

Groton Daily Independent

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Groton Area's football team defeated Webster Area, 47-0. Groton Area had 383 yards total offense while Webster Area had 38 yards of total offense.

Groton Area is 2-1 on the season while Webster Area is 0-3.

Full results will be forthcoming.

Today's COVID-19 report shows 293 positive cases in South Dakota and three more deaths. There are three fewer people currently being hospitalized as well as that number is now 86. Five deaths were recorded in North Dakota. There are a record high 32 positive cases in Brown County.



OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located west of the city shop. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

Special School Board Meeting

September 7, 2020 – 7:00 PM – Groton Area Elementary Commons

AGENDA:

1. Call to Order with members present. Approve agenda as proposed.

POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Executive session pursuant SDCL1-25-2(3) for legal matters.
3. Continued discussion and necessary action on District response to COVID-19 including
 - a. Reviewing masking requirement for indoor school activities.

ADJOURN

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://sdk12.zoom.us/j/96328167110?pwd=SU9oSIRuZGYyd24yVFpUQ3ViSjVHQT09>

Meeting ID: 963 2816 7110

Passcode: 696736

SOCIAL SECURITY

The Social Security Administration announced a new service for people awaiting a hearing decision. In addition to telephone hearings, Social Security will offer the opportunity for an online video hearing using the Microsoft Teams platform beginning this fall. This new free service will allow applicants and their representatives to participate in the hearing from anywhere they have access to a camera-enabled smartphone, tablet, or computer. This stable and secure online platform allows the Social Security judge to see and interact with applicants and their representatives just like an in-person hearing, while maintaining privacy of the claimant's information. Other hearing experts, such as medical or vocational experts, may participate as well.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of finding new ways to serve the public," said Commissioner of Social Security Andrew Saul. "For over a decade, the agency has used video hearings to get applicants their hearing decisions sooner. This advancement builds on that effort, making it easier and more convenient to attend a hearing remotely, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic. To continue to ensure all participants' safety, we expect online video hearings and telephone hearings will be the only two hearing options for the foreseeable future."

Social Security has been conducting appeal hearings with Administrative Law Judges (ALJ) via telephone only since March, while offices remain closed to the public to protect the health and safety of the public and employees. The agency's ALJs have held more than 180,000 telephone hearings since March, allowing the agency to continue to deliver critical customer service.

For the new online video hearings, whether the device is a laptop, smartphone, or tablet on either iPhone or Android, people will experience a clear picture and audio of the ALJ and their representative during their hearing.

For updates on the implementation and expansion of this new hearing service, and other Social Security information, please visit the agency's COVID-19 web page at www.socialsecurity.gov/coronavirus/.



Preschool Developmental
Screening
Groton Area Schools #06-6

Preschool Developmental Screening is for children ages 3-5 who reside in the Groton Area School District. The child needs to be 3 years of age before the screening date/day. This screening is not required to enter Kindergarten.

The screening consists of communication skills, motor skills, and concepts.

If your child is already receiving services or enrolled at Groton Elementary School they will not need to be screened. If your child has already been screened but you have concerns please contact the elementary school. If you are new to the district and have a child under the age of 5, we also ask you to contact the elementary school.

Screenings will be held on an appointment only basis. Please contact Paula Johnson at 605-397-2317 or Paula.M.Johnson@k12.sd.us to schedule a screening time.

CATHOLIC FAMILY SERVICES
IS NOW OFFERING

GRIEF SHARE

2020 DATES
• SEPTEMBER 15
thru NOVEMBER 24

2021 DATES
• FEBRUARY 2
thru APRIL 13
• JUNE 1
thru AUGUST 10
• SEPTEMBER 14
thru NOVEMBER 23

Grief Share is a worldwide Christian-based program. It is a support group for adults who have lost a loved one through death. It combines educational videos, a workbook titled "Your Journey From Mourning to Joy" and time for discussion. The group runs for 11 weeks.

Participants can attend in person at Catholic Family Services or your own parish can participate via Zoom for the educational component and then hold small group discussion lead by an identified team leader. (CFS will train the identified leader and offer continued support.)

[sfcatholic.org/cfs](https://www.sfcatholic.org/cfs) 800-700-7867(STOP)

Catholic Family Services

GRIEF SHARE

Tuesdays 6pm beginning Sept 15th in the SEAS Gathering Space
(This is for adults who have lost a loved one.)

Ruby Donovan from our parish has gone through the training with the Catholic Family Service for the purpose of leading a Grief Sharing Group. Although she is not a professional, she has also gone through the grieving process concerning the loss of several family members.

After viewing the professional counselor from the Catholic Family Services via a zoom conference, Ruby will be hosting a group discussion. As you listen to the professionals and Ruby, you will see you are not alone in your grieving, there is hope and you too can journey from grief to hope.

This program, although run by Catholics is good for any person going through the grieving process. The cost of the program is \$15.00 for the workbook but we will scholarship anyone who may need help. We also need a couple volunteers to be part of the leadership team. These volunteers will help with hospitality and support for our team leader. If you are interested in this program as a volunteer or to join the group, please call our parish office at 605-397-2775 or email us at seas@nvc.net.

#194 in a series

Covid-19 Update: by Marie Miller

Things look worse today by quite a lot. Not sure what's going on here, whether this is a one-day correction in the case reporting or something more. Let's hope it's a one-day thing; we cannot afford to go back where we came from. Additionally, we absolutely do not need to go into another three-day party weekend with this kind of spike in new cases; we're going into the weekend with a baseline case load close to double where it was before Memorial Day weekend, which means the consequences could be many times worse. We are now up to 6,217,800 cases in the US; that's 55,900 more than yesterday, a 0.9% increase, sharply up. It should help that many states are less "open" than they were in early June with more restrictions and limitations on crowd size. Let's hope that continues to work. Kentucky and Arkansas both set single-day new-case records today, and the Plains continues to burn, so we could use some help.

There were 1092 deaths reported today, a 0.6% increase to 187,676. This number is more in line with what we've been seeing over the past week. The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) at the University of Washington, one of the most-cited modelers for the pandemic, has a new projection for deaths, and it isn't pretty. They've adjusted their projection to 410,451 by the end of the year; this is significantly higher than any of their earlier models indicated and presumes we do not make major changes to the way we are approaching transmission mitigation. Given we know most viruses transmit more efficiently in dry, cold air and we have seen this virus transmits much more efficiently indoors, as well as increases in mobility in the past week, it is at least reasonable to expect increasing transmission and the concomitant increase in deaths. IHME director, Christopher Murray, said, "It's easy given the summer lull to think the epidemic is going away," but he added "there are bleak times ahead in the Northern Hemisphere winter, and unfortunately we are not collectively doing everything we can to learn from the past five months." I guess we knew that.

There's another update on that Maine wedding with 65 guests that turned out to be a superspreader event. We're now up to 144 cases. Fifty-six of these were guests at the wedding and the rest are secondary and tertiary contacts. Seventy-two are at a prison some 220 miles from the site of the wedding: 46 inmates, 19 workers, and seven household members of workers. In addition, there are 16 cases at a nursing home about 100 miles from the site of the wedding. There has now been a second death, a male in his 70s. I have not been able to determine whether he was in attendance at the wedding.

We have talked—a lot—about preventing infection. You know the drill: distancing, masking, ventilation, hand hygiene, blah, blah, blah. Well, here's a new one: silence. Or at least being quieter. According to Jose L. Jimenez, professor at the University of Colorado at Boulder, a disease transmission expert, "Every route of viral transmission would go down if we talked less, or talked less loudly, in public spaces. This is just a very clear fact. It's not controversial."

We know this bug spreads mostly through moist particles coming from our respiratory tracts when we sneeze, cough, talk, shout, and sing. There are the large droplets that settle quickly and the aerosols that hover a while. It makes sense, then, that one good strategy for limiting transmission would be to generate fewer of these particles. And being silent, of course, generates only a very few of them—just what we expel during normal breathing. In fact, being silent reduces aerosols by a factor of 50. And talking quietly rather than loudly reduces them by a factor of five; it's as useful as wearing a mask. That would seem to indicate that movie theaters might be safer than noisy restaurants; if people are masked and sitting in silence to watch the film, there's probably a lot less transmission than you would think, certainly less than unmasked diners hollering to be heard over the conversation of the masses and the clinking of silverware.

Jimenez said, "The truth is that if everybody stopped talking for a month or two, the pandemic would probably die off." Now I don't think we're going to do that; but how hard would it be to dial the volume back for a while? Other experts agree: Donald K. Milton, professor at the University of Maryland School of Public Health who's studied reducing transmission with face masks, has said that "silence and quiet speaking are reasonable means of intervening." Well, OK then. I guess we have a new motto: Shut up for health!

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Last night, we talked about the fact that cigarette smoking did not in one large study seem to be linked to a large increase in risk for serious disease; tonight, we have some evidence that may not be correct. Dr. Stephanie Lovinsky-Desir, a pediatric pulmonologist at Columbia University, says, "I have no doubt in saying that smoking and vaping could put people at increased risk of poor outcomes from Covid-19." I read a compilation of research that indicates smoking can more than double your risk of severe symptoms, which doesn't seem like the small increase in risk seen in the British study cited last night. I guess we'll wait and see. Of course, we all know smoking isn't great for your lungs, so that conclusion seems logical. I am not sure how these pieces fit together; I hope further information clarifies this. The same compilation, for the record, indicated vaping increases risk too.

Someone had the bright idea to put data together from a lot of cases and let the Summit supercomputer at Oak Ridge National Lab go to work on them to see what it can see. As fast as this computer is, it still took a week to sort through all of the information it was fed, and in the end, it saw quite a lot, resulting in something called the bradykinin hypothesis which provides a conceptual model that explains much of what we see in cases of Covid-19. Bradykinin is a peptide that interacts with the renin-angiotensin system (RAS) that controls blood pressure and depends on those ACE2 receptors we've discussed as the site of entry for this virus into host cells.

Bradykinin promotes inflammation and causes leakage of fluid from blood vessels. It appears that SARS-CoV-2 interferes with the degradation of bradykinin, which intensifies its effects. The inflammation damages tissue, and the leakage causes build-up of fluid in the lungs, where it interferes with oxygen exchange with the blood.

Additionally, the virus promotes the production of hyaluronic acid in the lungs. Hyaluronic acid absorbs more than 1000 times its weight in fluid, forming a hydrogel, a sticky, thick substance; in the lung the hydrogel traps that leaked fluid, further interfering with oxygen exchange. This could explain the respiratory distress which is common in this infection and which is not helped all that much by mechanical ventilation because the problem isn't the mechanics of breathing as much as it is the inability to exchange gases with the air that's pumped in. And the resulting inflammation also explains the inflammatory effects we're accustomed to seeing in Covid-19. Many of the vascular effects of the disease fit with these actions as well. We do not know this hypothesis is correct, but it seems to explain most of what we're seeing, and it offers promising avenues of research as we look for treatments that will reduce its effects and keep patients alive.

The good news is that we have some drugs, already proven safe and approved, which target components of the RAS, that might be effective in treating this viral infection. The supercomputer helpfully identified these for the research team too, among them danazol, stanazolol, and ecallantide, all of which decrease bradykinin production. There is another drug, icatibant, which decreases bradykinin signaling, so may minimize its effects. And Vitamin D may be useful as well due to its activity in the RAS. So this particular research gives us some important leads on ways to mitigate the effects of the virus. The research team recommends getting well-designed clinical trials underway. We'll stay tuned for further news.

Brian Schwartz was a digital advertising executive in New York City until the middle of June when, because of the pandemic, he was laid off. At that point, he had a lot of time on his hands and some thinking to do about where he was going to go in his career. You know what's a good place to do some thinking? Behind a lawnmower.

