for the JLP, one of Jamaica's two major parties, in St. Ann's Parish, the district encompassing Orange Hill and the nearby market center, Brown's Town, where Christiana Brown ran her store.

After following her career for years, the extended Harris family in Jamaica was elated at their relative's rise to a historic nomination.

"Her speech was brilliant," said cousin Maxine Cross, a 65-year-old property manager. "Loved it! We are so proud of Kamala."

In South Florida, members of the 300,000-strong Jamaican-American community celebrated just as hard when Harris was chosen as Biden's running mate, saying she will make it easier for Democrats to mobilize voters in a must-win state for President Donald Trump.

"The enthusiasm level is through the roof. People are extremely excited," said Dale Holness, the Jamaican-born Democratic mayor of Broward County, home to the largest Jamaican community in South Florida. "They are overjoyed to realize that a daughter of immigrants could be placed in a position where she would be the second in command."

Mark Douglas, a commissioner for the city of Sunrise, who immigrated to South Florida from Jamaica in his 20s, said that voters from other Caribbean nations such as Trinidad and Tobago, Haiti and the Bahamas may also feel more inclined to vote for Biden now that Harris is on the ticket. "We usually root for each other," he said.

The front page of the Caribbean National Weekly, a widely circulated South Florida publication serving several Caribbean diaspora communities, sported the headline "It's Kamala!" right over "Caribbean American is Biden's VP pick."

Donald Harris is an economist who is a professor emeritus at Stanford University. Through a Stanford spokeswoman, he declined to answer questions about his daughter's Jamaican ancestry.

"I know Donald, but I didn't know any of his daughters," the nominee's cousin Karen Harris said in an interview in St. Ann's Parish. "We are still very proud of her."

Like Donald Harris, many of the sons and daughters of Orange Hill seek better lives in the United States. Kamala Harris' nomination has given them new hope for their own success.

"The Harris are hardworking people. So this lady now, when I heard about it, I laugh and rejoice," said Vita Stevenson, a 75-year-old store owner in Orange Hill who is not related to the Harrises. "I have a daughter there who gives me information about everything going on in America. ... I am praying for (Kamala's) victory."

Associated Press writers Michael Weissenstein in Havana and Adriana Gomez Licon in Miami contributed to this report.

Ex-official says former Mexico president directed corruption

By RAFAEL CABRERA Associated Press

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Associated Press writers Mark Stevenson, E. Eduardo Castillo and Christopher Sherman contributed to this report.

Trump: US demands restoration of UN sanctions against Iran

By MATTHEW LEE, DEB RIECHMANN and EDITH M. LEDERER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States will demand Thursday that all United Nations sanctions be reimposed against Iran, President Donald Trump announced Wednesday, a move that follows America's embarrassing failure to extend an arms embargo against Tehran.

The administration's insistence on snapping back international sanctions against Iran sets the stage for a contentious dispute. It's possible that the U.S. call will be ignored by other U.N. members — an outcome that could call into question the U.N. Security Council's ability to enforce its own legally binding decisions.

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"Two years ago I withdrew the United States from the disastrous Iran nuclear deal, which was a product of the Obama-Biden foreign policy failure — a failure like few people have seen in terms of the amount of money we paid for absolutely nothing and a short-term deal," Trump said.

He pledged that under his administration, Iran will never have a nuclear weapon.

"If and when I win the election, within the first month, Iran will come to us and they are going to be asking for a deal so quickly because they are doing very poorly," he said, adding that sanctions have crippled Iran's economy and limited the amount of money it can use to support militant groups.

Trump said Secretary of State Mike Pompeo will travel to New York on Thursday to present the U.S. demand to reimpose the sanctions, accusing Iran of significant non-compliance with the 2015 nuclear deal.

The Trump administration wants to reimpose all international sanctions that had been eased under that deal. Other nations claim the U.S. has no standing to make the demand because the Trump administration pulled the U.S. out of the Iran nuclear deal two years ago.

Pompeo and Trump have made no secret of their intention to invoke the rare and controversial diplomatic move in the wake of the administration's defeat at the United Nations last week on extending the arms embargo. The U.S. won just one other "yes" vote, with China and Russia opposed and the 11 other members abstaining.

As with the arms embargo, Russia and China bitterly oppose reimposing sanctions on Iran. So do other Security Council members, including U.S. allies Britain and France, a dispute that could result in a battle over the legitimacy of the U.N.'s most powerful body.

"Iran's support for its proxies in Syria only helps to bolster the Assad regime and undermine the U.N. process," said U.S. Ambassador Kelly Craft in remarks at Wednesday's council meeting on Syria. "How will giving Iran access to more weapons serve the interests of international peace and security?"

The Trump administration seeks to reimpose all U.N. sanctions against Iran under the so-called "snapback" mechanism that was approved with the 2015 nuclear deal between Tehran and six major powers. Under the deal, Tehran received billions of dollars in sanctions relief in exchange for curbs on its nuclear program. The "snapback" mechanism was created in the event Tehran was proven to be in violation of the accord.

While other members of the U.N. Security Council say the U.S. no longer has any say regarding the Iran deal, the Trump administration argues that it retains its standing as an original participant in the accord and as a permanent member of the Security Council that endorsed the agreement.

Trump said that when the United States entered the deal, it was clear that the U.S. always would have the right to invoke a reimposition of the U.N. sanctions.

That's not how other countries see it.

Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi said that since the U.S. is no longer a party to the nuclear deal it "has no right to demand the Security Council to activate the rapid reinstatement of sanctions mechanism."

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov accused the Trump administration of unleashing a politically motivated campaign against Iran and called for "universal condemnation" of the U.S. attempt to impose a permanent arms embargo on the Islamic Republic.

Speaking to reporters Wednesday, Pompeo defended the U.S. decision to invoke the snapback provision. It's unclear whether other members of the council can stop it through technical procedural means.

"This will be a fully valid enforceable Security Council resolution and we have every expectation that it will be enforced just like every other Security Council resolution that is in place," said Pompeo, who is to meet Thursday with U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres at his residence. "We will be in full compliance with that and we have every expectation that every country in the world will live up to its obligations."

The administration's position is that once it has notified the council that it is invoking "snapback," all the U.N. sanctions will be reimposed in 30 days. That's because the U.S. would veto any resolution that attempts to prolong the sanctions relief. The administration's view is that once those 30 days have passed, any country that doesn't enforce the U.N. sanctions will be hit with U.S. penalties for violating a binding U.N. Security Council action.

What the administration's position does not account for, however, is a scenario in which the rest of the

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world simply ignores the United States on the grounds that it no longer has legal standing to invoke snapback. There is also the theory that America's sanctions architecture won't be able to effectively handle such a massive enforcement exercise on its own. Other countries may also hedge their bets pending the outcome of the Nov. 3 U.S. presidential election, believing that Democratic nominee Joe Biden would reverse Trump's decision should the president fail to win a second term.

The U.S. argument is highly controversial. Not only has it been ridiculed by the Chinese, Russians and Europeans, not even the biggest Iran hawks in the United States all agree with it.

Former Trump national security adviser John Bolton, who has long held anti-Iran positions, has said the U.S. lost its snapback standing when it withdrew from the deal and moving ahead is not worth the damage it could do to U.S. veto power in the council.

In a rare moment of agreement, Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Zarif praised Bolton this week. "At least he is consistent — a trait notably absent in this U.S. administration," Zarif tweeted.

Former U.S. Undersecretary of State for Political Affairs Wendy Sherman, a lead negotiator of the nuclear deal during the Obama administration, said, "It was never expected that someone who withdrew from the (deal) would have standing to in fact bring the snapback provision."

Lederer reported from the United Nations.

Florida modeled a smooth mail election. Yes, Florida.

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON and NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — The votes were swiftly counted, winners were declared, and by about 10 o'clock that night most of the results of Tuesday's primary election — one with large numbers of mailed votes — were known in Florida.

Yes, Florida. The poster child for election meltdowns, where the recount of the 2000 presidential race dragged on for 33 days until it was resolved by the U.S. Supreme Court. Where, in 2018, the outcomes of the gubernatorial and U.S. Senate races were up in the air well after Election Day.

Despite its reputation for confusing ballot design and controversial election administration, Florida was, in some respects, a model for how to conduct an election and count the vote in a pandemic-era election. That model is getting more attention as many states are considering adjusting their voting rules to prepare for a surge in mail-in votes and avoid a slow vote count.

One key to Florida's performance Tuesday was state law allowing election officials to begin processing mail ballots weeks before Election Day. That means signature verification can be done in advance, speeding up the count and leading to faster results.

Roughly 1 million more people voted by mail compared to four years ago, with about three-quarters of the nearly 3 million votes cast remotely.

"Florida's going to be in such a great position moving forward here into the general because this isn't new to us. We've been doing this for a while," said Craig Latimer, Hillsborough County supervisor of elections, who added that one-quarter of his county's mail voters cast ballots in person in 2018.

In contrast, in a trio of key Rust Belt states that may decide the election — Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin — Republicans have resisted loosening rules that limit the processing of ballots to Election Day or the day before. Election officials in those states warn that may make it impossible to determine who won the presidential race there for several days.

In Michigan, a bill to allow earlier processing of mail ballots remains stalled in the GOP-controlled state Senate. "If the Legislature doesn't act, we're going to really be reaching the limits of what our current system can provide both with people and machines," said Jocelyn Benson, a Democrat and the secretary of state in Michigan.

A prolonged count and unsettled presidential election could create days or weeks of chaos. Democrats are particularly worried about how President Donald Trump, who has repeatedly said that he could only lose an election through fraud, might behave in that time.

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There's already been a mixed bag of results of states that had to hurriedly shift to a mail-voting system during the primaries since the novel coronavirus became widespread in March. Some, like Georgia and Wisconsin, were marred by huge lines at the few polling places that could remain open and chaos in the mail balloting system. Others, like in Nebraska and Pennsylvania, went comparatively smoothly.

Still, voting advocates warn it's too early for Florida to celebrate. It's still possible, they say, for Florida's election system melting down under the strain of the much-larger turnout of the presidential election in November.

"Florida still has work to do as we head into the general election," said Michael Pernick, a voting rights attorney for the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund.

There also weren't many nail-biters on Tuesday night. One reason Florida elections are so notoriously drawn out is the state is so evenly divided between Democrats and Republicans, leading to many close elections — especially presidential ones. In situations where every vote counts, the best mail-balloting system in the world may not prevent drawn out tallies that extend the uncertainty of the election.

In other words, don't take Florida for granted in November.

Associated Press writers Bobby Caina Calvin in Tallahassee and David Eggert in Lansing, Michigan, contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to show that the Michigan bill would allow earlier processing of ballots, not counting.

Trump praises QAnon conspiracists, appreciates support

By ZEKE MILLER, JILL COLVIN and AMANDA SEITZ Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Wednesday praised the supporters of QAnon, a convoluted, pro-Trump conspiracy theory, and suggested he appreciates their support of his candidacy.

Speaking during a press conference at the White House, Trump courted the support of those who put stock in the conspiracy theory, saying, "I heard that these are people that love our country." It was Trump's first public comment on the subject and continued a pattern of president appearing unwilling to resoundingly condemn extremists who support his candidacy.

QAnon has ricocheted around the darker corners of the internet since late 2017, but has been creeping into mainstream politics more and more. The baseless theory centers on an alleged anonymous, high-ranking government official known as "Q" who shares information about an anti-Trump "deep state" often tied to satanism and child sex trafficking.

Trump insisted he hadn't heard much about the movement, "other than I understand they like me very much" and "it is gaining in popularity."

Trump has retweeted QAnon-promoting accounts, and shirts and hats with QAnon symbols and slogans are not uncommon at his rallies.

An FBI bulletin last May warned that conspiracy theory-driven extremists have become a domestic terrorism threat. The bulletin specifically mentioned QAnon. Earlier last year, the Southern Poverty Law Center warned that the movement is becoming increasingly popular with anti-government extremists.

Trump's comments were condemned by the campaign of his Democratic rival, former Vice President Joe Biden.

"After calling neo-Nazis and white supremacists in Charlottesville 'fine people' and tear gassing peaceful protesters following the murder of George Floyd, Donald Trump just sought to legitimize a conspiracy theory that the FBI has identified as a domestic terrorism threat," said Biden spokesman Andrew Bates. "Our country needs leadership that will bring us together more than ever to form a more perfect union. We have to win this battle for the soul of our nation."