So remembering his late grandfather, Schwartz decided to start up a lawnmowing service for seniors and veterans. He figured many of them were coping with concerns about the coronavirus, might be feeling isolated, and are on fixed incomes; so he started a lawnmowing service called "I Want to Mow Your Lawn" and used his knowledge of marketing to set up a website and Facebook page. An experienced advertiser, he also sent out a press release to get the word out about his service.

He wrote on his website, "With all going on in the world, it's the least I could do for our elderly neighbors. I love grandparents. I miss mine. Feels good to help out . . . Also looking to help disabled veterans! I believe that putting some good out into the universe, it all comes back."

Because here's the thing: His service is free. He will not accept tips. Some of his more than a dozen

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"customers" have donated to cover the cost of gas; others have donated to nonprofits Schwartz has listed on his website. But no one's paying for Schwartz's time. And that's the way he wants it; this is not about getting rich.

Some other folks feel that way too, as it turns out. Two neighbors who also lost their jobs in the pandemic have joined Schwartz's project. They're looking to expand the "business." Let's call it networking.

There are good hearts in many places. Let's find those and encourage them. Let's be them too. Surely you have something to give the world. It needs help.

Stay healthy. I'll see you tomorrow.

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Area COVID-19 Cases

	Aug. 26	Aug. 27	Aug. 28	Aug. 29	Aug. 30	Aug. 31	Sept. 1
Minnesota	70,707	71,236	72,390	73,240	74,257	75,189	75,864
Nebraska	32,348	32,727	33,101	33,436	33,753	34,046	34,287
Montana	6,624	6,785	6,929	7,063	7,251	7340	7,421
Colorado	55,800	55,993	56,343	56,773	57041	57,223	57,424
Wyoming	3,089	3,135	3,166	3,196	3,210	3245	3264
North Dakota	10,229	10,467	10,800	11,109	11,484	11,702	11,816
South Dakota	11,505	11,571	12,194	12,517	12,942	13,322	13,509
United States	5,779,395	5,823,685	5,869,692	5,919,670	5,961,582	5,997,622	6,031,286
US Deaths	178,533	179,743	180,857	181,798	182,779	183,068	183,602
Minnesota	+409	+529	+1,154	+850	+1,017	+932	+607
Nebraska	+301	+379	+374	+335	+317	+293	+241
Montana	+135	+161	+144	+134	+188	+89	+81
Colorado	+459	+193	+350	+430	+268	+182	+201
Wyoming	+21	+46	+31	+30	+14	+35	+19
North Dakota	+229	+238	+333	+309	+375	+218	+114
South Dakota	80	+66	+623	+323	+425	+380	+187
United States	+41,339	+44,290	+46,007	+49,978	41,912	+36,040	+33,664
US Deaths	+1,504	+1,210	+1,114	+941	+981	+289	+534
	Sept. 2	Sept. 3	Sept. 4	Sept. 5	Sept. 6		
Minnesota	76,355	77,085	78,123	78,966			
Nebraska	34,574	34,995	35,469	35,661			
Montana	7,509	7,691	7,871	8,018	8,164		
Colorado	57,775	58,019	58,287	58,655			
Wyoming	3,282	3,311	3,334		3,386		
North Dakota	12,000	12,267	12,629	12,974	13,334		
South Dakota	13,749	14,003	14,337	14,596			
United States	6,073,121	6,115,098	6,151,101	6,210,699			
US Deaths	184,644	185,752	186,606	187,874			
Minnesota	+491	+730	+1,038	+843			
Nebraska	+287	+421	+474	+192			
Montana	+88	+182	+180	+147	+146		
Colorado	+351	+244	+268	+368			
Wyoming	+18	+29	+23		+52		
North Dakota	+184	+267	+362	+345	+360		
South Dakota	+240	+254	+334	+259			
United States	+41,835	+41,977	+36,003	+59,598			
US Deaths	+1,042	+1,108	+854	+1,268			

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September 3rd COVID-19 UPDATE

Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

One male in the 80+ age group from Minnehaha County is the latest death recorded from COVID-19. No new deaths in North Dakota.

South Dakota's positivity rate dropped to 9.5 percent today. Brown County is at 16.4 percent. North Dakota is at 16.5 percent in today's report. The currently hospitalized number jumped 13 today to 89 percent, but the overall percentages remain stable. South Dakota had 259 cases while North Dakota had 343. Locally, Brown County had 24 positive and 18 recovered cases, Day County had four positive cases to jump to 10 active cases, Edmunds County had one recovered as they are now at eight active cases, Marshall County had one recovered for a total of four active cases, McPherson had one positive case for two active ones now, and Spink County had one positive and two recovered for a total of 18 active cases.

So the leaderboard for today have Brookings at 29, Brown at 24, Clay at 13, Codington at 27, Lawrence at 12, Minnehaha at 39 and Pennington at 24.

Brown County:

Total Positive: +24 (742) Positivity Rate: 16.4%

Recovered: +18 (589)

Active Cases: +6 (150)

Total Tests: 146 (8174)

Ever Hospitalized: +1 (29)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 79.4% (-0.1)

South Dakota:

Positive: +259 (14,596 total) Positivity Rates: 9.5%

Total Tests: 2734 (201,483 total)

Hospitalized: +10 (1062 total). 89 currently hospitalized (up 13 from yesterday)

Deaths: +1 (170 total)

Recovered: +239 (11,394 total)

Active Cases: +19 (3,032)

Percent Recovered: 78.0 +0.2

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 4% Covid, 53% Non-Covid, 44% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 6% Covid, 61% Non-Covid, 33% Available

Ventilator Capacity: 5% Covid, 15% Non-Covid, 80% Available

Fully recovered from positive cases (Lost Jones, Mellette, gained Sully): Aurora 42-42, Harding 2-2, Jackson 12-11-1, Sully 8-8.

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: Fully Recovered

Beadle (9): +2 positive, +1 recovered (28 active cases)

Bennett: +1 positive, +6 recovered (14 active cases)

Bon Homme (1): +1 recovered (14 active cases)

Brookings (1): +29 positive, +32 recovered (182 active cases)

Brown (3): +24 positive, +18 recovered (150 active cases)

Brule: +4 recovered (14 active cases)

Buffalo (3): 4 active cases

Butte (1): +1 positive (27 active cases)

Campbell: Fully Recovered

Charles Mix: +1 recovered (10 active cases)

Clark: 4 active cases

Clay (2) +14 positive, +23 recovered (197 active cases)

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Codington (2): +27 positive, +10 recovered (177 active cases)
 Corson: +3 positive, +3 recovered (15 active cases)
 Custer: +1 positive, +2 recovered (61 active case)
 Davison (2): +2 positive (31 active cases)
 Day: +4 positive (10 active cases)
 Deuel: +3 positive (15 active cases)
 Dewey: +3 positive (40 active cases)
 Douglas: +1 recovered (12 active cases)
 Edmunds: +1 recovered (8 active cases)
 Fall River (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (32 active cases)
 Faulk (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)
 Grant: +2 positive (13 active cases)
 Gregory (1): +1 positive (24 active cases)
 Haakon: +1 recovered (2 active cases)
 Hamlin: +2 positive, +1 recovered (23 active cases)
 Hand: 3 active cases
 Hanson: 3 active cases
 Harding: Fully Recovered
 Hughes (4): +3 positive, +3 recovered (24 active cases)
 Hutchinson (1): +2 positive (18 active cases)
 Hyde: 4 active cases
 Jackson (1): Fully Recovered
 Jerauld (1): +1 positive (4 active cases)
 Jones: 2 active cases
 Kingsbury: +1 positive, +1 recovered (7 active cases)
 Lake (6): +4 positive (14 active cases)
 Lawrence (3): +12 positive, +11 recovered (116 active cases)
 Lincoln (2): +6 positive, +16 recovered (162 active

cases)
 Lyman (3): 14 active cases
 Marshall: +1 recovered (4 active cases)
 McCook (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (14 active cases)
 McPherson: +1 positive (2 active case)
 Meade (1): +8 positive, +13 recovered (136 active cases)
 Mellette: 1 active case
 Miner: 2 active cases
 Minnehaha (70): +39 positive, +35 recovered (720 active cases)
 Moody: +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases)
 Oglala Lakota (2): +1 positive (32 active cases)
 Pennington (33): +24 positive, +30 recovered (442 active cases)
 Perkins: +4 positive, +3 recovered (13 active cases)
 Potter: +2 positive (15 active cases)
 Roberts (1): +2 positive (15 active cases)
 Sanborn: +1 positive (5 active cases)
 Spink: +1 positive, +2 recovered (18 active cases)
 Stanley: +1 positive (2 active cases)
 Sully: Fully Recovered
 Todd (5): +3 positive (10 active cases)
 Tripp: 5 active cases
 Turner: +3 positive, +2 recovered (18 active cases)
 Union (5): +8 positive, +6 recovered (51 active cases)
 Walworth: +3 positive (19 active cases)
 Yankton (3): +5 positive, +7 recovered (69 active cases)
 Ziebach: +1 positive (19 active cases)

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report
 COVID-19 Daily Report, September 4:
 • 6,713 tests (2,075)
 • 12,973 positives (+343)
 • 10,310 recovered (+259)
 • 150 deaths (+0)
 • 2,513 active cases (+85)

AGE GROUP OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Age Range	# of Cases	# of Deaths
0-9 years	483	0
10-19 years	1508	0
20-29 years	3692	2
30-39 years	2620	7
40-49 years	2025	7
50-59 years	1974	19
60-69 years	1247	30
70-79 years	585	26
80+ years	462	79

SEX OF SOUTH DAKOTA COVID-19 CASES

Sex	# of Cases	# of Deaths
Female	7387	85
Male	7209	85

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	42	42	438	0	None
Beadle	644	607	2068	9	Substantial
Bennett	30	16	568	0	Substantial
Bon Homme	54	39	982	1	Substantial
Brookings	431	248	3492	1	Substantial
Brown	742	589	5616	3	Substantial
Brule	70	56	891	0	Substantial
Buffalo	110	103	684	3	Minimal
Butte	51	25	891	1	Substantial
Campbell	4	4	117	0	Minimal
Charles Mix	122	112	1769	0	Moderate
Clark	21	17	446	0	Minimal
Clay	427	228	1867	2	Substantial
Codington	399	220	3620	2	Substantial
Corson	67	52	631	0	Moderate
Custer	131	70	851	0	Substantial
Davison	148	115	2760	2	Substantial
Day	43	31	767	0	Moderate
Deuel	53	36	523	0	Substantial
Dewey	92	56	2529	0	Substantial
Douglas	32	20	462	0	Moderate
Edmunds	34	26	485	0	Moderate
Fall River	60	28	1169	1	Substantial
Faulk	36	28	233	1	Minimal
Grant	47	34	863	0	Minimal
Gregory	35	10	503	1	Substantial
Haakon	6	4	310	0	Minimal
Hamlin	65	42	820	0	Substantial
Hand	15	12	357	0	Minimal
Hanson	24	21	258	0	Minimal
Harding	2	2	59	0	None
Hughes	138	112	2136	4	Substantial
Hutchinson	51	32	1015	1	Moderate