Former Florida Gov. Jeb Bush, who challenged Trump for the GOP nomination in 2016, also criticized the president, tweeting: "Why in the world would the President not kick Q'anon supporters' butts? Nut jobs, rascists, haters have no place in either Party."

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Pressed on QAnon theories that Trump is allegedly saving the nation from a satanic cult of child sex traffickers, Trump claimed ignorance, but asked, "Is that supposed to be a bad thing?"

"If I can help save the world from problems, I'm willing to do it," Trump said.

QAnon supporters were quick to celebrate Trump's comments on social media, with many calling them a validation of their views. Many have long contended he sends them coded messages of support, and on Twitter, one user claimed Trump's choice of a pink tie on Wednesday was another signal of support.

Within minutes, dozens of Instagram users began celebrating Trump's acknowledgement of the conspiracy theory at the White House podium, uploading videos of him.

"Well we've been waiting for this moment for a while, to put it mildly thank you @realDonaldTrump," one Instagram user wrote to her 19,000 followers in a post of Trump's exchange. The video was viewed more than 1,000 times in just 30 minutes.

"Holy Smokin Q," another tweeted. "Our President was asked 2 questions about the QAnon movement TODAY!! We LOVE you President Trump."

On Parler, a right-wing platform popular with some Trump supporters, one QAnon supporter posted a photo of Trump and a bald eagle.

Trump's comments came a week after he endorsed Marjorie Taylor Greene, who won her GOP House primary runoff in Georgia last week. Greene called the QAnon conspiracy theory "something worth listening to and paying attention to" and called Q a "patriot." Trump praised her as a "future Republican Star."

Trump has a long history of advancing false and sometimes racist conspiracies, including last week, when he gave credence to a highly criticized op-ed that questioned Democrat Kamala Harris' eligibility to serve as vice president even though she was born in Oakland, California.

Asked about the matter, Trump told reporters he had "heard" rumors that Harris, a Black woman and U.S.-born citizen whose parents were immigrants, does not meet the requirement to serve in the White House. The president said he considered the rumors "very serious," but later he and his campaign indicated they were not making an issue of the claim. Constitutional lawyers have dismissed it as nonsense.

Facebook announced just hours before Trump's statements that it was banning some QAnon Facebook groups and accounts.

But social media had already been used for years to fuel the conspiracy theory's rise, with private and super-secret Facebook groups where members sometimes post hundreds of times a day. QAnon believers often peddle a number of conspiracy theories, from claims that John F. Kennedy Jr. isn't really dead and is staging a public comeback to baseless speculation around celebrities who have secretly been arrested for trafficking children for sex.

Mentions of hashtags social media users to promote the QAnon conspiracy theory have spiked in public Facebook pages and groups since July, generating millions of interactions, according to an Associated Press analysis of data from Facebook-owned CrowdTangle.

The conspiracy theory gained a larger online following in recent weeks, when prominent QAnon social media accounts pushed a bizarre and baseless conspiracy theory that online retail giant Wayfair was trafficking children through pricey storage cabinets that are for sale on its site. Some of the social media users shared the names and photos of missing children from around the country as proof of the scheme, even though many of the children have since been recovered.

Last month, researchers at online misinformation firm NewsGuard found that the QAnon conspiracy theory is gaining traction in Europe, with Facebook users pushing it on Facebook and Twitter, too.

Seitz reported from Chicago. AP writer David Klepper in Providence, Rhode Island contributed.

Progressives irked by spotlight on GOP at Dem convention

By WILL WEISSERT and SARA BURNETT Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For nearly three minutes at this week's Democratic National Convention, Cindy McCain recounted Joe Biden's friendship with her late husband, John McCain, the Arizona senator and

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former Republican presidential candidate. Colin Powell, President George W. Bush's secretary of state, praised Biden for two minutes. Former GOP Govs. John Kasich of Ohio and Christine Todd Whitman of New Jersey also got prominent speaking slots.

Meanwhile, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, one of the most dynamic young stars of the Democratic Party, spoke for just 60 seconds.

The GOP's prominent billing reflects one of Biden's core arguments in the closing months of the campaign: He can appeal to and work with Republicans to bring stability to a Washington paralyzed by the chaos of Donald Trump's presidency. But progressive Democrats seeking to exert influence over Biden argue that such outreach risks undermining the party's principles and harkens back to an era of bipartisan cooperation that no longer exists.

"It's fine for Republicans and Democrats to say we disagree on many issues, but Donald Trump is a threat to American democracy and we must join together to elect Joe Biden," said Adam Green, co-founder of the Progressive Change Campaign Committee. "It's not OK for the Democratic convention to give more time to Republicans than Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, or to approve John Kasich's pre-taped video bashing the 'left' and implying that Joe Biden will not make good on the ambitious solutions he proposed in this crisis moment."

The political clout of progressives is debatable. After early setbacks, Biden took a commanding lead in the Democratic primary after voters rejected challengers from the left, including Sens. Bernie Sanders of Vermont and Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts. And many progressives, including Sanders and Warren, say the threat of Trump's election is enough to fully unify them behind Biden.

But that doesn't mean there aren't rising tensions — and a convention leaning so heavily into Republican support for Biden is exacerbating them.

Ocasio-Cortez is seen by many as the future of the party, but may actually already be its present. The New York representative has already helped progressives win congressional primaries, including challenger Jamaal Bowman toppling longtime Rep. Eliot Engel in her home state's primary.

"She is one of the people who can cut through this medium and deliver a message very powerfully, so I feel like the DNC just missed one on that," former Democratic presidential candidate Andrew Yang told Washington Post Live on Wednesday.

Waleed Shahid, spokesman for the progressive group Justice Democrats, described the convention so far as "boomer cringe," and said Democrats aren't effectively targeting young people and progressives who overwhelmingly didn't support Biden in the primary.

California Rep. Ro Khanna, head of the California delegation to the convention, said people need to be inspired to vote.

"The way I think we can do that is we've got such great progressive stars," Khanna said. "Let's get them out there. Let's get them engaged, let's showcase them. ... They can speak to that generation in very compelling ways."

Airtime isn't the only sticking point. The new Democratic platform approved at the convention does not call for an end to fossil fuel industry subsidies and tax breaks, nor does it make any mention of the sweeping "Green New Deal" proposals to combat climate change. That's despite Biden's campaign working for months with top Sanders advisers and supporters on "unity" task forces meant to incorporate some key progressive goals into the party platform.

The omission drew swift online condemnation from climate activists, but may have electoral benefits in battleground Pennsylvania, where the economy relies heavily on hydraulic fracturing.

Democratic National Committee spokeswoman Xochitl Hinojosa downplayed complaints about the convention being too Republican-heavy, telling Fox News Channel on Wednesday that her party would continue its message of "inclusion not exclusion."

The Biden campaign, meanwhile, has long said it wants to attract as many supporters from across the political spectrum as possible. Sanders speaking on the same night as Kasich — who sought to reassure Republicans and independents who "fear Joe may turn sharp left and leave them behind" — illustrated just how big its political tent can be.

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"As Senator Sanders said Monday night, this is the most important election in modern history, which is exactly why our campaign is building a broad coalition of supporters," said Biden spokesman Michael Gwin.

Among those who have addressed the convention is Ady Barkin, a progressive activist who after being diagnosed with A.L.S. in 2016 has become a visible face of support for single-payer health care under plans like Sanders' signature "Medicare for All."

Still, Shahid said a lot of the Democrats getting airtime, including in Tuesday's keynote montage with 17 "rising stars," were those who supported Biden in the Democratic primary and "are being rewarded for their loyalty and their endorsement."

That wasn't the case, he said, for young progressive leaders such as Massachusetts Rep. Ayanna Pressley, who supported Warren's presidential bid, and Washington Rep. Pramila Jayapal or Khanna, who backed Sanders, and "are not really being given the light of day."

Shahid also said disagreements over the convention are just a glimpse at what may happen if Biden wins in November and must work not only with Republicans but with a progressive caucus that is larger and more influential than it was when he left the vice presidency in 2016.

"A lot of what you're seeing is like the beginning of the tension that will come to fore in a Biden administration between his White House and progressives in Congress who will not give him the honeymoon that Barack Obama got from them in 2009," he said.

Burnett reported from Chicago. Associated Press writer Meg Kinnard contributed to this report from Columbia, S.C.

Victims want Golden State Killer sent to toughest prison

By DON THOMPSON Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Victims of California serial killer and rapist Joseph DeAngelo want him locked away in a distant maximum security prison with other inmates since he isn't going to spend the rest of his life on death row.

But they may not hold much sway over where the 74-year-old former police officer known as the Golden State Killer is imprisoned after he is sentenced Friday. State corrections officials said they must make their own evaluation about where and how DeAngelo can be housed.

Still, survivors and family members of victims have made recommendations during an ongoing sentencing hearing.

"You should be sent to the toughest prison in California. What a despicable piece of humanity you are," Dolly Kreis, the mother of rape victim Debbie Strauss, who died in 2016, told DeAngelo in court.

Strauss' sister, Sandy James, urged Sacramento County Superior Court Judge Michael Bowman to send DeAngelo to California's notorious supermaximum Pelican Bay State Prison.

He "deserves the worst possible environment, where he can live in fear as his victims did," she said.

Gay Hardwick, another rape victim, said in court Wednesday that she is certain DeAngelo is angling to be sent to "some prison nursing home for old murdering psychopaths."

In June, DeAngelo pleaded guilty to 13 murders and 13 rape-related charges between 1975 and 1986. He also publicly admitted dozens more sexual assaults for which the statute of limitations had expired. After the hearing, where victims are describing how they were traumatized by DeAngelo, he will be sentenced to consecutive life sentences under a plea deal that will spare him the death penalty.

Considerations involving his imprisonment include his medical and mental health needs, notoriety and safety concerns — potentially key calculations given his age and headline-grabbing crimes. Prosecutors have been trying to counter DeAngelo's courtroom appearance as a feeble man confined to a wheelchair, noting in a court filing that jail video shows him to be "healthy and physically active."

DeAngelo won't be going anywhere for a while because the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation has indefinitely halted transfers from county jails to prisons because of the coronavirus pandemic. When he is finally transferred, he will automatically be held at maximum security level, as are

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all those convicted of first-degree murder.

It will be up to prison officials to decide which prison and whether he must be housed in a protective custody unit.

"The court can make a recommendation, but ultimately, CDCR is the housing authority for the inmate population," department spokeswoman Terry Thornton said in an email. The department "does consider these requests based on the nature of the case and out of respect for the victims as much as possible, but CDCR must follow its regulations to ensure safety and security within its institutions."

The department has a special protective housing unit at Corcoran State Prison for high-profile inmates, though it's not clear if DeAngelo would go there. Notable past residents have included Charles Manson and Sirhan Sirhan.

Pelican Bay has a maximum security unit, but most of what had been the supermax portion of the prison is now used for minimum security inmates under a court settlement.

Many victims want the harshest possible punishment.

"I don't want to think of him breathing the same air and seeing the same sky as I do," Hardwick said in an interview.

In court Wednesday, she described how he assaulted her in 1978. DeAngelo simply stared ahead with no response, as he has throughout the hearings. Except for his eyes, his face was hidden behind a mask designed to stem the spread of the coronavirus.

"I'm certain that there is method in his madness and that his plan is to weaken himself in order to be assigned his life without parole sentence in some prison nursing home for old murdering psychopaths where he thinks he will be treated more like a patient than an inmate," Hardwick told the judge.

When he spoke, her husband, who was bound by DeAngelo during the attack on his wife, spun what he acknowledged was an elaborate fantasy in which their assailant is repeatedly brutalized by other inmates in prison in a manner similar to his crimes.

"I would want Mr. DeAngelo to suffer for the rest of his life like the victims, the rape victims, have suffered the last 42 years," he said.

Jane Carson-Sandler, who was raped in 1976 and also addressed the court on Wednesday, is among those asking for DeAngelo to be housed with other inmates and not in an isolation unit.

"It's going to cause him fear, because they don't like rapists that go after young girls," she said in an interview, "so he'd be looking over his shoulder."

Carson-Sandler was accompanied by a woman she identified as DeAngelo's one-time fiancée, Bonnie, who broke off their engagement before his crime spree began. A woman named Bonnie Colwell appeared in the HBO documentary series "I'll Be Gone in the Dark," based on Michelle McNamara's book of the same name.

Investigators have said one rape victim's recollection that her assailant shouted "I hate you, Bonnie" helped lead them to DeAngelo.

"When she saw who you really were, she was done with you," Carson-Sandler told DeAngelo. "I can see that 'I hate you, Bonnie' was a result of your frustration, because you lost control over her. But she bears none, none of that responsibility for your violent choices, and we consider her one of us — the sister-survivors of your malicious attacks."

Ex-FBI lawyer admits to false statement during Russia probe

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A former FBI lawyer pleaded guilty Wednesday to altering a document related to the secret surveillance of a former Trump campaign adviser during the Russia investigation.

Kevin Clinesmith is the first current or former official to be charged in a special Justice Department review of the investigation into ties between Russia and Donald Trump's 2016 presidential campaign. Attorney General William Barr appointed John Durham, the U.S. attorney in Connecticut, to scrutinize decisions made by officials during that probe.

Clinesmith pleaded guilty to a single false statement charge, admitting that he doctored an email that the

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FBI relied on as it sought court approval to eavesdrop on former Trump campaign aide Carter Page in 2017.

The sentencing guidelines call for zero to six months in prison, but the punishment is ultimately up to U.S. District Judge James Boasberg, who accepted Clinesmith's plea. Sentencing was scheduled for Dec. 10. Clinesmith resigned from the FBI before an internal disciplinary process was completed.

The case highlights broader problems with the FBI's surveillance applications on Page, an issue that has long animated critics of the Russia investigation.

Charging documents filed Friday say Clinesmith altered an email he received in June 2017 from another government agency to say that Page was "not a source" for that agency, then forwarded it along to a colleague. The document does not say which agency, but Page has publicly said that he had worked as a source for the CIA.

The FBI relied on Clinesmith's representation in the email when it submitted its fourth and final application to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court to secretly eavesdrop on Page on suspicions that he was a potential Russian agent.

Information about any relationship Page may have had with another government agency would have been important to disclose to the FISA court to the extent it could have helped explain, or reframe in a less suspicious light, Page's interactions with Russians.

Clinesmith mostly answered routine questions from the judge with brief responses, but he did elaborate at one point to clarify the nature of his conduct and to make clear that he believed the information he had included in the email was factually accurate at the time he altered the message.

"At the time, I believed the information I was providing in the email was accurate, but I am agreeing that the information I inserted into the email was not originally there and I inserted that information," Clinesmith said.

Clinesmith's attorney, Justin Shur, said in a statement last week that Clinesmith regretted his actions and had not intended to mislead the court or his colleagues.

A Justice Department inspector general report issued last December found significant errors and omissions in the four applications that the FBI submitted to eavesdrop on Page, and said officials failed to update the court after receiving new information that undercut the original premise that Page may have been an agent of a foreign power.

A Senate intelligence committee report Tuesday that examined links between Trump associates and Russia also identified flaws in the FBI's surveillance, including its reliance on a dossier of opposition research compiled by a former British spy whose work was funded by Democrats.

Page was never charged with a crime and has denied any wrongdoing.

Former Justice Department officials who have testified before Congress in recent months have said they would not have signed off on the surveillance applications had they known then about the problems that have since come to light.

Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee who has been leading an investigation into the Russia probe, said after Wednesday's plea that "the wheels of justice are turning."

"It is imperative we restore trust to a broken system and the only way that is possible is for people to be held accountable for their actions," Graham added. "More to come."

It remains unclear what additional charges, if any, Durham might bring. Though Justice Department policy is not to take investigative action aimed at affecting an election, Barr has said that doesn't apply here since Durham's probe is not targeting any current candidates for office, including Democratic nominee Joe Biden, who was vice president in the Obama administration when the investigation began. But he has also said he is mindful of the calendar.

The FBI said in a statement that it has been cooperating with Durham's investigation, including by providing documents and assigning officials to help his team.

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

Pelosi says postmaster has no plans to restore mail cuts

By LISA MASCARO and ANTHONY IZAGUIRRE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Postal Service faced more questions and a federal lawsuit Wednesday over mail disruptions, despite assurances by President Donald Trump's postmaster general of no more service changes until after the November election — a pledge made only after a public outcry.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi said Postmaster General Louis DeJoy told her he has no intention of restoring removed blue mailboxes or sorting equipment and no plans for employee overtime. Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said officials are withholding information about DeJoy's selection to the job. With the agency in turmoil, civil and voting rights advocates are suing to bring mail operations back to normal.

Pelosi, D-Calif., said she told DeJoy in a phone call that his decision for a temporary pause was "wholly insufficient and does not reverse damage already wreaked."

The uproar over the Postal Service is expected to spill out Friday as DeJoy testifies before the Senate, and Saturday as the House convenes for a rare session. The House is set to vote on legislation to reverse the service changes and provide \$25 billion to shore up operations.

Widespread mail disruptions have stunned Americans and led to warnings that Trump is trying to undermine the Postal Service as he rails against mail-in ballots just as millions of people are trying vote absentee to avoid polling places during the COVID-19 crisis.

Civil and voting rights organizations said Wednesday they are suing to immediately halt the changes and restore operations.

"We never imagined that we would be in this position with one of the oldest and most trusted institutions in our country," said Virginia Kase, CEO of the League of Women Voters.

Kase said even with DeJoy's decision to halt the changes the organization felt it had no choice but to go forward with the others in the lawsuit. "We need guarantees in place that this will not happen again, prior to the election," she said,

At the White House, Trump's team has insisted the president has no intention of disrupting mail delivery now or before Election Day.

But Trump leveled more attacks on absentee voting. "IF YOU CAN PROTEST IN PERSON, YOU CAN VOTE IN PERSON!" the president tweeted.

Schumer, who spoke to DeJoy late Tuesday, said he asked the postmaster for a written explanation of exactly what changes he was halting and if he would be restoring services.

Schumer, D-N.Y., also called on the Postal Service's board of governors to provide "answers on why Mr. DeJoy was selected" for the job. Schumer said that the board told him previously "much of the information I requested was confidential and declined to provide it."

Flares also went up Wednesday over a little-noticed rule that prohibits postal workers from providing witness signatures on absentee ballots while they're working, which could impact rural Alaska voters.

DeJoy, a former supply chain CEO, is a Republican donor, and the first postmaster general who did not come from the ranks of the Postal Service. He has pledged to revamp the Postal Service, which has struggled financially ever since 2006, confronting a decline in first-class mail and a new requirement to pre-fund its employee retiree healthcare benefits.

On Tuesday, DeJoy said he was halting those initiatives until after the election "to avoid even the appearance of impact on election mail."

"We will deliver the nation's election mail on time," DeJoy said in a statement.

DeJoy said he is halting the planned removal of mail-processing machines and blue collection boxes, as well as an initiative to change retail hours at post offices. He also said no mail processing facilities will be closed and said the agency has not eliminated overtime.

The statement did not specify whether the agency would restore mail-sorting machines that have recently been taken offline. A Postal Service spokesman declined to comment beyond DeJoy's statement.

One initiative that DeJoy didn't single out in his announcement was the newly imposed constraints on when mail can go out for delivery — a change postal workers have said is fueling delays.

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Along with the federal lawsuit, more than 20 states announced they would be suing to stop the changes. Several Democratic lawmakers have called for DeJoy to resign, but Republicans are also raising alarms over mail delivery disruptions, which are important not just for ballots, but prescription drugs and ordinary goods, especially in rural communities.

Trump made clear last week that he was blocking \$25 billion in emergency aid to the Postal Service, acknowledging he wanted to curtail election mail operations, 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.

Those funds are tangled in a broader coronavirus aid package that was approved in the House but stalled in the Senate.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell, R-Ky., has said he's not interested in a separate postal bill. He is eyeing a new virus aid package that would provide \$10 billion for the Postal Service.

"We're certainly open to post office funding," said White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany. But she said more important is broader virus relief with unemployment insurance and other aid.

Some prominent Trump backers say that his focus on the postal service has not been helpful in his pitch to undecided voters.

Dan Eberhart, a major Republican donor, said the president and DeJoy are right that the agency needs an overhaul. But he said the focus now "distracts" from broader campaign messages about the economy and policing issues.

Izaguirre reported from Charleston, West Virginia. Associated Press writers Aamer Madhani and Deb Riechmann in Washington, Bruce Schreiner in Frankfort, Kentucky, Gene Johnson in Seattle contributed to this report.

This story has been corrected to reflect that the name of the CEO of the League of Women Voters is Virginia Kase, not Virginia Case.

Pharmacists can give childhood shots, U.S. officials say

By MIKE STOBBE AP Medical Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Pharmacists in all 50 states are now allowed to give childhood vaccinations under a new directive aimed at preventing future outbreaks of measles and other preventable diseases.

Alex Azar, the head of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, took the step using emergency powers he has during the U.S. coronavirus epidemic, which was declared a public health emergency. The directive announced Wednesday will temporarily preempt restrictions in 22 states starting this fall.

The move is designed to help prevent vaccination rates from falling during the pandemic, Azar said.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has reported that orders for childhood vaccines from doctors' offices plummeted in late March and early April as their offices closed or saw fewer patients, raising concerns that vaccination rates would fall.

But a survey of pediatricians in May suggested that most offices were open and able to give recommended shots, and more than half were able to take on new patients if needed. Another CDC report from late last month noted New York City saw a rebound in kids getting their shots. National 2020 numbers from the agency are not expected for another year.

"Especially as we approach the school season, it is critical that children have easy access to the pediatric vaccinations to enable them to get back to school as schools reopen," Azar said.

The Trump administration has been pushing for schools and day care centers to reopen, as part of an effort to allow parents to return to work and help revive the economy.

Currently 28 states allow pharmacists to administer vaccinations to children, Azar said. In 22 states, laws limit such vaccinations, including three states that prohibit pharmacists from giving immunizations to any kids.

The authorization allows state-licensed pharmacies to administer childhood vaccines without a doctor's

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prescription. Pharmacists must first complete a training program, although many already have, Azar said.

The measure does not OK pharmacists to give shots to children younger than 3. Some of the most important childhood vaccinations are given to babies and toddlers, but pharmacists don't have the training or medical support to administer doses to young children, said Dr. Brett Giroir, the HHS Assistant Secretary for Health.

Most childhood vaccinations are given at doctor's offices and it's relatively unusual for kids to get vaccinations at pharmacies. In 2018, only about 7% of childhood flu shots were administered at pharmacies, according to CDC data. And it's even rarer for other childhood shots to be given at drug stores.

The American Academy of Pediatrics on Wednesday issued a statement criticizing the directive.

"Pediatricians' offices are open and safe. We have all necessary childhood and adolescent vaccines in stock with trained medical professionals who can administer them," said the organization's president, Dr. Sally Goza. "Rather than create an unnecessary alternative method to deliver immunizations to children, our federal government should invest in the one we have: pediatricians."

The American Pharmacists Association has been talking with federal officials about expanding services that its members can provide during the pandemic, said Mitchel Rothholz, the organization's chief of governance and state affiliates.

"I wouldn't say we initiated" the idea of gaining federal authorization to vaccinate children, he said. "It was part of ongoing conversations going on with decision makers, both at the federal and state level."

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Apple reaches \$2 trillion market value as tech fortunes soar

By MICHAEL LIEDTKE AP Business Writer

BERKELEY, Calif. (AP) — Apple has become the first U.S. company to boast a market value of \$2 trillion as technology continues to reshape a world where smartphones are like appendages and digital services are like instruments orchestrating people's lives.

The iPhone maker reached the \$2 trillion milestone in Wednesday's early stock market trading when its shares surpassed \$467.77.

The stock later backtracked to close at \$462.83, but it didn't diminish a remarkable achievement that came just two years after Apple became the first U.S. company with a \$1 trillion market value. It comes amid a devastating pandemic that has shoved the economy into a deep recession and caused unemployment rates to soar to the worst levels since the Great Depression nearly a century ago.