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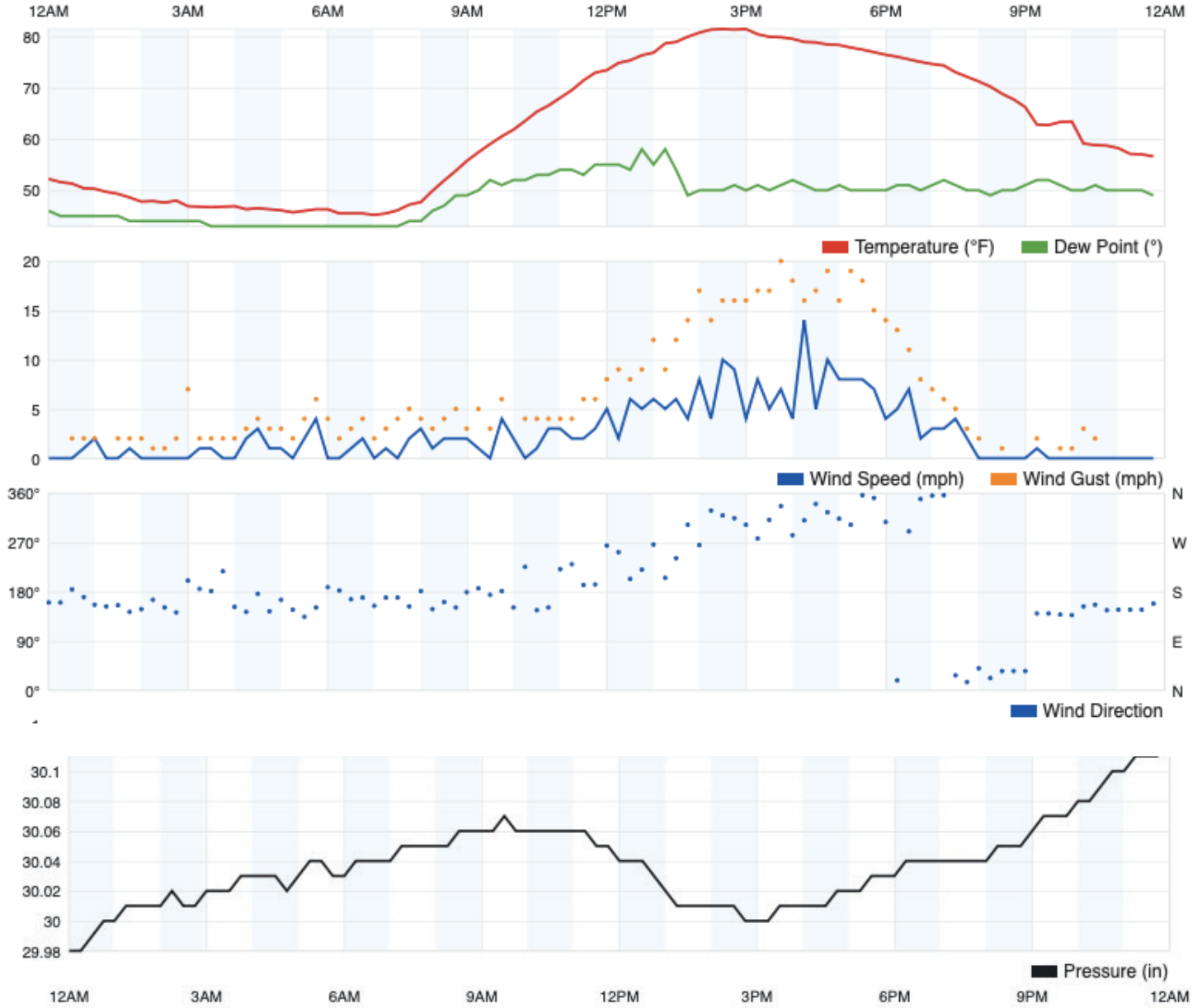
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Hyde	8	4	169	0	Minimal
Jackson	12	11	496	1	None
Jerauld	44	39	297	1	None
Jones	5	3	70	0	None
Kingsbury	25	18	669	0	Moderate
Lake	122	102	1100	6	Moderate
Lawrence	252	133	2373	3	Substantial
Lincoln	958	794	8372	2	Substantial
Lyman	104	87	1102	3	Substantial
Marshall	19	15	552	0	Moderate
McCook	54	39	751	1	Substantial
McPherson	11	9	257	0	None
Meade	332	195	2344	1	Substantial
Mellette	25	24	410	0	None
Miner	17	15	290	0	None
Minnehaha	5496	4776	32711	71	Substantial
Moody	48	37	737	0	Minimal
Oglala Lakota	187	153	3094	2	Moderate
Pennington	1560	1085	12724	33	Substantial
Perkins	23	10	231	0	Moderate
Potter	20	5	353	0	Substantial
Roberts	104	88	2220	1	Substantial
Sanborn	16	13	268	0	Minimal
Spink	57	37	1330	0	Substantial
Stanley	22	20	317	0	Minimal
Sully	8	8	108	0	Minimal
Todd	86	71	2510	5	Minimal
Tripp	25	20	679	0	Minimal
Turner	88	70	1070	0	Substantial
Union	288	232	2289	5	Substantial
Walworth	49	30	923	0	Substantial
Yankton	252	180	3707	3	Substantial
Ziebach	53	34	463	0	Minimal
Unassigned	0	0	12531	0	

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Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today

Tonight

Sunday

Sunday Night

Labor Day



Mostly Sunny

High: 83 °F



Gradual Clearing

Low: 58 °F



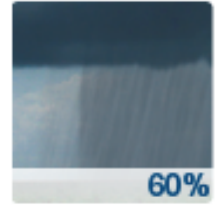
Sunny then Mostly Sunny and Breezy

High: 84 °F



Partly Cloudy and Breezy then Slight Chance Showers

Low: 49 °F



Showers Likely

High: 58 °F

Severe T-Storms Possible Tonight

ISSUED: 5:32 AM - Saturday, September 05, 2020

WHEN

Saturday night/after dark. Models suggest the threat begins around 8pm and exits southeast into southwestern MN by midnight.

WHAT

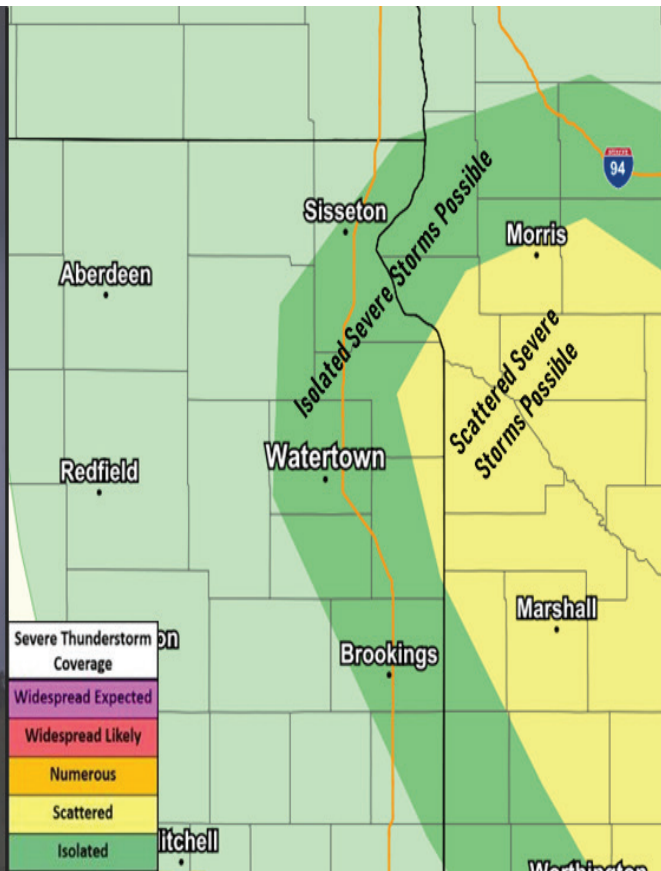
1-2" (plus?) diameter hail, & damaging winds possible

WHERE

Most likely near and east of I-29, but some uncertainty remains. Those in and around Sisseton, Watertown, Milbank, Wheaton, Ortonville (and points further southeast) may be impacted.

ACTION

Consider moving sensitive property to a safe location prior to turning in for the night.



Predominantly sunny skies and dry weather is expected through the day with highs near 80 across the Coteau to the mid-90s plus across Stanley, Lyman and Jones Counties. Meanwhile, the ingredients necessary for severe weather may be assembling behind the scenes for those near and east of I-29. If thunderstorms develop as anticipated, they'd do so after sunset and could quickly turn severe. Large, damaging hail is the main threat.

Today in Weather History

September 5, 1983: In the late afternoon and early evening, hail up to 2, and ½ inches in diameter pounded crops, trees, buildings, and windows resulting in extensive damage in Spink, Beadle, Turner, and Clay Counties. Trees were stripped of numerous branches broken off.

1666: The Great Fire of London started on September 2nd and continued through September 5th. The fire spread rapidly due to strong westerly winds. This fire consumed 13,200 homes, 87 parish churches, and St. Paul's Cathedral.

1929: Early season snowfall occurred in the mountains of Wyoming and the Black Hills of South Dakota on September 5th and 6th. The highest snowfall amount was 16 inches in Fox Park, Wyoming.

1933: A Category 3 hurricane made landfall on South Padre Island, Texas during the late evening hours on September 4th, or Labor Day. The storm caused 40 fatalities and nearly \$17 million in damages. With the storm making landfall during a holiday weekend, fatalities could have been much higher. The following is from the report of the official in charge at Corpus Christi, Texas: "Probably never before in the history of Texas hurricanes have such widespread and early warnings been given as were received from Washington in advance of this one. The telegram of Saturday, September 2, warning all persons to avoid inaccessible places over the weekend probably saved thousands of lives."

1950: Hurricane Easy was an erratic and unpredictable hurricane that lingered over the Tampa Bay area for days, dropping torrential rains and causing damage especially in Cedar Key, Florida where the storm eventually made landfall. This hurricane dumped 38.7 inches of rain in 24 hours in Yankeetown, a record for the U.S. at the time, and caused \$3.3 million in damage. Total rainfall amounts in Yankeetown was 45.20 inches.

1978: Tropical Depression Norman became the most recent tropical system to make landfall in California near Long Beach as an extra-tropical storm.

1996: Hurricane Fran made landfall near the tip of Cape Fear, North Carolina with maximum sustained winds near 115 mph on the evening of September 5th. Fran was responsible for 26 deaths and was at the time the most expensive natural disaster ever in North Carolina's history.

2017: Hurricane Irma became a category 5 hurricane with maximum sustained winds of 180 mph. This made Irma one of strongest hurricane ever observed in the open Atlantic Ocean.

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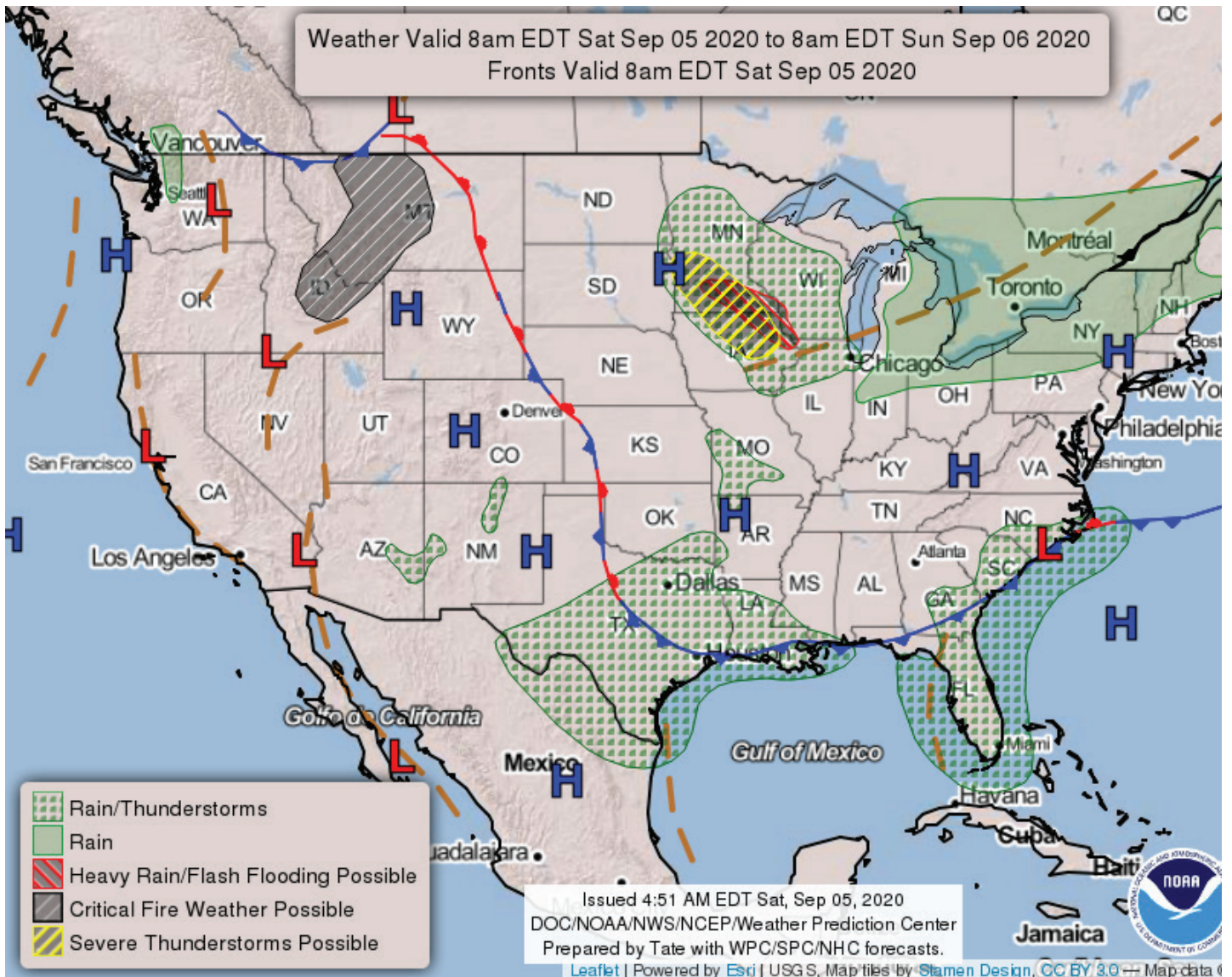
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Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 82 °F at 2:20 PM
Low Temp: 45 °F at 6:59 AM
Wind: 20 mph at 3:17 PM
Precip: .00