But Apple and other well-established tech giants such as Microsoft, Google, Amazon, Facebook and Netflix have thrived during the upheaval as the pandemic has forced millions of people to work, attend classes, shop and entertain themselves at home. That, in turn, has made technology even more crucial, a factor that has caused investors to snap up the stocks of the industry's biggest players, as well as relative newcomers, such as video conferencing service Zoom, which has seen its shares quadruple so far this year.

Apple's stock has climbed nearly 58% this year. In recent weeks, the rally has been bolstered by excitement over a four-for-one stock split that Apple announced late last month in an effort to make its shares more affordable to a wider swath of investors.

The broader boom in tech stocks also has helped the benchmark S&P 500 index reach new highs after steep declines earlier in the year. Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, Facebook and Google's parent company, Alphabet account for nearly 23% of the S&P 500's entire value.

Apple isn't the first company in the world to reach a market value of \$2 trillion. That honor belongs to energy producer Saudi Aramco, which attained it in December 2019. Saudi Aramco now trails Apple with a market value of about \$1.8 trillion.

Now that technology has clearly become the oil of the 21st century, other industry leaders could soon be joining Apple in the \$2 trillion club, now that it is clear technology has become the oil of the 21st cen-

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ture. Many industry analysts are predicting Amazon, Microsoft and Alphabet could eclipse the milestone in the upcoming months too.

But regulators and lawmakers looking into allegations that Apple, Amazon, Google and Facebook have been illegally abusing their power to stifle competition could spook investors if their investigations result in moves that undercut the companies' profits.

Not all technology companies are doing as well as they were before the pandemic. Google, for instance, suffered the first quarterly revenue decline from the previous year in its history during the April-June period as the advertising sales that generate most of its profit tapered off amid pandemic-driven lockdowns across the U.S.

But Apple has fared extraordinarily well, buoyed by the timely April debut of a new iPhone model priced at about \$400, 40% to 60% less than the fancier devices that it released last fall. The company will face another litmus test in October when it is expected to unveil a line-up of new iPhones, including a model capable of connection on the next generation of ultra-fast wireless networks known as 5G.

The next wave of high-priced iPhones, coming out a few weeks later than usual because of production delays caused by the pandemic, are expected to test the depths of Apple's customer loyalty as well how much people are willing to spend during tough times for most people outside the technology industry.

Iowa governor's push to reopen schools descends into chaos

By RYAN J. FOLEY Associated Press

IOWA CITY, Iowa (AP) — An aggressive push by Iowa's pro-Trump governor to reopen schools amid a worsening coronavirus outbreak has descended into chaos, with some districts and teachers rebelling and experts calling the scientific benchmarks used by the state arbitrary and unsafe.

The clash in the Midwest has illustrated in condensed form the tension between science and politics — and between economic concerns and health fears — that has characterized the nation's response to the outbreak from the White House on down. The virus has devastated the U.S. economy and killed over 170,000 Americans.

"We're about to see a tragedy occur in the state. And there's not a lot we can do about it. That's frightening," said Sara Anne Willette of Ames, a parent and former math tutor who runs a website tracking state infection data.

At issue is Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds' mandate in July that districts offer at least 50% classroom instruction.

The conflict intensified Wednesday when the statewide teachers union announced a lawsuit challenging the governor's ability to make such decisions for local districts. The Iowa City school board, which like many others had planned to start the year fully online, voted to join the lawsuit.

In her order, the governor said districts where 15% or more of coronavirus tests were positive over the prior 14 days can request permission to move to online instruction for two weeks at a time.

Health experts say Reynolds' 15% threshold is not based on science and is three times higher than what the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests is safe. The surgeon general has recommended a 10% limit.

States and local districts have set widely varying thresholds for reopening schools, but Iowa's is among the highest anywhere.

"They decided they wanted to open schools and then set the threshold, rather than deciding what's safe and meeting that target. They did it backwards," said Eli Perencevich, an infectious-disease expert at the University of Iowa.

By contrast, New York City says schools can reopen if positivity rates are below 3%. Arizona has put its rate at 7%.

Perencevich and others warn that it will only be a matter of time before Iowa educators, students and their families face illness and death in growing outbreaks. About a half-million students are preparing to begin school in the coming days.

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Reynolds has dismissed the health warnings as scare tactics and, echoing President Donald Trump, argued that children infrequently get seriously ill from or transmit the virus. She has said schools need to be open for children's benefit and so parents can go to work.

"Education is fundamental to the well-being of our children, and our teachers are essential to ensuring that our schoolkids return to learn rather than mark time and lose ground," she said. "We can do this safely."

Reynolds noted that one of her daughters will be teaching in-person classes and eight of her grandchildren will be going to school this fall.

Since her order, Iowa's outbreak has only gotten worse. Its per capita cases are the highest in the Midwest, the number of patients now in the hospital has increased to nearly 300, deaths surpassed 1,000 Wednesday, and dozens of nursing homes are suffering outbreaks. The governor has refused to order the wearing of masks statewide.

As of Wednesday, only a few districts across the state would qualify to request a waiver under the state's calculations.

Making matters worse: The data the state is using to calculate local positivity rates has been flawed.

The Fort Dodge district this week said its positivity rate looked grimmer than it really was because a clinic failed to report up to 3,000 negative tests.

Other school districts are seeing worse outbreaks than the state data would indicate. Reynolds' office announced Wednesday that it is fixing a major flaw in the data that unintentionally backdated thousands of negative and positive test results, which will lower or raise each county's 14-day positivity rate.

Thomas Tsai, a health policy researcher at Harvard, called Iowa's 15% threshold arbitrary and said it was made worse by the data problems. He said Iowa is among the states rushing to reopen schools despite not having the virus contained, while others that could safely reopen them haven't done so.

"You are seeing both extremes," he said.

The governor's order also required school districts to give parents the option of choosing online-only education, and many have agonized over what to do.

A storm that damaged school buildings across the state last week with 100 mph winds dealt another blow, and many districts have delayed their start dates so they can clean up and make repairs.

But it also highlighted the friendly relationship between Reynolds and Trump, who traveled to Iowa on Tuesday to discuss the damage with the governor.

Business groups have backed her in her move to reopen schools. Democratic lawmakers and school officials have mostly lined up against her.

"I believe the governor is misinterpreting that law," said Iowa City school board member J.P. Claussen, who said the state's metrics "don't seem designed to keep our staff and students safe."

The governor has warned that administrators who defy the state could face discipline against their licenses. In addition, the state said schools moving to 100% virtual instruction will not be allowed to offer sports or other activities. That could put pressure on administrators to keep classrooms open even when outbreaks occur.

Under pressure, some districts, including Iowa City, have decided on a hybrid arrangement in which students will go to class two or three days per week.

But the Des Moines district, the state's largest school system, is still pushing back against the state, despite the county's positivity rate well below 15%. The school board intends to begin next month in an online-only format but allow sports and other extracurricular activities.

Trump, Pence campaign events signal lax approach to virus

By THOMAS BEAUMONT Associated Press

DES MOINES (AP) — Sitting and standing shoulder to shoulder, some without face masks, hundreds of supporters of President Donald Trump jammed into an airplane hangar for an Arizona campaign event this week, ignoring the advice of Trump's own health experts.

Like his boss, Vice President Mike Pence went mask-less in Iowa last week as he reached across a bar-

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rier to autograph a half-dozen familiar red Trump campaign hats, literally crossing the line of vulnerability outlined by the coronavirus task force he heads.

The episodes, along with similar ones in New Jersey, Florida and Wisconsin, project a confusing message to the public even as Trump and Pence are trying to secure the confidence of Americans during a global pandemic and in the lead-up to the November election.

"It sends a mixed message. I think if you are making guidance for the general public, you should follow the guidance," said Dr. Amesh Adalja, an infectious disease specialist at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. "The guidance they are putting out is very unambiguous about these types of situations. I do think they are undermining their own work."

The White House says the president and vice president observe federal health guidelines, as well as those in place in the states they visit. Trips are planned with input from the presidential medical staff, and the president, vice president and senior staff are regularly tested.

But in Wisconsin on Monday, Trump absolved his audience of health precautions, along the way mocking the racial justice protests he has railed against for weeks.

In an aircraft hangar in Oshkosh, Trump flaunted violations of the state's distancing and masking guidelines — recommendations also promoted by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention — as he spoke to hundreds of supporters, most not wearing face coverings.

"This was supposed to be just a quick, little small gathering," Trump said, joking that "We're supposed to have 50 people, right?"

"We'll call it a peaceful protest, that way we can do whatever we want," Trump added.

"This is like a rally," Trump added, before telling supporters: "I hereby grant you a pardon."

At Tuesday's similarly raucous rally in Yuma, Arizona, supporters sat on closely packed-in chairs and bleachers, and stood on a balcony as they chanted "four more years!" While the hangar was open on one side overlooking Air Force One on the tarmac, it nonetheless felt stuffy inside in the stifling heat. Most in the crowd did wear official "TRUMP" and "MAGA" masks, though many did not.

The event was one in a series of recent Trump and Pence campaign events where the candidates and their audiences at times took public health precautions lightly and at worst ignored them.

On Wednesday, Pence addressed a crowd at a metal fabricating plant in Darien, Wisconsin, where the crowd stood and sat close together, many people not wearing masks despite a statewide order requiring them indoors. The White House said it turned away about 200 people to keep the crowd to a certain size.

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is painting Trump's public appearances as public health threats. As the Democratic National Convention got under way this week, his campaign aired an ad connecting a spike in COVID-19 cases in Tulsa, Oklahoma, to the rally Trump headlined there in June.

Pence wears a mask at times, as he did walking on stage in Des Moines before pocketing it for the remainder of the appearance. Trump has worn one in public only a few times. Officials have repeatedly said the campaign encourages the use of masks.

"President Trump and Vice President Pence are safely hosting events that allow them to bring their message directly to the American people in several states across the country," said campaign spokeswoman Courtney Parella. The campaign maintains that its events are in line with local regulations.

It isn't the president's and vice president's safety that's at risk, said Dr. Perry Haltikis, a public health psychologist and dean of the Rutgers University School of Public Health.

"They have top-notch care. They are being tested every day," Haltikis said. "It's the people who are standing there, whether it's at Bedminster golf course or at these rallies next to each other."

Earlier this month, Trump held two news conferences in front of country club members at his Bedminster club in New Jersey. At one, called suddenly on a Friday night, club members holding wine glasses assembled keeping no personal distance and, like Trump, not wearing masks. The gathering also exceeded the number of people allowed in an indoor space in New Jersey.

During Pence's Des Moines event, chairs arranged in small clusters six feet apart were quickly abandoned as many in the audience of about 200, few in masks, moved within a few inches of each other. Dozens

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crowded together afterward to get an autograph or nod from Pence.

"We all have a role to play to continue to protect the vulnerable, with the help of others, first, to save lives," Pence said during his speech. "I know the people of Iowa will do as you have done all along, put the health of others first."

But the call to collectively fight the virus rang hollow to some given the administration's inconsistent messaging.

Rob Mudd, who drove 120 miles from Cedar Falls to see Pence, was among those not wearing a mask.

"Is the disease real? Yes," said Mudd, 53. "So is the fear mongering."

Likewise, Justin Chance, from suburban Des Moines, shook his head when asked why he, too, wore no mask.

"I just don't believe all the hype," said Chance, 55. "I just don't worry about it."

Haltikis said Trump's campaign is playing down the danger, perhaps in hopes of suggesting that life in the United States is closer to normal, and thus safe in his care for another four years.

"We want the America of days gone by, where we could touch each other and not wear masks. They want to make it look normal in this extremely abnormal time," Haltikis said.

AP writers Jill Colvin in Yuma, Zeke Miller in Oshkosh, Scott Bauer in Madison, Wisconsin, and Jonathan Lemire in New York contributed to this report.

FDA blocks much-anticipated BioMarin hemophilia gene therapy

By LINDA A. JOHNSON AP Medical Writer

FAIRLESS HILLS, PA (AP) — Investors fled drug developer BioMarin in droves on Wednesday, driving shares down by a third after U.S. regulators rejected the company's potentially game-changing hemophilia A gene therapy over concerns it might not really be a one-and-done lifetime treatment.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration's rejection late Tuesday means the San Rafael, California-based company will have to complete an ongoing late-stage patient study, likely delaying possible approval till late in 2022.