Today's Info

Record High: 102° in 1945
Record Low: 32° in 1896, 1962
Average High: 77°F
Average Low: 50°F
Average Precip in Sept...: 0.30
Precip to date in Sept.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 16.59
Precip Year to Date: 13.35
Sunset Tonight: 8:03 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:02 a.m.



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GUIDELINES

An anxious young college student recently said to a highly respected entrepreneur, "I need your guidance. I know that you are very successful so I know that any advice you give me would be very worthwhile. Can you give me a few words that can guide me through life?"

"Yes," he replied. "But first, you must know that they come from the Bible and that I have found them most reliable."

The first word is anything. Be willing to do any work or task that God places before you. Accept all of His assignments with confidence because He has never planned for anyone to fail.

The second word is anywhere. Be ready to follow Him wherever He leads you. The will of God won't lead you where the grace of God can't protect you or His power will not provide for your every need.

Finally, any cost. Nothing is too precious to give up for the Lord. And, whatever you give up for Him will be given back to you many, many times over. And, above all, remember this: Give up everything for Him but do not give Him up for anything.

Jesus said, "Take up your cross and follow me!" To be one of His disciples means that we are willing to do whatever He asks us to do, wherever He asks us to do it. And, it is essential to realize one crucial fact: God equips everyone for success. Each of His opportunities come with a guarantee that He will give us the ability to succeed if we are willing to do the work His way.

Prayer: Father, may we realize that being Your disciples carries with it the responsibility to honor You in everything we do. May we do our best for Your sake. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, "If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. Mark 8:34

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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)
- 10/30/2020 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

Three men escape from minimum-security unit in Sioux Falls

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Law enforcement authorities in South Dakota are searching for three men who escaped a minimum-security unit at a prison in Sioux Falls.

Inmates Liberty Briley, Joseph Davis and Kevan Whiteman left the Sioux Falls Community Work Center without authorization on Friday.

The Department of Corrections said that anyone who sees the men or knows of their whereabouts should contact law enforcement immediately.

Separated brothers reunited, with a common football bond

By BENJAMIN CHASE Huron Plainsman

WOLSEY, S.D. (AP) — Damien McGhee can remember when his younger brother was adopted.

"I was five or six years old, and I remember the adoption agency came to get him," Damien recalled. "I'll admit that I forgot about him a bit, but then we started getting pictures."

Damien's brother Marty was adopted by Steve and Kris Gohn of Huron, and the Gohns wanted to keep the adoption open, hence the pictures and information about Marty as he grew up that they sent back to Damien and his family to keep them updated.

"We told Marty about his family, but it was when Damien began playing college football that Marty began to really take an interest in getting to know Damien better," Kris told the Huron Plainsman.

Damien began his college football career at Presbyterian College in South Carolina, a Division I school in the Football Championship Subdivision. He later transferred to Florida Institute of Technology, or Florida Tech, a Division II school. McGhee scored 10 touchdowns in his two seasons with Florida Tech, but most importantly, Marty was able to see him play in 2019.

"Coach (Gordon) Hooks doesn't really like the guys missing practice, but we worked it out to take a weekend to go see a game," said Kris. "Marty was able to meet not just Damien, but two other siblings as well on that trip."

Since the visit, the two brothers have been keeping in touch. "We'll talk often through text, but at least weekly we have a FaceTime chat," Damien commented. "I prefer to see someone's face when talking rather than just type."

That connection continued through the school year as Marty experienced his sophomore year at Wolsey-Wessington and Damien completed his senior year at Florida Tech. Then, the pandemic hit.

"I was doing some potential NFL draft prep stuff, hoping I could at least catch on with a team," said Damien. "Then everything changed."

The contacts through video call continued, however, and in June, Damien came to South Dakota to visit the Gohns.

He was interested in experiencing the cultural differences between his life in Jacksonville, Florida, and the life Marty and Payson Gohn were living in South Dakota. He found the pace different, but definitely enjoyable.

"I could definitely see the differences, but I thought it was good meeting with Coach Hooks and Coach (Ralph) Newton to discuss their lives in the area," Damien remarked. "The boys have great role models here and a great family atmosphere in this community."

While they had been separated for 16 years, Marty's brother Payson immediately noticed the genetic connection between the brothers, mentioning that their mannerisms were very similar.

Damien took both boys under his wing while visiting, working out with the Warbirds team, and talking with Marty and Payson at home about many different topics.

"His visit was just after the George Floyd murder in Minnesota, so to have a young, well-spoken Black man to mentor the boys was excellent," Steve Gohn mentioned. "He offers a perspective that we simply

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cannot offer.”

Kris agreed: “When Damien left, we found a list for the boys of movies and books for them to look into, and he’s actually been a ‘big brother’ about that list, checking in to see which ones they’ve read or watched on that list.”

Damien’s surprise visit to see Marty late last month came after he gave a talk at Sioux Valley High School in Volga. “I focus on a family-oriented foundation, but I’ll also be talking on unity and goal-setting,” Damien said.

Marty would like to keep the connection with his brother wherever his speaking career may take him. “I just want to keep in touch going forward,” Marty said.

Kris expressed that Damien’s become another part of their family. “Many people discuss their family tree. We view our family as more of a family orchard!”

Friday’s Scores

By The Associated Press

PREP FOOTBALL=

Aberdeen Central 35, Rapid City Central 7

Alcester-Hudson 56, Estelline/Hendricks 12

Arlington/Lake Preston 42, Elkton-Lake Benton 28

Avon 20, Scotland 18

Baltic 50, Deubrook 0

Beresford 34, Garretson 28

Brandon Valley 20, O Gorman 14

Bridgewater-Emery 21, Sioux Valley 12

Britton-Hecla 38, Clark/Willow Lake 36, 2OT

Brookings 37, Lennox 0

Canistota 40, Oldham-Ramona/Rutland 6

Chamberlain 18, Miller/Highmore-Harrold 8

Chester 50, Irene-Wakonda 0

Custer 40, Spearfish 0

DeSmet 54, Dell Rapids St. Mary 0

Dell Rapids 41, Flandreau 16

Douglas 47, Belle Fourche 21

Elk Point-Jefferson 37, Sisseton 16

Faith 32, Harding County 26, OT

Florence/Henry 32, Dakota Hills 12

Gregory 38, Tripp-Delmont/Armour/Andes Central/Dakota Christian 0

Groton Area 47, Webster 0

Hamlin 44, Great Plains Lutheran 7

Hanson 44, Parker 0

Harrisburg 35, Sioux Falls Washington 17

Herreid/Selby Area 50, Waverly-South Shore 0

Huron 30, Milbank 0

Jones County/White River 52, Newell 0

Kadoka Area def. Edgemont, forfeit

Langford 65, North Border 26

Lemmon/McIntosh 50, Hettinger/Scranton, N.D. 0

Madison 34, Canton 18

Mitchell 33, Sioux Falls Christian 20

Mobridge-Pollock 50, Lead-Deadwood 0

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Mt. Vernon/Plankinton 52, Wagner 28
Northwestern 14, Hitchcock-Tulare 12
Parkston 32, Kimball/White Lake 18
Philip 26, Rapid City Christian 14
Pierre 24, West Central 14
Platte-Geddes 50, Colome 0
Potter County 26, Sully Buttes 24
Redfield 40, Aberdeen Roncalli 26
St. Thomas More 16, Sturgis Brown 0
Stanley County 34, Bennett County 0
Tea Area 54, Vermillion 0
Timber Lake 58, Dupree 6
Viborg-Hurley 52, Menno/Marion 0
Warner 50, Faulkton 12
Watertown 30, Rapid City Stevens 7
Winner 38, Woonsocket/Wessington Springs/Sanborn Central 6
Yankton 51, Dakota Valley 15
POSTPONEMENTS AND CANCELLATIONS=
Bon Homme vs. Wolsey-Wessington, ppd.
Colman-Egan vs. Castlewood, ppd.
Deuel vs. Ipswich/Edmunds Central, ccd.

Some high school football scores provided by Scorestream.com, <https://scorestream.com/>

SD Lottery

By The Associated Press undefined

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) _ These South Dakota lotteries were drawn Friday:

Mega Millions

19-22-24-28-53, Mega Ball: 25, Megaplier: 3

(nineteen, twenty-two, twenty-four, twenty-eight, fifty-three; Mega Ball: twenty-five; Megaplier: three)

Estimated jackpot: \$88 million

Powerball

Estimated jackpot: \$66 million

Rapid City police arrest man accused of beating death

Rapid City police have arrested a man accused of severely beating three people, killing one of them.

Police arrested Allac "AJ" Dismounts Thrice, a 28-year-old from Rapid City on Thursday afternoon in Box Elder, the Rapid City Journal reported. He is charged with both murder and attempted murder charges.

He allegedly killed Richard Montanez, a 39-year-old from Rapid City, and left two women in "critical condition with life-threatening injuries," according to the Rapid City Police Department.

Police Chief Don Hedrick said that investigators believe that Dismounts Thrice knew the victims.

Dismounts Thrice could receive the death penalty or life in prison without parole if he is convicted of the murder charge.

Rapid City has seen an uptick in murders this summer, with police reporting five murder victims during the month of August.

South Dakota reports 259 new COVID-19 cases, one death

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota recorded 259 new cases of the coronavirus along with one death

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on Friday as the state has seen a surge in infections over the last few weeks.

The number of new infections per capita has been the nation's third-highest over the last two weeks. There were 413 new cases per 100,000 people in South Dakota.

The number of hospitalizations from COVID-19 also grew to 89, up by 13 since Thursday. South Dakota health officials have said they are watching that number closely. COVID-19 patients are currently occupying 4% of the state's hospital beds, and over 40% of hospital beds across the state are currently open.

Since the pandemic began, South Dakota has seen 14,596 people test positive for the coronavirus. About 78% of those people have fully recovered, while 3,032 have active infections and 170 have died.

The latest person to die from COVID-19 was a man from Minnehaha County who was over the age of 79.