The infused therapy, called Roctavian, could have freed hemophilia A patients from frequent, extremely expensive infusions of a blood-clotting therapy to prevent dangerous internal bleeding. It had been highly anticipated by doctors, patients and investors.

In a statement, BioMarin said the company and the FDA previously agreed on how much patient testing data the agency required to review the therapy, but in its rejection letter the FDA for the first time recommended Biomarin finish the late-stage study and provide two years of follow-up data on the therapy's safety and efficacy in preventing internal bleeding for all study participants.

The company added that FDA concluded differences between the results of a small, early-stage study and interim data from the late-stage study left unclear how long the therapy's effect would last.

Roctavian was meant to free patients with severe hemophilia A from 100 to 150 IV infusions of Factor VIII per year to prevent or at least reduce painful, spontaneous bleeding into joints and muscles, which can cause permanent damage to them.

Also known as valoctocogene roxaparvovec or valrox for short, it would have been the first gene therapy approved in the U.S. for any type of hemophilia. That's a rare, genetic bleeding disorder in which people don't have enough of a clotting protein called Factor VIII due to a mutation in the gene responsible for producing it. They repeatedly suffer spontaneous internal bleeding. About 1 in 10,000 people, mostly males, have hemophilia A, including about 20,000 in the U.S. About half have severe disease.

The gene therapy works by using an inactivated virus, created in a lab, to deliver to liver cells a working gene via a one-time IV infusion meant to enable the body to produce FVIII on its own.

Questions about whether it would work for a lifetime or just a few years came amid rumors that Biomarin might set a price tag as high as \$3 million per patient. That would top the price for the most expensive therapy ever approved by the FDA, Swiss drugmaker Novartis AG's gene therapy for spinal muscular atro-

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phy, Zolgensma, which was launched in spring 2019 with a \$2.125 million price tag per patient.

Biomarin has estimated the lifetime cost of current treatments to prevent bleeding at about \$25 million, arguing its gene therapy would save far more than its cost.

Several other drugmakers are developing gene therapies for hemophilia A but are further behind in testing: partners Pfizer Inc. and Sangamo Therapeutics, Spark Therapeutics and Generation Bio.

SVB Leerink analyst Joseph Schwartz on Wednesday slashed his 12-month price target for BioMarin's stock from \$140 to \$113 per share. He called the FDA ruling a "major negative surprise," but added, "We would not sell the stock here, as disappointing as this is."

Schwartz noted that after BioMarin disclosed disappointing data from an interim analysis of the ongoing late-stage study, company shares dropped to \$63. Schwartz believes BioMarin's other assets are worth an \$88 share price.

The company currently sells six medicines in the U.S., all for rare genetic or enzyme disorders. It posted a profit of \$52 million on revenue of \$932 million in the first six months of 2020.

In mid-afternoon trading, Biomarin Pharmaceutical Inc. shares plunged \$42.62, or 36%, to \$75.92. Trading volume by then was about 19 times the usual number of BioMarin shares traded in a day.

Follow Linda A. Johnson at https://twitter.com/LindaJ_onPharma

Palestinians in Gaza rally against Israel-UAE deal

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP) — Hundreds of Palestinians in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday rallied against the U.S.-brokered deal to normalize ties between Israel and the United Arab Emirates.

Protesters burned Israeli and American flags, trampled on posters of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and President Donald Trump, and chanted "normalization is betrayal to Jerusalem and Palestine."

Unlike Palestinian protesters last Friday near the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem's Old City who also burned posters of the Emirati crown prince, the Gaza demonstrators stopped short of burning symbols of the UAE — apparently not to antagonize the Gulf Arab country, where tens of thousands of Palestinians work and live.

The demonstrators in Gaza City also voiced support for Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas for his rejection of President Donald Trump's Mideast plan, which the Palestinians say unfairly favors Israel.

The protest was organized by the militant Hamas group, which rules the Gaza Strip, and other factions. Khalil al-Hayya, a senior Hamas official, denounced the Israeli-Emirati deal.

"Normalization with the occupation harms us and doesn't serve us," he said. "Instead, it serves and promotes the occupation in its projects that target Palestine and the region."

In the West Bank town of Turmusaya, several dozen Palestinians demonstrated against the UAE's deal with Israel, the Trump administration's Mideast plan and Israel's plan to annex parts of the West Bank. Protesters burned Israeli flags and threw stones at Israeli soldiers in the distance.

Lives Lost: 'Warrior' fought for slave descendants in Brazil

By DAVID BILLER and LUCAS DUMPHREYS Associated Press

ARMAÇÃO DE BUZIOS, Brazil (AP) — Carivaldina Oliveira da Costa was the steward of history in her Brazilian community on the northern coast of Rio de Janeiro state, and for two decades fought for their land rights as descendants of escaped slaves.

Known as Dona Uia, she was the matriarch who signed off on all decisions of her community, Rasa, one of Brazil's many so-called quilombos. Uia worked tirelessly for the roughly 700 families to be recognized rather than marginalized, according her daughter Nally Oliveira.

"I would like to be half the person she was: a good-hearted warrior woman who battled, and always taught us what was right and wrong," said Nally, 41, Uia's only daughter.

EDITOR'S NOTE: This is part of an ongoing series of stories remembering people who have died from

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the coronavirus around the world.

Uia was born in Armacao dos Buzios in 1941, when it was just a district of a seaside city discovered by Amerigo Vespucci. It wasn't until the mid-1960s that a visit by French actress Brigitte Bardot bestowed Buzios with celebrity cachet and kicked off its transformation into the elite escape comprised of 23 glistening beaches.

Uia's mother had told her stories – stories she'd heard from her own mother – of a bygone era. It was a time when Portuguese ships unloaded enslaved Africans at an outcropping called Father Vitorio Point. They were marched to a hilltop church to be christened, casting off names they received on the opposite side of an ocean, then put to work on sugarcane farms. Still today there are vestiges of slaves' quarters.

None of this appears in the history section of Buzios' official website.

"Buzios only tells about Brigitte Bardot, not its real history," Nally said. "Before Brigitte Bardot came to discover the place, there were people here: fishermen and people who didn't even know they were in quilombos, and were descendents of slaves."

Brazil was the last country in the Western Hemisphere to abolish slavery, in 1888. The quilombo communities persisted, though not until a century later did a new constitution for the first time recognize their right to the lands they occupied. Often disconnected from urban life even within city limits, quilombos have relatively high poverty and can be confused by outsiders with other poor neighborhoods. And securing title is a years-long process.

To facilitate government COVID-19 aid, Brazil's national statistics and geography agency in April released its estimate of how many quilombos exist nationwide — almost 6,000 — as well as their locations. The number of people living within them remains uncertain; the agency planned to count them for the first time in the 2020 census, but the pandemic forced its delay until next year. Many, including residents of Rasa, for decades weren't certain of their origins.

As a girl, Uia's family planted beans, manioc, banana and fruit trees on their land to feed themselves, Nally said. It wasn't enough to survive, however, and at age 13 she set off to Rio de Janeiro, then the nation's capital. Working as a live-in nanny, Uia sent money home. She was a child helping to raise other children in an apartment visited by politicians of the day.

At 20, Uia returned to Buzios, where she married and for almost four decades helped support eight children working as a maid. She quit not long after founding an association to fight for Rasa's traditional rights, sparked by historical research her brother conducted in Portugal.

Uia held meetings and debates, dug up information, traveled across the state for conferences and seminars, and brought her niece, Rejane Oliveira, under her wing in the fight for land. Rejane remembers Uia pacing out the boundaries of Rasa with a representative from the government's agrarian reform institute, which has been processing the community's claim for 16 years. Uia's energy never flagged.

"She brought something to Rasa that no politician would bring: self-confidence. Self-confidence came from her, the fight for land, the question of rights," said Rejane, who lives in a nearby quilombo and is Rio state's representative in the National Coordination of Black Rural Quilombo Communities.

Uia's advanced diabetes was attacking her vision before she contracted the coronavirus. She was admitted to hospital with a symptom believed to be associated with high blood sugar, and died the same day, according to Nally, who contracted the virus herself. Nally says what hurts most is she hadn't an inkling she was about to lose her mother, and didn't get to say goodbye.

Dona Uia died June 10, at the age of 79. Her death certificate cites COVID-19 as one of the causes.

Buzios' mayor decreed three days of official mourning, describing her as a pioneer and a leader in quilombo residents' fight. However, restrictions on activity due to the pandemic meant it wasn't possible to carry out an official ceremony, City Hall said in an email.

Rasa mourned her passing, and took it as a call to continue her work.

"She rescued the history of the ancestors. And today, my mom not being here, there's a loss, understand?" Nally said. "We have to carry that legacy and pass on to young people what our mother passed to her kids. Tell them about our roots, where our ancestors came from."

_____ Biller reported from Rio de Janeiro

A million more Floridians voted by mail in Tuesday primaries

By BRENDAN FARRINGTON undefined

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Former Navy pilot Scott Franklin has ousted Rep. Ross Spano, making the Florida congressman dogged by ethics investigations the eighth incumbent House member to be defeated in party primaries this year.

Tuesday's contests were shaped by the coronavirus pandemic, with more than 2.3 million people casting mail-in ballots.

That compares to fewer than 1.3 million in the 2016 primary. Unlike 2016, when there were primaries for U.S. Senate that helped drive up turnout, there were no statewide races on the August 2020 ballot.

This year also has been tough on House incumbents. The eight defeats double 2018's total and are the most since 1974 to lose in a year when the nation's congressional districts hadn't just been redrawn to reflect a new census, which happens every 10 years.

The U.S. Department of Justice is investigating Spano for alleged campaign finance violations. The House Ethics Committee was looking into allegations that Spano borrowed more than \$100,000 from two friends and then loaned the money to his campaign. But it paused the review when the criminal investigation began.

Franklin said he contested the nomination in Spano's district because he was fearful Democrats might capitalize on allegations against the incumbent to flip the seat in November.

"Politically, ideologically we're pretty close on the issues, but with the ethics and the investigations hanging over him it just really made the seat vulnerable, and that was my concern," Franklin said.

The district sits east of Tampa in central Florida and has traditionally voted Republican. Franklin, a businessman and Lakeland city commissioner, now faces Democrat Alan Cohn, a former television journalist who had raised about \$600,000 for the race as of July 29.

In north Florida, Kat Cammack won a crowded GOP primary to replace her former boss, outgoing Republican U.S. Rep. Ted Yoho.

The 32-year-old Cammack owns a political consulting firm and previously served as Yoho's deputy chief of staff and his former campaign manager. She prominently featured her connection to Yoho during the campaign.

Cammack won in a Republican field of 10 candidates in the firmly Republican district that runs from Ocala to just south of Jacksonville.

"It's a very humbling experience winning a 10-way primary," she said. "It's a sign that there's a next generation of conservatives coming up and we're ready to start a new squad on Capitol Hill."

Florida will also elect a new member of Congress in a strongly GOP district in southwest Florida, where U.S. Rep. Francis Rooney is stepping down after two terms. Nine Republicans faced off in the primary to replace him in a race that was too close to call Wednesday. Mail-in ballots from overseas voters, such as those in the military, can be returned up to 10 days after election night, and they could narrow the margin and prompt an automatic recount of ballots.

In Broward County, Sheriff Gregory Tony claimed victory in the Democratic primary over his predecessor, who was fired after the Parkland massacre. Tony replaced Scott Israel in 2019 after Gov. Ron DeSantis dismissed Israel over his handling of the 2018 shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School that left 17 dead.

In a Palm Beach County congressional district, far right conservative Laura Loomer won the Republican primary to face Democratic U.S. Rep. Lois Frankel. The district is firmly Democratic, and Frankel has been a political fixture there for decades.

While President Donald Trump has raised questions about the potential for fraud in voting by mail, he later walked back his comments, at least as far as Florida was concerned, and requested a mail-in ballot of his own.

Democrats now have the registration edge in Florida, but independents can, as usual, make all the dif-

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ference. As of June 30, Florida had nearly 4.9 million active Republican voters and more than 5.1 million active Democratic voters.

The state has nearly 3.8 million voters who either are not registered with a party or are registered with a minor party.

James Collins, 69, a retiree in Fort Lauderdale, said that because he was "a bit apprehensive because of the pandemic," he went to his polling station early in the morning Tuesday, donning vinyl gloves and a face mask.

"No one was there except the poll workers. It was very quick," Collins said.

AP writers Bobby Caina Calvin in Tallahassee and Tamara Lush in St. Petersburg contributed to this report.

How Black women cleared a path for Harris to be the VP pick

By KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — When Hazel Dukes stepped onto the Democratic National Convention stage in 1972 to second Shirley Chisholm's presidential nomination, it amounted to more than history.

It was a moment of hope.

The legacy of Chisholm, who famously said she was "unbossed and unbothered," was cemented that day as the first Black woman to run for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination. Dukes said Chisholm and others hoped her historic run would lay the foundation for future generations of Black women to ascend into powerful political roles to usher in systemic change within their communities.

And 48 years later, that hope is being realized as California Sen. Kamala Harris prepares to accept the Democratic Party's vice presidential nomination on Wednesday. She will be the first Black woman and first Asian American woman named to a major party presidential ticket.

"Shirley exhibited the strength of Ida B. Wells, Mary McLeod Bethune and Fannie Lou Hamer and she was a powerhouse," said Dukes, 88, a lifelong activist and current president of the NAACP New York State Conference. "African American women, we've been in this struggle. And now we are showing our power and our strength. We are saying this is our moment and our space, and we are claiming it."

That energy could decide whether Harris and Joe Biden win in November. Black voters, especially women, are a critical part of the Democratic coalition and could sway the results in critical states such as Michigan, Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, North Carolina and Florida.

But historically, Black women have fought the racism and sexism that prevented them from having prominent roles within the movements for women's suffrage and civil rights. While their organizing and political contributions had measurable impact, experts say, they were largely relegated to the sidelines, or in some cases, seemingly wiped from the historical record.

That reminder is especially clear as America marks the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which gave women the right to vote — a right that most Black women weren't afforded until much later.

"This is certainly a watershed moment for them, but I do think it's important to emphasize that descriptive representation, as powerful as this is for women, is only that much more sweeter when it results in substantive representation," said Ravi Perry, Howard University's political science chair. "That upper glass ceiling is still there, and we are still one of the last developed nations to see a woman head of state."

So, while Harris is set to address the nation for what some hope will be a rousing speech at a time of immense economic uncertainty and racial reckoning, others hope her remarks will be set against the legacy of the many Black women on whose shoulders they believe she stands.

Her speech follows former first lady Michelle Obama, whose powerful remarks Monday kicked off the convention and outlined the dire stakes for the election ahead. She declared that President Donald Trump was "in over his head" and the "wrong president for our country."

Mrs. Obama hinted at the legacy of Black women in politics and how, even in 2020, a Black woman speaking with conviction at the convention might not be met with open arms by some, a stark reminder that the road to prominence within politics and the Democratic Party has not been easy for women of

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color, especially Black women.

"Now, I understand that my message won't be heard by some people," Mrs. Obama said. "We live in a nation that is deeply divided, and I am a Black woman speaking at the Democratic convention."

The first Black woman to run technically for vice president was Charlotta Bass in 1952. Bass, who was a newspaper publisher, ran through the Progressive Party, according to author and Johns Hopkins University history professor Martha Jones.

Bass receives little attention, Jones said, because her radical ideas at the time were met with great resistance.

"I think there's a temptation to kind of sanitize Black women's political history, and I think part of the reason we don't remember Bass is because she doesn't fit a shiny, polished mold of respectable Black women," said Jones, whose forthcoming book is "Vanguard: How Black Women Broke Barriers, Won the Vote, and Insisted on Equality for All."

"Black women have always been ambitious and nimble and willing to engage in a broad range of political views in order to figure out the problem of an American democracy that for so long disappoints Black Americans," she said.

But the legacy of Black women extends beyond politics, according to Johnnetta Cole, who became the first African American female president of historically Black Spelman College and national chair of the National Council of Negro Women.

"I have had this extraordinary honor of seeing strong Black women leaders, and there's an expression of, 'If you see one, you can be one,'" said Cole, who was mentored by civil rights legends Mary McLeod Bethune and Dorothy Height. "We are shaped and we are propelled by others. There's no question that our foremothers paved the way. But while we can talk in a moment about the extraordinary, exquisite selection of Sen. Kamala Harris, let's not declare that it's all victory."

Much work remains. America has yet to have its first Black female governor. And while inroads have been made, Black women remain significantly underrepresented in politics.

And younger grassroots organizers are balancing the historic nature of Harris' selection with her record as California attorney general and district attorney in San Francisco, which some believe could make it difficult for her and Biden to galvanize support among younger Black and Latino voters.

Some of Harris' critics say she focused on issues that punished poor and minority families. Among them, she took on truancy and supported a statewide law modeled on her city initiative that threatened parents with jail time, fines and lost public benefits if they failed to send their children to school. But in recent years, Harris has supported more progressive criminal justice reform measures.

Karissa Lewis, the Movement for Black Lives' national field director, said she knows many activists who are inspired by Harris and others who have been "deeply and negatively impacted by some of the historical legacy of Harris."

But Lewis said it's too soon to know whether Harris will truly follow in the steps of women who came before her like Fannie Lou Hamer, a beloved civil rights activist.

"It is clear to us at M4BL that no matter who occupies the White House in January, it will require sustained struggle in building our political power to be able to shape a true Black national agenda," Lewis said.

"Fannie Lou Hamer is the model and someone that a lot of folks in modern-day movements look to," she said. "So thinking back to some of Fannie's powerful speeches, it was clear that she was speaking for the people and felt accountable to the people. I think time will tell if Harris sees herself aligned with movement and brings movement along with her."

Kat Stafford is a member of The Associated Press' Race and Ethnicity team. Follow her on Twitter at https://twitter.com/kat__stafford.

Trail of bubbles leads scientists to new coronavirus clue

By LAURAN NEERGAARD AP Medical Writer

A doctor checking comatose COVID-19 patients for signs of a stroke instead stumbled onto a new clue about how the virus may harm the lungs -- thanks to a test that used tiny air bubbles and a robot.

Dr. Alexandra Reynolds, a neurologist at New York's Mount Sinai Health System, initially was baffled as she tracked "the cacophony of sound" made by those harmless bubbles passing through the bloodstream of patient after patient.

Yet the weird finding excited lung specialists who now are studying if it helps explain why often, the sickest coronavirus patients don't get enough oxygen despite being on ventilators.

The tale illustrates how months into the pandemic, scientists still are struggling to unravel the myriad ways the coronavirus attacks -- and finding hints in surprising places.

As patients flooded New York hospitals last spring, Mount Sinai's intensive care unit that usually handles patients with brain diseases turned overnight into a COVID-19 ward, with patients heavily sedated as ventilators kept them alive.

"When we wake them up, will we notice they have some horrible brain injury?" worried Reynolds, who at first had little way to monitor brain function except to check patients' pupils.

A bedside test called a transcranial Doppler uses sound waves to track blood flow in the brain, but it was too risky for health workers to stand by patients' heads for long periods.

So Reynolds turned to a new robotic version, a headset that once positioned over the patient can automatically do the tracking. She used it to perform what's called a bubble study, a commonly used, painless test for stroke risk that involves injecting saline containing tiny air bubbles into a vein. As the microbubbles circulate, the smallest blood vessels in healthy lungs — called capillaries — will trap and filter them out of the bloodstream.

Over several nights in the ICU, Reynolds tested some of her sickest coronavirus patients — and repeatedly, NovaSignal's robotic Doppler kept measuring bubbles that, instead of being filtered away, were somehow reaching their brains.

"This was really bizarre," Reynolds said. Often bubbles avoid lung filtering by slipping through a heart defect that's a well-known stroke risk, but "there's no way everyone suddenly has a hole in their heart."

But to Mount Sinai lung expert Dr. Hooman Poor, the bubble mystery might be "essentially the missing link" in why these patients weren't getting enough oxygen: Maybe abnormally dilated lung capillaries, not a heart problem, were letting the bubbles sneak through.

Poor and Reynolds did more tests. By the end of the pilot study, 15 of 18 tested patients had microbubbles detected in the brain. And backing Poor's theory, patients with the most bubbles also had the lowest oxygen levels, researchers reported earlier this month in the American Journal of Respiratory and Critical Care Medicine.

Why would capillaries matter?

Coronavirus patients on ventilators have what's called ARDS or acute respiratory distress syndrome, an inflammatory lung failure that when caused by other infections blocks oxygen by stiffening lungs. But the coronavirus doesn't similarly stiffen lungs, Poor explained.

His new theory: Doctors know the coronavirus attacks the lining of blood vessels, causing dangerous clots. The bubble study suggests maybe blood is being detoured from clogged vessels to unusually widened ones — and thus flowing through too fast to properly absorb oxygen.

A rare disorder called hepatopulmonary syndrome causes the same abnormality, and it's diagnosed with a bubble study.

The findings are preliminary, not proof that dilated blood vessels are a problem. Still, some autopsies have linked COVID-19 to deformed lung capillaries.

Next up is a larger study that aims to see if measuring bubbles could help doctors monitor whether patients are improving or worsening.

The report "I think is really going to generate a lot of talk" among lung specialists, because it's "more

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evidence that the blood vessel is really where the action is," said Dr. Corey Kershaw of the University of Texas Southwestern Medical Center, who wasn't involved in the pilot study.

He cautioned that researchers need to definitively prove a heart defect isn't playing a role.

But, "it's an example of, there are so many things we still don't know," Kershaw added, praising the creativity used to find this latest clue.

The Associated Press Health and Science Department receives support from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Now playing at the mall parking lot: movies, drag shows

By JOSEPH PISANI AP Retail Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Angel Dougherty went to the mall last month — not to shop, but to watch a drive-in drag show in the parking lot.

"This year has been so anxiety filled and chaotic, I figured this experience would be something to lighten the mood," says Dougherty, who paid to see the stars of TV's "RuPaul's Drag Race" dance in front of hundreds of parked cars at a shopping center in Paramus, New Jersey.

After being closed for months due to the coronavirus pandemic, malls are bringing all types of drive-in entertainment to their massive parking lots, hoping to lure people back to their properties.

A mall in upstate New York, for example, is hosting a drive-in wrestling match. Others around the country are bringing movies or magic shows that can be watched from a car.

It's a way to reintroduce people to the mall and eventually get them inside to shop, says retail consultant Kate Newlin. But that's still a hard sell for anxious shoppers, especially with coronavirus cases spiking around the country.

"Nobody wants to go there," Newlin says about malls. "Nobody wanted to go there before COVID."

Malls have struggled to attract shoppers for years as more people shop online. But the pandemic has hit malls especially hard. Stores that they depend on, such as J.C. Penney, have filed for bankruptcy and are permanently closing several locations. Other mall tenants, such as the Gap, stopped paying rent while their stores were temporarily closed.

Retail consultant Jan Rogers Kniffen believes that up to half of the 1,000 malls in the U.S. will either close or be unrecognizable in the next two years. Before the pandemic, he expected only 300 to close over the next decade.

The drive-ins mean extra money for malls since production companies typically pay to rent a section of the parking lot. Details of the deals are kept private, but Newlin says renting out the parking lot won't make up for the loss of losing a major tenant like J.C. Penney.

Malls can benefit in other ways: Some deliver meals from the food court to the parking lot. Others encourage movie goers to park a couple of hours before showtime to pick up dinner inside.

Brandon Voss came up with the idea of a drive-in drag show at an Olive Garden, where his meal was brought to his parked car.

"If Olive Garden can do it, why can't I?," says Voss, whose company had to cancel this year's "RuPaul's Drag Race" tour, which would have been held at indoor venues around the world.

He found a willing partner in mall operator Westfield, which brought Drive N' Drag to three of its malls, including ones in Seattle and Annapolis, Virginia.

Drive 'N Drag tickets start at \$70 for two people and their car. About 300 to 400 vehicles can park at each show, a much smaller audience than Voss is used to.

"We usually play in arenas that Lady Gaga plays," he says.

Westfield says it has been using its parking lots to draw crowds for years, with circuses, ice skating rinks and car shows. But it had to get more creative during the pandemic, hosting drive-thru high school graduations and other events where people can and socially distance in their car.

Kilburn Live, another production company, has turned five mall parking lots into drive-ins and is adding

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others. Cars are parked at least 8 feet way. Attendees can watch from the roof of their vehicle, outside of it or sit in an opened trunk of an SUV, as long as they stay in their designated spot.