Unions threaten work stoppages amid calls for racial justice

By AARON MORRISON Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Ahead of Labor Day, unions representing millions across several working-class sectors are threatening to authorize work stoppages in support of the Black Lives Matter movement amid calls for concrete measures that address racial injustice.

In a statement first shared with The Associated Press, labor leaders who represent teachers, auto workers, truck drivers and clerical staff, among others, signaled a willingness Friday to escalate protest tactics to force local and federal lawmakers to take action on policing reform and systemic racism. They said the walkouts, if they were to move forward with them, would last for as long as needed.

"The status quo — of police killing Black people, of armed white nationalists killing demonstrators, of millions sick and increasingly desperate — is clearly unjust, and it cannot continue," the statement says. It was signed by several branches of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, the Service Employees International Union, and affiliates of the National Education Association.

The broader labor movement has been vocal since the May 25 killing of George Floyd, a handcuffed Black man who died when a white police officer pressed his knee into Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes during an arrest over counterfeit money. The death of Floyd in Minneapolis set off an unprecedented surge of protests and unrest from coast to coast this summer. In July, organized labor staged a daylong strike with workers from the service industry, fast-food chains and the gig economy to call out the lack of coronavirus pandemic protections for essential workers, who are disproportionately Black and Hispanic.

Now, in the wake of the August shooting of Jacob Blake, who was critically wounded by a white police officer in Kenosha, Wisconsin, the union leaders say they are following the lead of professional athletes who, last week, staged walkouts over the shooting. Basketball, baseball and tennis league games had to be postponed. Some athletes resumed game play only after having talks with league officials over ways to support the push for policing reforms and to honor victims of police and vigilante violence.

"They remind us that when we strike to withhold our labor, we have the power to bring an unjust status quo to a grinding halt," the union leaders said in the statement.

"We echo the call to local and federal government to divest from the police, to redistribute the stolen wealth of the billionaire class, and to invest in what our people need to live in peace, dignity, and abundance: universal health care and housing, public jobs programs and cash assistance, and safe working conditions," the statement reads.

Among the supportive unions are ones representing Wisconsin public school teachers who, ahead of the mid-September start of the regular school year, urged state legislators to take on policing reforms and systemic racism.

"We stand in solidarity with Jacob Blake and his family, and all communities fighting to defend Black lives from police and vigilante violence," Milwaukee Teacher's Association president Amy Mizialko told the AP.

"Are we striking tomorrow? No," said Racine Educator United president Angelina Cruz, who represents teachers in a community that abuts Kenosha. "Are we in conversation with our members and the national labor movement about how we escalate our tactics to stop fascism and win justice? Yes."

The Nonprofit Professional Employees Union, which represents several hundreds of professionals work-

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ing at more than 25 civil rights groups and think tank organizations, told the AP it signed onto the union statement because “the fights for workers’ rights, civil rights, and racial justice are inextricably linked.”

At the federal level, the Democrat-controlled House of Representatives has already passed the George Floyd Justice In Policing Act, which would ban police use of stranglehold maneuvers and end qualified immunity for officers, among other reforms. The measure awaits action in the Senate.

A Republican-authored police reform bill, introduced in June by South Carolina Sen. Tim Scott, failed a procedural vote in the Senate because Democrats felt the measure didn’t go far enough to address officer accountability.

Meanwhile, officials who serve on governing bodies in more than a dozen major U.S. cities, including Seattle, San Francisco, New York City and Austin, Texas, have voted to defund their police departments and reallocate the money to mental health, homelessness and education services.

Although some unions have a history of excluding workers on the basis of gender and race, the marriage between the racial justice and labor movements goes back decades. That alliance was most prominently on display during the 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom, which featured the visions of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rep. John Lewis and was organized by A. Philip Randolph, a Black icon of the labor movement.

Today, Black workers are more likely to be unionized than any other segment of the workforce as a result of decades of collaboration between labor and civil rights activists, said New York University professor and civil rights historian Thomas Sugrue.

“That connection has only intensified because of the importance of workers of color, particularly African Americans, in the labor movement,” Sugrue said.

Public and private employers are faced with a “Which side are you on?” moment due to growing support for the BLM movement, said Maurice Mitchell, national director of the Working Families Party and a leading organizer in the Movement for Black Lives, a national coalition of 150 Black-led organizations.

“If I was a decision-maker that was considering whether or not to meet the demands of the unions, I would be scared,” Mitchell said. “This movement is spreading. We’ve been on the streets consistently, we’re building on the electoral front, and now we’re seeing this conversation at the highest levels of labor.”

Morrison is a member of the AP’s Race and Ethnicity team. Follow him on Twitter at <https://www.twitter.com/aaronlmorrison>.

Racial tensions roiling US pose target for election meddling

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The tensions coursing through the United States over racism and policing are likely targets for adversaries seeking to influence the November election, lawmakers and experts warn — and there are signs that Russia is again seeking to exploit the divide.

Earlier this year, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pulled down dozens of accounts with names like “Blacks Facts Untold” that had been followed or liked by hundreds of thousands of people. The accounts were fake, created by an organization in Africa with links to Russia’s Internet Research Agency.

Similarly, this past week Facebook announced it had removed a network of accounts linked to that “troll factory” that had pushed out stories about race and other issues. The network had tricked unwitting American writers to post content to the pages.

It’s a troubling but familiar pattern from Russia, as the Internet Research Agency overwhelmingly focused on race and the Black Lives Matter Movement when targeting the U.S. in 2016. The goal, part of the Russian playbook for decades, was to sow chaos by posting content on both sides of the racial divide. Indeed, “no single group of Americans was targeted by IRA information operatives more than African-Americans,” concluded a report from the Senate Intelligence Committee.

With the election just two months away, some lawmakers are worried that the Russian efforts, now evolved and more sophisticated than four years ago, could again take hold. They fear the Trump administration’s

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decision to limit what it tells Congress — and by extension the American people — about election threats will allow the propaganda to spread.

“Race was a big piece of what they did in 2016, and given heightened racial tensions this year, there’s no reason they wouldn’t be doing the same thing again,” says Maine Sen. Angus King, an independent who is on the Senate Intelligence Committee. He says the information that is now being limited “belongs to the American people.”

Democrats were furious last weekend after Director of National Intelligence John Ratcliffe, a close Trump ally, informed Congress that the office would supply written information to the intelligence committees about election threats but would no longer be doing in-person briefings, denying lawmakers the chance to ask questions.

The cancellation came a few weeks after U.S. intelligence officials publicly stated that Russia is using a variety of measures to denigrate Trump’s opponent, Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden, ahead of the election. Trump responded to that assessment by saying that “nobody has been tougher on Russia than I have.”

Election interference has always been a sensitive subject for Trump. The president has often dismissed the idea that Russia interfered at all in 2016, and has replaced many long-serving intelligence officials with his own appointees.

The intelligence statement did not offer specifics about what tactics Russia is using, but the past provides important clues.

In 2016 the Internet Research Agency had an “overwhelming operational emphasis on race” that was apparent in the online ads it purchased — more than two-thirds contained a term related to race. The company targeted that content to “African-Americans in key metropolitan areas with well-established black communities and flashpoints in the Black Lives Matter movement,” according to a Senate Intelligence Committee report. One of its top performing pages, “Blactivist,” generated 11.2 million engagements with Facebook users.

Bret Schafer, an expert on foreign disinformation with the bipartisan group Alliance for Securing Democracy, said stoking racial animosity is a Kremlin strategy that goes back decades. His group tracked a major uptick in social media activity on racial issues from Russian state-sponsored media and political figures this summer, especially after the killing of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police.

“We have seen a constant messaging theme being race and racism in the U.S.,” Schafer said. “They’re very good at it.”

There is evidence that the recent police shooting of a Black man in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and the resulting protests — the focus of political sparring between Trump and Biden this week — have fueled a new round of social media activity from foreign governments.

English-language media outlets linked to the Russian government have published stories supporting the protests, and “Cop Injustice in Kenosha” is the headline on a video posted by an online news organization with ties to Russia. Another video from the Kremlin-backed outlet Redfish shows Trump supporters driving aggressively through protesters in Portland, Oregon, where there have been protests for weeks.

The stories are precisely the kind of content lawmakers are trying to keep tabs on.

The acting chairman of the Senate committee, Sen. Marco Rubio, R-Fla., told a local news outlet this past week that he has spoken to Ratcliffe and expects the in-person briefings to continue. But it is unclear whether they will. A spokeswoman for Ratcliffe would not confirm Rubio’s remarks.

The committee’s top Democrat, Virginia Sen. Mark Warner, says he has been working with Rubio to urge Ratcliffe to reverse the decision.

“Ninety percent of the information I’ve ever gained from any briefing is not from the briefing, it’s from the questions,” Warner said.

The briefings are less likely to be reinstated in the House intelligence committee, which is led by Democrats. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff said cancelling the briefings is a “shocking abdication of its lawful responsibility.” He has urged vigilance on the Russian meddling, noting that the tactics have evolved but “the underlying malign goals remain the same.”

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The intelligence committees are receiving some information from the social media companies themselves, notably Facebook and Twitter. The companies were slow to respond in 2016, but are now waging sophisticated efforts to root out foreign interference. Twitter stopped accepting political ads, while Facebook began verifying the identity of ad buyers in 2018 and this week said it will restrict new political ads in the 7 days before the election.

Nina Jankowicz, disinformation fellow at the nonpartisan Wilson Center, says there has been an improvement in tracking, but because the issue of interference has been so politicized, Congress and the public aren't getting enough information.

"What people need to be looking for is stuff that is seemingly trying to get a rise out of them," Jankowicz said. "Don't think you are going to find a troll. It's about guarding yourself from emotional manipulation."

Associated Press writers David Klepper in Providence, Rhode Island, Amanda Seitz in Chicago, Barbara Ortutay in Oakland, California, and Deb Riechmann contributed to this report.

AP Explains: US debt will soon exceed size of entire economy

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government's war against the coronavirus is imposing the heaviest strain on the Treasury since America's drive to defeat Nazi Germany and imperial Japan three-quarters of a century ago.

The Congressional Budget Office has warned that the government this year will run the largest budget deficit, as a share of the economy, since 1945, when World War II ended. Next year, the federal debt — the sum of the year-after-year gush of annual deficits — is forecast to exceed the size of the entire American economy for the first time since 1946. Within a few years, it's on track to set a new high.

It might be surprising to hear that most economists consider the money well-spent — or at least necessary. Few think it's wise to quibble with the amount of borrowing deemed necessary to sustain American households and businesses through the gravest public health crisis in more than 100 years. That's especially true, economists say, when the government's borrowing costs are super-low and investors still seem eager to buy its debt as fast as the Treasury issues it.

Here's a closer look at the federal debt and the government's use of it to combat the pandemic and the economic pain it's inflicted.

JUST HOW MUCH MONEY ARE WE TALKING ABOUT?

The annual deficit — the gap between what the government spends and what it collects in taxes — will hit \$3.3 trillion in the budget year that ends Sept. 30, the CBO projects. That amounts to 16% of America's gross domestic product, which is the broadest measure of economic output. Not in 75 years has a deficit been that wide.

The federal debt, reflecting the accumulated deficits and the occasional surplus, is forecast to reach 100% of GDP next year. Then it is predicted to keep climbing to \$24.5 trillion — 107% of GDP — in 2023. That would snap the record of 106% of GDP set in 1946. (The percentage does not include debts that the government agencies owe one another, including the Social Security trust fund.)

WHY IS THE BUDGET SO LOPSIDED?

The U.S. government was already deeply in debt even before the virus struck in March. The budget had absorbed the expenses of the 2007-2009 Great Recession, the federal benefits for the retirements of the vast baby boom generation and the cost of President Donald Trump's 2017 tax cut. Last year, the debt burden reached 79% of GDP, the highest share since 1948.

Then came the pandemic. The economy tumbled into a sickening free-fall as businesses shut down and millions of Americans hunkered down at home to avoid infection. GDP collapsed at a 31.7% annual rate from April through June, the worst three months on records dating to 1947. In March and April combined, employers slashed a record 22 million jobs.

To help Americans to endure the crisis, Congress passed a \$2 trillion relief bill in March. Among other

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things, the package sent Americans one-time checks of up to \$1,200 and temporarily offered the unemployed \$600 a week on top of their state jobless benefits.

Economists say that the rescue probably helped keep the economy from sinking into a depression but also that much more assistance is needed.

CAN THE U.S. REPAY ALL THAT MONEY?

After World War II, the United States paid down the federal debt with surprising speed. By 1961, the debt had dropped to 44% of GDP, the same level as in the prewar year of 1940.

Behind that success was a fast-growing economy that delivered rising revenue to the government and erased the debt. From 1947 through 1961 the economy grew at a 3.3% annual rate. The financial system was tightly regulated by the government. This allowed policymakers to keep interest rates artificially low and minimize the cost of repaying the debt.

Circumstances are somewhat different now. The economy doesn't grow as fast as it did in the postwar boom years. Since 2010, GDP growth has averaged just 2.3%, even excluding this year's economic implosion. And the government doesn't control interest rates as it used to, not after the financial deregulation of the 1980s.

Still, the Federal Reserve is helping keep government borrowing rates ultra-low by buying up huge volumes of Treasury debt.

DOES THE DEBT CARRY ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES?

Economists have long warned that too much government borrowing risks hobbling the economy. When the government takes on excessive debt, the argument goes, it competes with businesses and consumers for loans, thereby forcing borrowing rates prohibitively high and imperiling growth.

Another concern is that investors will demand ever-higher interest rates for accepting the risk that governments could default on their debts.

Some economists and budget watchers still warn that a day of reckoning will come and that the United States will have to curb spending, raise taxes or both.

But after the Great Recession, many economists began to rethink their view of debt. The recovery in the United States and especially in Europe was sluggish in part because policymakers were too reluctant to stimulate growth with debt.

In the United States, rates didn't rise even though government debts were high. Investors, it turned out, had a near-insatiable appetite for U.S. Treasuries, still considered the world's safest investment. Their rush to buy federal debt helped keep rates low and limited the government's borrowing costs. So did persistently low inflation.

In such a low-rate, low-inflation environment, the risk of piling on more debt seems more manageable, at least for countries like the United States and Japan that borrow in their own currencies.

In a speech last year, Olivier Blanchard, a former chief economist of the International Monetary Fund, declared:

"Put bluntly, public debt may have no fiscal cost ... The probability that the U.S. government can do a debt rollover, that it can issue debt and achieve a decreasing debt-to-GDP ratio without ever having to raise taxes later, is high."

AP Economics Writer Martin Crutsinger contributed to this report.

Voting in person Nov. 3? Expect drive-thrus, sports arenas

By SOPHIA EPPOLITO Associated Press/Report for America

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) — Voting will look a little different this November. States are turning to stadiums, drive-thrus and possibly even movie theaters as safe options for in-person polling places amid the coronavirus pandemic and fears about mail-in ballots failing to arrive in time to count.

The primary season brought voters to an outdoor wedding-style tent in Vermont and the state fairgrounds in Kentucky. The general election on Nov. 3 is expected to include voting at NBA arenas around the country,

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part of an agreement owners made with players to combat racial injustice.

Large venues and outdoor spaces allow for social distancing that helps prevent the spread of the virus, though there are questions about keeping people warm as the weather gets cold and the possibility that fewer traditional neighborhood polling places could lower voter turnout.

Election Day is expected to bring a surge in mail-in voting, but some people may feel more comfortable casting their ballots in person amid concerns about recent mail delays following a series of operational changes at the U.S. Postal Service and President Donald Trump stoking unfounded claims of voter fraud.

Several states conduct their elections almost entirely by mail, and mail-in voting is well established in others.

In June, Utah broke voter turnout records despite not opening traditional polling places because of the virus. In-person voting will be back in November, but rather than only using schools, churches and public buildings like usual, clerks also are permitted to set up drive-thru or outdoor polling places.

The family that owns the NBA's Utah Jazz also has a chain of movie theaters and offered three as voting sites in November.

One suburban Salt Lake City county ran a primary polling place where voters drove through an indoor convention center to pick up their ballots, completed them in their cars and then dropped them off in an outdoor parking area. Davis County Clerk Curtis Koch said the system will be in place for the general election, too.

Chad Berbert, a 46-year-old Republican, said he'll probably vote by mail in the fall, but he's glad officials are offering alternative voting methods.

"The more options for voting in terms of mechanisms or ways that people can exercise their franchise I think is helpful," said Berbert, who lives in Layton, Utah, and works at a management consulting firm.

Less than 1% of Utah voters chose in-person options in June, according to election officials. But in states where voters are less familiar with mail-in voting, unorthodox in-person options will provide a safe alternative, said Charles Stewart, a political science professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

In Los Angeles, Dodger Stadium will be used as a vote center as part of a joint effort with More Than A Vote, a voting rights organization launched by LeBron James that's dedicated to maximizing Black turnout in November. Many Black voters — one of the Democratic Party's most important voting groups — are wary of voting by mail amid historical skepticism of a system that tried to keep Black people from the polls and worries that a mailed ballot won't get counted.

Several teams, including the Milwaukee Bucks, Detroit Pistons and Atlanta Hawks, had already committed their arenas to be voting sites prior to the NBA's announcement last week. Madison Square Garden also will be among the sports stadiums used.

The idea to use large spaces for in-person voting started in Kentucky, where Louisville's only option in the June primary was an exposition center at the state fairgrounds. Organizers carefully laid out chalk markings where voters could safely stand in line, though there were complications as voters struggled to find parking at the end of the day.

In Vermont, the tiny town of Lincoln voted during an August primary in a wedding-style tent, clerk Sally Ober said. Being outdoors in the summer gave Ober some unexpected brushes with nature. As she was setting up, she picked up a baby robin from the street and rescued a speckled fawn that got stuck on a fence. A toad also hopped through the tent during voting.

"It was very funny and cute and sweet that wildlife was involved with our voting day," Ober said.

The primary set turnout records, largely driven by mail-in voting. All active Vermont voters will get a mail-in ballot for the November election, and lawmakers also have allowed for outdoor and drive-thru voting systems.

In Lincoln, Ober is again preparing for people who want to vote in person. But in a state where below-freezing temperatures are normal for November, the tent likely won't make another appearance.

Associated Press writer Wilson Ring in Stowe, Vermont, contributed. Eppolito is a corps member for the

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

Activists insist on changes to policing after Prude's death

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (AP) — The death of Daniel Prude after a confrontation with police sparked a third night of demonstrations in New York's third-largest city, with protesters demanding more accountability for how it happened and legislation to change how authorities respond to mental health emergencies.

Advocates for such legislation say Prude's death and the actions of seven now-suspended Rochester police officers — including one who covered the Black man's head with a "spit hood" during the March encounter — demonstrate how police are ill-equipped to deal with people suffering mental problems.

Having police respond can be a "recipe for disaster," The National Alliance on Mental Illness said in a statement Friday.

Prude's death "is yet another harrowing tragedy, but a story not unfamiliar to us," the advocacy group said. "People in crisis deserve help, not handcuffs."

Stanley Martin, an organizer of Free the People Rochester, told reporters: "We do not need violent workers with guns to respond to mental health crises."

Activists have marched nightly in the city of 210,000 on Lake Ontario since police body camera videos of the encounter with Prude were released this week by his family.

Friday night's protest resulted in 11 arrests, police said. As they had the night before, officers doused activists at police headquarters with a chemical spray to drive them from barricades around the building.

As the night wore on, demonstrators were pushed further back, as police fired what appeared to be pepper balls. Fireworks were shot off and a bus stop was set on fire.

Prude's family has said he appeared to be spiraling into crisis in the hours before police handcuffed him on a street and pinned the naked man face down. In the video, police are also seen covering his head with the white "spit hood," designed to protect police from bodily fluids.

"You're trying to kill me!" the 41-year-old man is heard saying. He died days later in what the medical examiner ruled was a homicide.

A police union has defended the officers involved in the encounter, saying they were strictly following department training and protocols, including using the mesh hood.

27 arrested as Portland protests reach 100 consecutive days

By SARA CLINE and ARON RANEN Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Law enforcement declared an unlawful assembly Friday night and arrested 27 people after protesters marched through the streets of Portland on to a police building, where officers stood waiting outside.

A few hundred demonstrators had met at Kenton Park before making their way to the Portland Police Association building, where officers warned protesters to stay off the streets and private property. Those who refused could be subject to citation, arrest, the use of tear gas, crowd-control agents or impact munitions, police said.

Around midnight, police ran down the street, pushing protesters out of the area, knocking people down and arresting those who they say were not following orders — as some people were being detained, they were pinned to the ground and blood could be seen marking the pavement. Law enforcement officers used smoke devices and shot impact munitions and stun grenades while trying to get the crowd to disperse, The Oregonian reported.

The Portland Police Bureau issued a statement Saturday morning, saying some officers reported that rocks, a full beverage can and water bottles had been thrown at them, prompting police to declare the gathering an unlawful assembly.

Police said at one woman who was detained was bleeding from an abrasion on her head, and she was treated by medics at the scene before being transported by an ambulance. The Portland Police Bureau

said she jumped out of the ambulance and ran away before it left the scene, however.

Most of those arrested were arrested on suspicion of interfering with a peace officer or disorderly conduct, police said.

Oregon State Police troopers assisted local police at the protest. State police frequently helped police at the protests until early August, when they withdrew. Their return on Friday came days after Gov. Kate Brown announced the move.

Demonstrations in Portland, which started in late May after the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, are reaching 100 straight nights of protests that have been marked by vandalism and violence.

The slaying of a right-wing Trump supporter, Aaron "Jay" Danielson, shot and killed after he came downtown last weekend with a pro-Trump caravan of pickup trucks further roiled things in the liberal city. The prime suspect in the shooting, self-described anti-fascist Michael Forest Reinoehl, was killed Thursday night by law enforcement.

Since Floyd's killing, nights of unrest that increasingly targeted a federal courthouse prompted President Donald Trump to dispatch U.S. agents to guard the building in July.

The presence of the agents from U.S. Customs and Border Protection, U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement and the U.S. Marshals Service was intended to tamp down on the demonstrations but instead reinvigorated the Black Lives Matter movement.

The U.S. agents began drawing down July 31 under an agreement between the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and Democratic Gov. Kate Brown. But as the unrest has continued and picked up, federal authorities have again said they may increase their presence in the city.

Cline reported from Salem, Oregon.

Colleges using COVID dorms, quarantines to keep virus at bay

By PAT EATON-ROBB and JEFF AMY Associated Press

STORRS, Conn. (AP) — With the coronavirus spreading through colleges at alarming rates, universities are scrambling to find quarantine locations in dormitory buildings and off-campus properties to isolate the thousands of students who have caught COVID-19 or been exposed to it.

Sacred Heart University has converted a 34-room guest house at the former Connecticut headquarters of General Electric to quarantine students. The University of South Carolina ran out of space at a dormitory for quarantined students and began sending them to rooms it rented in hotel-like quarters at a training center for prosecutors. The Air Force Academy sent 400 cadets to hotels to free up space on its Colorado base for quarantines.

The actions again demonstrate how the virus has uprooted traditional campus life amid a pandemic that has killed nearly 200,000 people in the U.S. and proven to be especially problematic for universities since the start of the school year. Many colleges quickly scrapped in-person learning in favor of online after cases began to spike, bars have been shut down in college towns, and students, fraternities and sororities have been repeatedly disciplined for parties and large gatherings.

Health officials such as White House coronavirus task force member Dr. Deborah Birx have been urging colleges to keep students on campus to avoid them infecting members of their family and community.