"I'm glad they are bringing drive-ins back," says Kimberly Shanks, a real estate agent in Lakewood, Colorado, who watched two movies from her SUV, parked near a Nordstrom at the Park Meadows mall in Lone Tree, Colorado.

Outside of malls, drive-in movie theaters have become popular again with people tired of being stuck at home with no where to go. Walmart, noticing the trend, added drive-in movies to 160 of its parking lots where people can order snacks ahead of time from the store.

Shanks, who watched "Detective Pikachu" and a "Harry Potter" movie with her son, felt it was a safer way to have a night out without being "too exposed to crowds."

Much of what's played in the drive-ins are older movies, such as "The Goonies" and "Ghostbusters," since Hollywood has all but stopped releasing new films. But Kilburn has shown some new content, including concerts by country stars Garth Brooks and Blake Shelton, which were filmed just to be shown at drive-ins. And the company plans to keep things fresh by expanding into drive-in stand-up comedy and magic shows

What can be shown is also limited by the malls, which don't allow R-rated movies.

"We don't want someone accidentally passing by to see something inappropriate," says Michelle Snyder, chief marketing officer at Brookfield Properties, a mall operator that partnered with Kilburn.

Besides movies, Brookfield's malls have used their lots for drive-thru farmer's markets and drive-thru COVID-19 testing, a service many shopping centers around the country are offering in response to the pandemic. At Brookfield, someone has floated the idea of holding a drive-in wedding. And it's also considering renting out parts of its parking lots to companies that want to hold drive-in meetings with their employees.

"We're not closed to anything," Snyder says.

Poll: Pandemic shifts how consumers use gig companies

By CATHY BUSSEWITZ and HANNAH FINGERHUT AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — When ride-hailing heavyweights Uber and Lyft and delivery giants Grubhub and Instacart began making shared rides and meals available with a few taps on a smartphone, they transformed the way people work, travel and get food delivered to their homes.

But the pandemic shuffled the deck for the so-called gig economy as fear of contracting the coronavirus led many who once traveled in shared vehicles to stay home, and grocery delivery services struggled to keep up with demand from people who didn't want to risk stepping into a store.

A new survey from the University of Chicago Harris School of Public Policy and The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research shows how consumer attitudes about using ride-hailing and delivery services have changed. It also highlights a wealth divide, where Americans with higher incomes are able to utilize the services to help reduce their risk of infection.

"People are worried. We know that," said Dmitri Koustas, an assistant professor at the University of Chicago Harris School. "They're worried about themselves and their families, and they're concerned about the virus, and they're also worried about workers."

Among the people who used ride-hailing before the crisis, 63% said they have not taken a ride since March. At the same time, people with higher household incomes had more groceries delivered to their homes.

Those with household incomes about \$100,00 a year were roughly twice as likely to have increased their use of grocery delivery services than those in households earning less, the survey found. Overall, the percentage of people using delivery services remained about the same since the pandemic began, with those increasing their use balanced out by those cutting back, in some cases because of cost.

In Auburn, New York, few grocery stores offer delivery, and those that do are more expensive, said Patricia McAvaney, 49, who is disabled and living on a fixed income of \$920 a month. She's not comfortable going to the grocery store, but feels she has no choice.

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"I'm on a budget, so it's really not feasible to get everything delivered from that store," McAvaney said. Many Americans have been uncomfortable with delivery services during the pandemic. About 6 in 10 say they are very comfortable picking up food from a restaurant, compared with about 3 in 10 using delivery. Roughly another 3 in 10 said they are uncomfortable getting food delivered.

George Hunter, a 60-year-old antique dealer in Kent, Washington, said he went out to restaurants three or four times per week before the pandemic. But he'd rather cook his own food than order in, and he prefers to pick his own produce at the store.

"I did a lot of my appointments in restaurants, and it was a treat, to go out and have somebody bring me coffee and do the dishes," Hunter said. "It's no longer a treat. I'm in the house. It doesn't make sense to me."

A majority — 54% — said they feel uncomfortable using a ride-hailing service during the coronavirus outbreak, preferring their own cars for travel. A similar percentage were uncomfortable with taxis, public transportation and air travel, suggesting people are shying away from all forms of transportation where they share space with others.

Thomas Sorenson, a 63-year-old handyman, used ride-hailing when he went out with friends before the pandemic. But they no longer get together, and he takes care of his elderly mother, so wouldn't risk infection by using ride-hailing services.

Karena Mazur Israel, 52, said she would be more comfortable riding in long vehicles such as buses, station wagons or limousines.

"On the bus, if you're feeling like you can't socially distance, you can get off of the bus and transfer, and wait until the next bus to come around," she said.

The changing sentiments on ride-hailing and delivery are reflected in recent earnings for companies in those spaces.

Uber and Lyft lost a combined \$2.2 billion in the second quarter as people shied away from their services. Bookings in Uber's mobility business declined 73% and the company laid off a quarter of its workforce. Uber's food delivery business more than doubled its revenue compared to last year, but it didn't turn a profit. In April, Lyft's rides were down 75% compared to the same time last year, and the company said it was laying off 17% of its workforce.

Grubhub's average daily orders jumped 32% in the second quarter as diners ordered in, but it lost money as it spent heavily to prop up struggling restaurants and protect drivers.

The survey also weighed concerns for gig workers. Democrats were more likely than Republicans to express a lack confidence in safe working conditions for ride-hailing and delivery drivers. Overall, 35% of Americans favored government regulations to increase wages and benefits for drivers.

Support grew somewhat — to 42% — if the cost of services were to increase 5% to ensure better benefits and wages for gig workers. But support dropped to 22% if it would lead to a 25% increase in the cost of such services.

Mazur, a stay-at-home mom who says her household income is around \$150,000, said she would be willing to pay a few dollars more. "I used to waitress and I used to do these kinds of jobs, so I definitely feel for the workers," she said.

Hunter, the conservative antique dealer who makes about \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year, would not.

"If the companies don't pay enough money, people will leave," Hunter said. "And if you keep artificially paying people higher wages, it shows up in your economics."

The AP-NORC poll of 1,002 adults was conducted July 16-20 using a sample drawn from NORC's probability-based AmeriSpeak Panel, which is designed to be representative of the U.S. population. The margin of sampling error for all respondents is plus or minus 4.3 percentage points.

Online:

AP-NORC Center: <http://www.apnorc.org/>.

A US WeChat ban could hurt many in America, not just China

By TALI ARBEL, KELVIN CHAN and JOSEPH PISANI Associated Press

For millions of people in the U.S. who use the Chinese app WeChat, it's a lifeline to friends, family, customers and business contacts in China.

That lifeline is now under attack by an executive order from President Donald Trump that could ban the app in the U.S. as early as mid-September, potentially severing vital relationships.

"It's the first thing I check in the morning," Sha Zhu, a Chinese-American in Washington, says of WeChat. It's how she talks to her mother and old friends from China, which she left in 2008, and how she communicates with her colleagues as a public relations manager for a Chinese-owned consulting company. It's where she stores Chinese currency in her virtual wallet.

Most important, it's where she keeps videos and audio clips of her father, who died four years ago.

In China, WeChat, or Weixin as it's known, is critical infrastructure — texting, social media, cab-hailing, payments and more, all wrapped into one app. Many Chinese businesses don't even take credit cards anymore, just WeChat. It has over a billion users, owner Tencent says, mostly in China. Mobile app firms have varying estimates for U.S. downloads — in the range of 19 to 26 million.

People in China have little choice but to use it because the country's communist rulers block access to Google's search engine, Facebook, Twitter and other social media, along with many other foreign websites and online services.

For people in the U.S., WeChat has less functionality than it does in China. But it's what connects immigrants and students from China to their pasts and to each other. Chinese restaurants in the U.S. use it to take food orders. Businesspeople in the U.S. that have work in China rely on it as well.

Kurt Braybrook, who spent 22 years doing business in Shanghai before moving back to the U.S. in 2017, says the app is irreplaceable for him and his China-born wife. He could lose roughly 500 WeChat contacts, few of which he could reach without the app.

"If they banned it entirely, it will wipe out connections to my wife's family, all our friends and my network of business contacts I built over 22 years," says Braybrook, who now lives in Grand Rapids, Michigan.

Trump's Aug. 6 order, released after hours without additional explanation, purportedly aims to ban all "transactions related to WeChat." Trump simultaneously issued a nearly identical order aimed at the popular, Chinese-owned video app TikTok. Both orders have thrown users into confusion, leading some to begin moving to alternative services. But that's especially difficult for regular users of WeChat.

Executives of more than a dozen U.S. multinationals pushed back against the Trump order on WeChat in a conference call with White House officials, the Wall Street Journal reported Thursday. Some feared the order might prevent their subsidiaries in China from using the app, which could place them at a competitive disadvantage.

The day after Trump's order, Zhu got dozens of queries from friends, family members and colleagues, asking if they should switch to messaging options such as Telegram, WhatsApp or Signal. Those offer secure messaging and aren't Chinese-owned.

She still doesn't know if she'll be able to access her money, or what she'll do with all those stored memories of her father. "We can't make a plan," she says. She blames politicians, especially Trump, for her current stress: "We're the pawn that they can manipulate to put anywhere on the chess board."

Some U.S. users are trying to reassure each other that they already have the app, and the U.S. government can't ban it entirely, because that's their free speech — a right guaranteed to them in the U.S. but not in the country they left behind.

WeChat users are censored by the government in China. It's not quite the same for international users who registered their accounts outside China, but the Citizen Lab internet watchdog group in Toronto says WeChat monitors documents and images shared abroad to aid its censorship in China. WeChat's parent, Tencent, said earlier this year that "all content shared among international users of WeChat is private."

Many users who see it as a necessity aren't particularly concerned about privacy.

The Chinese-American Planning Council, a New York Asian American social services agency that works

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with 60,000 New Yorkers a year, relies on WeChat to share information with community members, says spokeswoman Carlyn Cowen. This year, for instance, the agency has messaged its members about participating in the U.S. Census, since the government's in-person door-knocking for the Census has been truncated, or where COVID-19 tests are available.

"I can't say I've thought deeply about personal data concerns because that's not really how we use it," she says.

If there's some kind of ban on WeChat, it's not clear what the agency will do instead — perhaps use other apps more if Chinese-Americans do that. "We haven't really thought through what that looks like."

Indianapolis college student Seth Workman was introduced to WeChat last year while studying abroad in China, where he used it to chat with coworkers at a hotel where he worked.

But when Workman returned to the U.S. last fall, he started using it to order \$6 lunches from a local Chinese restaurant that took orders from a group chat of about 60 people. A van would show up on campus with the orders, typically boxes filled with rice, vegetables and meat.

"The food is really good," says Workman. "If WeChat was banned, I would be a little bit upset."

For all of AP's tech coverage, visit <https://apnews.com/apf-technology>

Top seeds toppled: Bucks, Lakers stunned in playoff openers

By BRIAN MAHONEY AP Basketball Writer

LAKE BUENA VISTA, Fla. (AP) — First it was Giannis Antetokounmpo and the Bucks, unable to call upon what was one of the best defenses in the league.

Then came LeBron James and the Lakers, clanging 3-pointers off the rim to provide a steady sound in a mostly empty gym.

These NBA playoffs already promised to be the most challenging yet. They got a little tougher Tuesday for the league's top teams.

Milwaukee and Los Angeles lost their playoff openers, the first time both conference No. 1 seeds have been beaten by the No. 8s to start their postseasons since 2003.

So good for most of the season, the top seeds are having trouble in the bubble.

There's no home-court advantage to lose in this postseason at Walt Disney World, making it easier not to panic in what would normally be a tougher predicament.

"No frustration because the game is the game and we came in with a mindset to win. We didn't take care of business, but we've got another opportunity on Thursday to even the series and that's my only mindset," James said.

The Lakers knew they were in against a tougher-than-usual No. 8 seed in the Portland Trail Blazers, who came back from the coronavirus-caused suspension of the season healthy and then played their way into the postseason by winning a play-in series.

Los Angeles didn't help itself in trying to slow down a hot opponent by shooting just 15.6% (5 for 32) from 3-point range and wound up losing 100-93.