At Sacred Heart, which acquired the 66-acre GE campus in 2016, the guest house that once provided rooms for visiting corporate executives will be used for the rest of the year to isolate any of its 3,000 students who test positive for COVID-19 and are unable to return home, said Gary MacNamara, the school's director of public safety.

Rooms are stocked with snacks and equipped with TVs and work stations for remote learning. Health officials will do periodic check-ups, security is stationed outside and card swipes keep track of who enters or leaves.

"With all the stress and fear a student may have if in isolation we believe we need to make it as comfortable as possible," MacNamara said. "This guest house helps us accomplish that."

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But not every situation is as comfortable.

Ryan Bologna has been locked in his dorm room at the University of Connecticut since 12 cases were found in his building last week. He's allowed to go to a dining hall next door, but has had no other contact with the outside world.

Zoom classes and virtual marching band practice and video gaming are not what the communications major had envisioned for the start of his senior year.

"I do have friends I've made throughout the years that I can talk to," he said. "But if I were a freshman, I'd be really struggling right now as far as the social aspect."

Isolating students seems to be working in states like Connecticut, where the infection rate at UConn on Thursday was 1.34% among residential students tested for the virus.

But the results haven't been as good elsewhere.

The University of Alabama recently informed students in half of a five-story complex that they had to move to other housing to make room for infected or potentially infected students, because two other quarantine-and-isolation facilities would reach capacity.

So far, more than 1,000 students on the Tuscaloosa campus have tested positive since mid-August. As of Thursday, the system's online dashboard showed its quarantine housing was 36% full.

The university banned on-campus events for two weeks and the city of Tuscaloosa ordered bars closed amid concern about virus spread. The football-obsessed school is still planning to allow fans for games — with a ban on tailgating — when the Crimson Tide begin their season this month.

Freshman Zachary Bourg, 18, spent 10 days in a quarantine dorm after testing positive on Aug. 23. He's now back in his regular room.

"I want to stay here for the fall semester," he said. "But if cases continue to rise at the rate they are then the likelihood of that occurring is starting to get lower."

The University of South Carolina has about 35,000 students on its main Columbia campus. More than 1,000 have tested positive for COVID-19 so far, with many more ordered into quarantine after exposure to COVID-positive students.

They were first housed in a dormitory called Bates West, where some students are allowed to room together. But once that filled the university began sending students to off-campus at a training center for prosecutors.

"We do feel like we can surge additional space, either on campus or nearby, to support the students," said Larry Thomas, a school spokesman.

Brown University has delayed the start in-person learning until next month at the earliest because of concerns over where to put those who might test positive. Schools such as Georgia College & State University, a 7,000-student school in Milledgeville which has reported more than 600 cases since the beginning of August, are telling students that if they have COVID-19, they should leave campus.

There's a debate in the health community about whether to send students home or keep them in quarantine.

Dr. Joseph Gerald, associate professor of public health policy and management at the University of Arizona, said the idea of identifying cases, contact tracing and quarantining is the right approach. He said it's just going to be hard to do in dorms, frat houses or places where students congregate.

"One of the things we're struggling with here at the University of Arizona is what to do with multi-story buildings, where kids need to get to their rooms, but we have one or two elevators," he said. "It's not really possible to make an elevator safe."

Dr. Peter Hotez, a Baylor College of Medicine infectious disease expert, dean of the National School for Tropical Medicine and co-director Texas Children's Hospital Center for Vaccine Development said many colleges simply cannot open safely.

"There's only so much you can do with Plexiglas and social distancing and testing," he said. "That will help get you about 20% to 30% of the way, the other 70% is whether you have an adequate suppression of transmission. You might get away with it at Bowdoin College ... but clearly it's going to fail at the

University of Alabama, the University of Georgia and places like that.”

Associated Press writer Haleluya Hadero contributed to this report.

Harris’ mostly virtual campaign to get Wisconsin road test

By KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — Kamala Harris told a friendly crowd of Hollywood donors on Thursday they’d be surprised by how many states she’s visiting daily, if only virtually.

Earlier in the week, she’d campaigned before supporters in Minnesota, California and Connecticut, and she was greeting Missouri donors next.

Harris hasn’t been on a plane in more than a month. Three weeks after joining Joe Biden as the Democratic vice presidential nominee, the California senator is still campaigning largely in front of a computer screen to relatively small audiences.

That’s about to change. On Monday, Harris will travel to Milwaukee on her first traditional campaign trip. Biden’s campaign hasn’t yet said what she plans to do in the critical swing state. Her trip to Wisconsin comes after Biden visited Kenosha this past week to meet with the family of Jacob Blake, who was shot by police, and talk to the community about racial justice and protests in the city.

The coronavirus pandemic has radically altered campaigning for Democrats, who, unlike Republicans, are largely avoiding in-person gatherings and organizing digitally.

For Harris, that’s so far meant a mix of fundraising and organizing events, along with local press interviews and one speech aimed at President Donald Trump’s handling of the coronavirus. Leaning into her role as the first Black woman on a major party’s presidential ticket, Harris has spoken with Black leaders and activists in events that aren’t open to the press, but she did not travel with Biden to Kenosha.

“She’s been on the road. She’s out herself,” Biden said Friday. “I talk with her almost every day. I speak with her and we work together and I have every confidence in her. There’s nothing about not campaigning together, it’s about being able to cover more territory.”

On Sunday, Harris is scheduled to be a guest on CNN’s “State of the Union,” her first solo appearance on such a show since becoming the vice presidential nominee. She has not held a wide-ranging press conference since joining the ticket.

Democratic observers say Harris is so far complementing Biden in a way that’s expected for a running mate. It’s the role of the vice presidential nominee to boost the presidential candidate’s agenda, as Harris has done, and reach out to constituencies that may not be as natural for the nominee, said Karen Finney, a Democratic strategist who ran communications for Sen. Tim Kaine of Virginia, Hillary Clinton’s running mate in 2016.

Vice President Mike Pence, for example, was chosen in part to help boost Trump’s support among evangelical voters, a key Republican constituency not originally seen as natural Trump allies. Harris, meanwhile, counters the 77-year-old Biden as a 55-year-old Black woman.

“They have similar values, but she also has had a different experience,” Finney said.

In private events over the past two weeks, Harris has met with Black leaders and activists to thank them for their support and motivate them as the campaign enters the final stretch. Last Saturday, Harris held one with Black women leaders who had urged Biden to choose a Black woman as his running mate and another with Black men, said Donna Brazile, a former head of the Democratic National Committee, who was on the first call, where singer Bebe Winans serenaded Harris with his song “Born for This.”

“We had a wonderful time just showering her with powerful energy for the battles ahead,” Brazile said.

Brazile said it will be important for Harris to get out for non-virtual events “where she can actually see the pulse of people,” but she said the digital organizing has created strong enthusiasm. This week, Brazile joined a video call with students from historically black colleges and universities as they spoke about how to boost Harris and hold campus voter registration drives. She’s also been invited by friends to join organizing groups of suburban women supporting Harris and marveled at the Harris-specific T-shirts and

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other merchandise people are creating and selling online.

"She did something to make the VP seem like a rock star and people are just donating," Brazile said.

The campaign declined to release fundraising numbers for Harris's events, but several organizers said on calls that interest in giving rose sharply when Harris joined the ticket. That's despite her own presidential bid ending last year before primary voting began as she struggled to raise money. Biden raised a record \$365 million in August.

In video calls featuring dozens of donors, Harris talks about Biden and their platform before taking questions on everything from the coronavirus to protest violence and what to do if Trump refuses to accept the election results. ("If he's foolish enough to try a stunt like that, he will fail," she said.)

Attendees range from Hollywood powerhouses like TV director Chuck Lorre and actress Kate Hudson to friends and top Kaine donors.

"It's been increasingly clear that the response from contributors went up dramatically when you were named as vice presidential nominee," Merle Ginsburg, a donor who helped organize a Connecticut-based fundraiser on Tuesday, told Harris.

Beyond raising cash, she's joined calls focused on returning to school in Minnesota, mobilizing Black women voters in Detroit and reaching out to Hispanic voters in Miami. In those events, she often gives remarks at the top and, if she takes questions, takes them from event organizers rather than participants. Minnesota, Michigan and Florida are key swing states.

Steve Benjamin, mayor of Columbia, South Carolina, said Friday it makes sense that Harris has been used mainly in a fundraising role thus far but that voters wanted to see her more.

"The importance of on-the-ground exposure, people seeing you in the community, is so important," said Benjamin, who initially supported Mike Bloomberg's 2020 Democratic presidential bid before backing Biden. He joined Harris's private call with Black male leaders, discussing issues like racial injustice and economic inequality. He said he expects there will be opportunities for Harris to get out in swing states like Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, North Carolina, Florida and Georgia.

"It matters right now," he said. "More and more citizen engagement by Sen. Harris is what people want."

Associated Press writers Meg Kinnard in Columbia, South Carolina, and Will Weissert in Wilmington, Delaware, contributed to this report.

As Africa's COVID-19 cases rise, faith is put to the test

By RODNEY MUHUMUZA Associated Press

KAMPALA, Uganda (AP) — The COVID-19 pandemic is testing the patience of some religious leaders across Africa who worry they will lose followers, and funding, as restrictions on gatherings continue. Some evangelical Christian leaders in Uganda have launched a campaign with the now-universal phrase of protest: "I can't breathe."

Their members vow to occasionally put on the burlap costumes they say resemble the sackcloth worn by biblical prophets.

"Uganda is a God-fearing nation but, unfortunately, due to the lockdown, the citizens of our great country cannot gather to seek God's intervention," Betty Ochan, leader of the opposition in Uganda's national assembly, recently wrote in the local Daily Monitor newspaper. "The devil is taking dominance. If people do not worship God together, they are spiritually derailed."

From Nigeria to Zimbabwe, people are speaking out — or sneaking out to worship — as they argue that limits on religion could lead to a crisis of faith.

"I am appalled that some people have the audacity to tell us how many hours we can spend in church," said Chris Oyakhilome, president of the Lagos-based megachurch known as Christ Embassy. "How dare you. What in the world do you think you are?"

Church services in Nigeria resumed last month but are limited to an hour, a severe test for some in a country where worship can spill from a Sunday morning into the afternoon.

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Some ministers in Nigeria, Africa's most populous country, have sparked a separate controversy for saying followers should continue paying their tithes into designated bank accounts. Some ministers have long been accused of maintaining lavish lifestyles at the expense of their followers.

But the larger concerns are rooted in the very nature of belief.

"Coming together is very important from an African point of view," said Christopher Byaruhanga, a professor of systematic and historical theology at Uganda Christian University. "We Africans want to live in a community. So the coronavirus is now redefining that community."

Coming together to worship is part of the "accountability" that builds trust as people share their testimonies, he said.

The "overall levels of religious commitment" in sub-Saharan Africa are among the highest in the world, according to a 2018 study by the Pew Research Center. The region's number of Christians grew from about 7 million in 1900 to 470 million by 2010, when it was home to 21% of the world's Christians and 15% of all Muslims.

Christians strongly associate their faith with the brick-and-mortar buildings of their parishes, said the Rev. Charles Odurkami, an emeritus bishop in Uganda.

"Africans are notoriously religious," he said. "Of course, in Africa some people worship with two feet. One foot in traditional culture and another foot in Christianity."

Another religious leader in Uganda, a self-described prophet who leads a congregation of thousands in Kampala, has criticized attempts to negotiate with the government to reopen houses of worship.

"It's disrespectful ... if a so-called pastor goes on his knees and begs a politician to open up," Elvis Mbonye recently told a local broadcaster. "I will not ask any man to give me the permission, the right, the directives."

Hajji Ramadhan Mugalu, secretary-general of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, said Muslims "are losing out on the ... social aspect" while mosques remain closed.

"If arcades and malls have been opened, our prayer is that these places of worship should also be opened," he said. "Yes, they can pray at home, but congregational prayer is very powerful."