Milwaukee's problem was on the other end. The Bucks surrendered three 30-point quarters — and 29 in its best period — to the short-handed Orlando Magic in a 122-110 loss. That was an especially poor performance from a team that led the league in a number of defensive categories and held opponents to a league-low 41.4 shooting percentage. Orlando made 49.4%.

"They played good. You've got to give that to Orlando and we've just got to keep doing what we're doing and hopefully things in Game 2 can switch around," Antetokounmpo said. "But just keep playing hard, keep playing together. That's all you can do."

Neither team can blame its MVP candidate. Antetokounmpo had 31 points, 17 rebounds and seven assists. James had 23 points, 17 rebounds and 16 assists, the first 20-15-15 game in NBA playoff history.

But neither team has looked particularly sharp in Florida. They had arrived at the restart well ahead of

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their competitors for the No. 1 seeds and were focused more on staying healthy than getting wins in the eight seeding games leading into the playoffs.

They couldn't turn things around when things became serious and by the time the day was done it was the first time both No. 1s lost since Orlando knocked off Detroit in the East and Phoenix beat San Antonio out West in 2003.

The Spurs recovered to win that NBA title, just as the Toronto Raptors did last year after falling to the Magic in their opener. The Lakers' Danny Green was on that team, so he wasn't concerned about what either top-seeded squad faces now.

"It's the same kind of scenario," Green said. "Down 0-1, they're down 0-1. They're the top-seeded team for a reason, we're the top-seeded team for a reason. We just have to dig down and find it, figure it out. I believe we will."

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

Quiet ties and secret talks paved way for UAE-Israel deal

By AYA BATRAWY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Secret talks and quiet ties — that's what paved the way for last week's deal between the United Arab Emirates and Israel to normalize relations.

Touted by President Donald Trump as a major Mideast breakthrough, the agreement was in fact the culmination of more than a decade of quiet links rooted in frenzied opposition to Iran that predated Trump and even Barack Obama, as well as Trump's avowed goal to undo his predecessor's Mideast legacy.

And the deal leaves behind what had been a cornerstone of U.S. policy in the region: resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The effort to achieve that goal picked up speed 17 months ago at a U.S.-led conference in Warsaw, according to officials involved.

That February 2019 meeting, originally conceived as an anti-Iran gathering, morphed into a broader Mideast security endeavor after European objections to its agenda. Many countries opted not to send their top diplomats, and Russia, China and the Palestinians skipped it entirely. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu attended, however, as did the foreign ministers of key Arab states.

At the summit, diplomats from Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Bahrain spoke of the threat Iran posed to their security and its use of Shiite proxies in Iraq, Syria, Lebanon and Yemen. They stressed that confronting Iran had become the top priority — ahead of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — in comments appearing in leaked video, whose authenticity was confirmed by a U.S. official who attended the gathering.

Netanyahu followed, echoing similar concerns.

"Iran was very high on the agenda in Warsaw because Iran's foreign policy is the biggest driver of instability in today's Middle East," the U.S. special envoy for Iran, Brian Hook, told The Associated Press.

Four months after the summit, a secret meeting between the UAE and Israel took place on June 17, 2019, in Washington.

The trilateral focused on regional, cyber and maritime security, as well as diplomatic coordination and disrupting terror finance, according to a U.S. official who participated but was not authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

More meetings followed in the U.S., Israel and the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi, culminating in Thursday's Trump announcement that his administration had brokered a deal between Israel and the UAE to establish diplomatic relations and exchange embassies. The UAE said Israel also agreed to halt its controversial plans to annex large areas of the occupied West Bank sought by the Palestinians.

Jared Kushner, Trump's son-in-law and senior adviser, told White House reporters that discussions for the deal took place over the past year and a half.

"Look, at the end of the day, it's an inevitability, right?" Kushner said, adding later: "No Israeli has ever killed an Emirati, right? There's not that hatred between the people."

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To be sure, Israel and the UAE have never fought each other in war and do not share borders. Still, the agreement was far more warmly welcomed in Israel than the UAE, where the public has long viewed Israel with suspicion. But criticism has been muted, in part because of government suppression of free speech.

The UAE, composed of seven emirates run by hereditary rulers led by Abu Dhabi, will be only the third Arab nation, after Egypt and Jordan, to have full ties with Israel. By doing so, Abu Dhabi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Zayed laid a path for countries like Morocco, Bahrain, Oman or Sudan to potentially follow.

There are many, though, who shun any Arab embrace of Israel. To the Palestinians, who say they had no prior notice of the deal, the UAE turned its back on the longstanding Arab consensus that recognition of Israel can only come after Israeli concessions in peace talks lead to the creation of a Palestinian state.

"I think the UAE is least beholden to these old formulas of solidarity ... which gives them more strategic flexibility," said Kristin Smith Diwan, a scholar at the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington.

"There's no question that among the broader Arab and Gulf public, this will be a very unpopular move," she said, adding that the agreement also leaves the UAE vulnerable to whatever decisions Israel makes in the future.

For the UAE, however, the calculus to build relations with Israel carries a number of strategic advantages beyond countering Iran and suspending West Bank annexation.

Through Israel, the UAE can build stronger ties with both Republicans and Democrats — a crucial hedge considering the uncertainty of Trump's reelection chances against former Vice President Joe Biden in November's U.S. presidential elections.

Another impetus was the perception among Arab Gulf states that U.S. dependability had waned, from the Obama administration's nuclear deal with Iran, to Trump's unpredictability in foreign policy. Their views on the matter have been reflected in state-linked newspaper columns and in quiet grumbling at private gatherings.

Saudi Arabia and the UAE were also barred by Congress from purchasing billions of dollars in U.S. weapons due to the humanitarian toll of their war in Yemen, before Trump vetoed the measures.

"Their first preference is to have the United States heavily involved in the Middle East as their primary ally. If they can't get that, which ... under Trump they absolutely cannot, then they're going for second best, and Israel is second best," said Kenneth Pollack, a former CIA analyst and now Mideast expert at the American Enterprise Institute.

The Saudis and Emiratis want to build up military strength and want the U.S. to give them more freedom of maneuver in places like Libya, Yemen and the Horn of Africa. With a stronger Emirati-Israeli alliance, "they can count on the Israelis to also make that case in Washington," Pollack said.

Hook argues it was the Trump administration's aggressive Iran policy and decision to withdraw the U.S. from the nuclear accord that helped seal the latest deal.

"Israel and UAE felt betrayed by Obama's Iran strategy. With us, they knew we stood with our allies and partners, and that trust was a critical factor in getting this peace agreement done," said Hook, who was involved in the trilateral talks.

At a time when the coronavirus pandemic has eroded vital oil and tourism revenue, the UAE will look to its ties with Israel to deepen trade links, security cooperation and technology sharing. Already, the UAE has deployed Israeli spyware against dissidents, according to a lawsuit brought against the company in Israel.

UAE efforts to seek better ties with Israel as a means of improving its standing in Washington dates back to 2006, according to Sigurd Neubauer, author of the book "The Gulf Region and Israel: Old Struggles, New Alliances."

It began with a public-relations crisis over Dubai port operator DP World's failed bid to manage major ports in the U.S. The longtime UAE ambassador to the U.S., Yousef Al-Otaiba, held his first meeting with an Israeli official in 2008 and a diplomatic channel was established to focus on Iran, Neubauer said.

The relationship hit a snag in 2010 when the UAE accused Israeli Mossad operatives of assassinating Hamas figure Mahmoud al-Mabhouh in a Dubai hotel.

Nearly a decade later, an Israeli minister stood in Abu Dhabi and sang her country's national anthem at

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a judo competition, shook hands warmly with Emirati officials and toured the emirate's grand mosque in a public spectacle of warming ties.

In January, when Trump unveiled his Mideast plan — which was rejected by the Palestinians — the ambassadors of the UAE, Bahrain and Oman attended the White House ceremony, which featured Netanyahu.

Senior Emirati diplomat Anwar Gargash said the relationship with Israel grew “organically” over the last 15 years or so.

“Through engagement with the Trump administration, the idea ... developed and percolated, and it was right to do it,” he said.

Associated Press writer Matthew Lee in Washington contributed to this report.

Follow Aya Batrawy on twitter at <https://twitter.com/ayaelb>

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Thursday, Aug. 20, the 233rd day of 2020. There are 133 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On August 20, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Economic Opportunity Act, a nearly \$1 billion anti-poverty measure.

On this date:

In 1862, the New York Tribune published an open letter by editor Horace Greeley calling on President Abraham Lincoln to take more aggressive measures to free the slaves and end the South's rebellion.

In 1920, pioneering American radio station 8MK in Detroit (later WWJ) began daily broadcasting.

In 1940, exiled Communist revolutionary Leon Trotsky was assassinated in Coyoacan, Mexico by Ramon Mercader, a Spanish Communist agent working at the behest of Josef Stalin. (Trotsky died the next day.)

In 1953, the Soviet Union publicly acknowledged it had tested a hydrogen bomb.

In 1955, hundreds of people were killed in anti-French rioting in Morocco and Algeria.

In 1968, the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations began invading Czechoslovakia to crush the “Prague Spring” liberalization drive.

In 1981, Michael Devine, a member of the Irish National Liberation Army, died after a 60-day hunger strike at the Maze Prison in Northern Ireland; he was the tenth and last hunger-striker to die that year.

In 1986, postal employee Patrick Henry Sherrill went on a deadly rampage at a post office in Edmond, Okla., shooting 14 fellow workers to death before killing himself.

In 1989, entertainment executive Jose Menendez and his wife, Kitty, were shot to death in their Beverly Hills mansion by their sons, Lyle and Erik. Fifty-one people died when a pleasure boat sank in the River Thames (tehms) in London after colliding with a dredger.

In 2005, Northwest Airlines mechanics went on strike rather than accept pay cuts and layoffs; Northwest ended up hiring replacement workers. San Francisco 49ers offensive lineman Thomas Herrion, 23, died of a heart attack shortly after a preseason game against the Denver Broncos.

In 2008, a Spanish jetliner crashed during takeoff from Madrid, killing 154 people; 18 survived.

In 2017, actor, comic and longtime telethon host Jerry Lewis died of heart disease in Las Vegas at the age of 91.

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama invited Israel and the Palestinians to meet face-to-face in Washington the following month for talks aimed at achieving an agreement to establish an independent Palestinian state and secure peace for Israel.

Five years ago: With a broad smile and an upbeat attitude, former President Jimmy Carter told a news conference in Atlanta that he had cancer in his brain, and felt “perfectly at ease with whatever comes.” (In March 2016, Carter announced that recent scans had shown no signs of cancer and that he no longer

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needed to receive doses of an immune-boosting drug.)

One year ago: President Donald Trump abruptly canceled an upcoming trip to Denmark, which owns Greenland, after the Danish prime minister dismissed the idea of the United States purchasing the mostly frozen island.

Today's Birthdays: Writer-producer-director Walter Bernstein is 101. Boxing promoter Don King is 89. Former Sen. George Mitchell, D-Maine, is 87. Former U.S. Rep. Ron Paul, R-Texas, is 85. Former MLB All-Star Graig Nettles is 76. Broadcast journalist Connie Chung is 74. Musician Jimmy Pankow (Chicago) is 73. Actor Ray Wise is 73. Actor John Noble is 72. Rock singer Robert Plant (Led Zeppelin) is 72. Country singer Rudy Gatlin is 68. Singer-songwriter John Hiatt is 68. Actor-director Peter Horton is 67. TV weatherman Al Roker is 66. Actor Jay Acovone is 65. Actor Joan Allen is 64. Movie director David O. Russell is 62. TV personality Asha Blake is 59. Actor James Marsters is 58. Rapper KRS-One is 55. Actor Colin Cunningham is 54. Actor Billy Gardell is 51. Rock singer Fred Durst (Limp Bizkit) is 50. Actor Jonathan Ke Quan is 50. Rock musician Brad Avery is 49. Actor Misha Collins is 46. Rock singer Monique Powell (Save Ferris) is 45. Jazz/pop singer-pianist Jamie Cullum is 41. Actor Ben Barnes is 39. Actor Meghan Ory is 38. Actor Andrew Garfield is 37. Actor Brant Daugherty is 35. Actor-singer Demi Lovato is 28. Actor Christopher Paul Richards is 17.