Authorities in Uganda and other countries say they will follow the advice of health experts on allowing places of worship to resume normal operations. In Tanzania, however, President John Magufuli has alarmed health experts by asserting that divine power would offer protection from the virus. The country hasn't updated its number of infections — just over 500 — since April.

In South Africa, which makes up roughly half of the African continent's 1.2 million confirmed coronavirus infections, the pandemic has challenged people's relationship with their faith, said Mosa Sona, bishop at Grace Bible Church in the Johannesburg township of Soweto.

"Am I a believer that practices his faith in the midst of a crowd, at a building called a church, or does it matter when I am all alone at home?" asked Sona, whose church was among the first to stream sermons online.

Others insist on staying physically in touch with their coreligionists, no matter what pandemic restrictions say.

In Zimbabwe, the government has encouraged people to pray at home. But that wasn't an option for Amos Mazikande, who recently went to a "prophet" with his apostolic group to seek a cure for his daughter's persistent headaches.

The family used back roads to avoid police on their way to an open ground where services are held in the capital, Harare.

"Coronavirus will be defeated by the Holy Spirit, so we don't have to fear it," Mazikande said.

Across the country, apostolic believers line up to collect "holy" water, oil, pieces of cloth and clay pots that they believe offer protection from "evil spirits" that bring poverty and disease.

At a recent service, about a dozen worshippers huddled to sing and dance, some with face masks dangling from their chins. Under a nearby tree, a woman knelt while the leader sprinkled water and vigorously shook her head in an apparent healing session.

Some say such scenes show the pandemic is strengthening people's faith no matter how they worship.

Etienne Bonkougou, a chaplain in Burkina Faso's capital, Ouagadougou, said he has noticed that since normal church services recently resumed, people who didn't attend regularly before the pandemic now show up every week.

"People found it necessary to get closer to God because they said it's only God that can deliver them," Bonkougou said.

Farai Mutsaka in Harare, Zimbabwe; Mogomotsi Magome in Johannesburg; Sam Mednick in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso; and Sam Olukoya in Lagos, Nigeria, contributed.

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

Child care crisis pushes US mothers out of the labor force

By ALEXANDRA OLSON and CATHY BUSSEWITZ AP Business Writers

NEW YORK (AP) — Angela Wynn had just launched her own project management business, hitting a career stride after years of struggle that began with earning an undergraduate degree as a single mother.

Then the coronavirus pandemic hit, forcing many schools to shift online. The now-married mother of five saw little choice but to give up her newly minted business to help three of her children cope with remote learning while her husband, the primary breadwinner, kept his job at a senior living center.

"To see all that come to fruition, I did it, but now it's gone," said Wynn, who has always been the main caretaker for her children, ages 1, 5, 11, 12 and 18. "But my priority is my kids and their education is everything."

Wynn's story is becoming distressingly common. Research is increasingly pointing to a retreat of working mothers from the U.S. labor force as the pandemic leaves parents with few child care options and the added burden of navigating distance learning.

The trend threatens the financial stability of families in the near-term. In the long-term, the crisis could stall — if not reverse — decades of hard-fought gains by working women who are still far from achieving labor force parity with men.

Thousands of school districts are starting the school year with remote instruction, including most of the largest ones. At least half the country's child care providers are closed and may not survive the crisis without financial help to cope with implementing safety standards and reduced enrollment. Negotiations for a bailout of the industry have stalled in Congress.

In August, the federal jobs reports showed that women in their prime-earning years — 25 to 54 — were dropping out of the work force more than other age groups. About 77% of women in that age group were working or looking for work in February, compared to 74.9% in August. The decline is most pronounced among Black women of that age range, whose participation rate is down 5 percentage points since February, compared to 4 percentage points for Hispanic women and 2 percentage points for white women.

Overall, the drop translates into 1.3 million women exiting the labor force since February.

"We think this reflects the growing child care crisis," BNP Paribas economists Daniel Ahn and Steven Weinberg wrote in recent report. "It is hard to see this abating soon, and if anything could become worse as we move into fall."

Few families can afford for mothers not to work indefinitely: Mothers are now the equal, primary, or sole earners in 40% of U.S. families, up from 11% in 1960, according to federal labor figures. Women also comprise nearly half the U.S. labor force, making their inability to work a significant drag on the economy and hindering any recovery from the pandemic's impact.

In Wynn's case, she is working a part-time job to help pay the bills. Even so, the family is taking a financial hit, refinancing their home outside Nashville and starting a garden in their backyard to cut down on grocery bills.

Despite the leaps over the past decades, working women still entered the pandemic at a disadvantage.

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They are typically paid 82 cents for every dollar men earn, according to research by the National Women's Law Center.

Among working mothers and fathers, the wage gap is even higher at 70 cents. The median household earnings for mothers in the U.S. is \$42,000, compared to \$60,000 for fathers. When left with no choice but to give up one income as child care options collapse, that wage gap incentivizes fathers to stay in the workforce and mothers to leave, or at least scale back.

"There is already a motherhood wage gap. In times of uncertainty and recession, you protect the primary earner," said Liana Christin Landivar, a sociologist at the Maryland Population Research Center and author of the book, "Mothers at Work: Who Opts Out?"

That is bearing out in the numbers. More mothers than fathers have exited the labor force since the pandemic began, according to research published in August by Sage Journals, which analyzed data from the Current Population Survey. Between February and April, labor force participation fell 3.2% among mothers with children younger than 6, and 4.3% for those with children 6 to 12. Fathers of children under 12 also left the workforce, but at lower rates, said Landivar, who co-authored the report.

In a separate study, the same researchers found mothers are cutting back on working hours more than fathers. Mothers of children under 12 were working more than six fewer hours a week than fathers in April, compared to less than five fewer hours in February, according to the study, which looked at sub-sample of heterosexual married men and women from the CPS, a monthly survey of 60,000 households sponsored by the U.S. Census Bureau and the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

"We already knew there was a large gender inequality in the labor force, and the pandemic just makes this worse," Landivar said.

For Anna Hamilton and her husband, juggling two careers while raising two children was always a bit of house of cards. The pandemic knocked it down, at least for now.

Hamilton, who lives in the Atlanta area, is taking indefinite leave from her job at a small investment firm, a job she stuck with for 12 years in part because it allowed her family to move twice so her husband could pursue his career as a cancer surgeon.

She has mixed feelings but one thing she knows is that working full-time while handling remote schooling last spring was unbearable.

"There was a lot yelling. I thought, 'Let's just admit what's happening and maybe everyone will be happier,'" said Hamilton, 43, whose sons are 6 and 7. "I hope it's not a career-ender."

Concerned about attrition and loss of productivity, some companies are now rolling out generous benefits to help working parents cope with school and day care closures because of the pandemic. Microsoft is offering an extra 12 weeks of paid family leave for employees struggling with child care issues. Google added 14 more weeks.

Duolingo, the foreign language-learning app, is allowing parents to request reduced working hours with full pay and benefits.

"Our CEO has talked to other tech CEOs who said they're starting to see attrition tick up, especially with female employees. They thought it had to do with the parenting load," said Christine Rogers-Raetsch, vice president of people at Duolingo. "We set a directional goal for ourselves: Let's not lose any parents during this."

But most women don't work for tech companies, and instead make up a majority of the country's teachers, nurses, child care workers, social workers, librarians, bookkeepers, waitresses, cashiers and housekeepers, according to federal labor figures.

Mothers in particular are the majority of the country's teachers, nurses and child care workers. Despite the progress over the past two years, 80% of U.S. private sector workers have no access to paid family leave, which is not mandated by federal law.

"When we leave it to employers, the vast majority of higher income workers get more coverage and low-income workers just don't. This disproportionately affects women," Landivar said.

The pandemic has particularly affected women who put their careers on the back burner with the expectation of ramping back up once their children reached school age.

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With the youngest of her three children now 6 years old, Kate Albrecht Fidler had begun studying for certification as a human resources professional, hoping to jump-start a career she had largely put on hold.

But in April, the 49-year-old was furloughed from her part-time job at a hospital and now she's once again looking for any flexible job she can get because she'll have to shepherd her children through remote schooling in her rural town of Adams, New York.

"For women in their prime earning years, this is a complete disaster," Albrecht Fidler said. "There's no way to catch up."

AP Business Writer Chris Rugaber in Washington contributed to this story.

No payoff: Summer without fairs leaves farm kids heartbroken

By JOHN SEEWER Associated Press

TOLEDO, Ohio (AP) — Well before the sun rises and then again after school, Arrissa Swails feeds and waters her goats, fancy chickens and three dairy cows. There's another trip to the barn at night to hustle the chickens into their coop.

It's a daily routine that typically takes the high school senior at least three hours.

This week, she'd be parading her livestock at the Hancock County Fair, hoping to win a grand champion ribbon during her last turn in the show ring. But there is no fair this year for her or anyone else, another tradition wiped away from the 2020 calendar by the coronavirus.

"I bawled my eyes out," she said about the fair's first cancellation since World War II. "Honestly, it means everything to me. It's definitely weird this year without it."

Not many county or state fairs in the U.S. are continuing on without major changes, about 80% have been called off or drastically scaled down by eliminating carnival rides, concerts and tractor pulls, according to the International Association of Fairs and Expositions. Some are only allowing youth livestock competitions and auctions or opening for "fair food drive-thrus."

The losses have been monumental — the association estimates the total is nearing \$4 billion for fair organizations. And that's not counting the revenue for ride and concession operators and volunteer organizations that raise money by selling milkshakes and corn dogs.

To make up some of the difference, a group of Republicans and Democrats in Congress are backing legislation introduced in July that would direct \$500 million to agricultural fairs across the nation.

But for those who have spent the past year feeding, cleaning and working with their animals in hopes of winning a blue ribbon and maybe some money for college, there is no replacing the missed experiences of the fair.

"I just love walking the goats in, they're so happy in the show ring," said Swails, who has been in 4-H the past eight years. "We have this one, she looks forward to the fair, she's happy and content at the fair."

Just like at home, she stays with her animals during fair week from morning until late at night. Hanging out in the barns, camping at the fairgrounds and competing in the judging allowed her to come out of her shell at a young age and meet many new people, said the 18-year-old who lives near the village of Jenera in northwestern Ohio.

"This was my last chance," she said.

In rural America, the county fair remains a cherished institution with agriculture its centerpiece even though farm families now represent less than 2% of the nation's population.

"I call it the farmers' family reunion," said Jacki Johnson, who has spent 41 years volunteering as a 4-H adviser in Hancock County, one of Ohio's top crop-producing regions.

It was hardly a surprise, though, when fair organizers decided in mid-July to scrap this year's event for only the second time since it began in 1938. The decision came just a few weeks after the county's fair board said it needed to raise \$80,000 because the pandemic caused some businesses to limit their donations and forced the cancellations of other money-making events at the fairgrounds.

"It's so frustrating to see the sadness on the kids' faces," Johnson said.

Volunteers in the county did manage to pull together a makeshift livestock competition and alternative auction. But not everyone participated for a number of reasons, including because some had already sold their animals months ago when it became apparent there would be no fair.

Eric Davis, a high school sophomore who's a member of Johnson's 4-H club, was bummed he didn't get to take this year's batch of chickens to the fair because he said they're the best he's had in six years.

Still, he understands why holding a fair this year with crowds "wouldn't be a good look" and that it wouldn't be the same no matter what.

"It's a shame. You do all that and there's no payoff, but I know there's going to be a fair next year," he said.

Eleven-year-old Payne Steffan has plenty more fairs ahead too, but he's still sad he won't get to show off his ducks or get to impress the judges with how much he knows.

"When you get to take them in the ring, you really get to know if your bird is any good," he said.

His mom, Brynne Steffan, maybe even more disappointed. She grew up taking dairy cows to the fair and has never missed one, not even last year when she was pregnant and due on opening day.

She and her family managed to get to the fair each day and then on the final day — Labor Day — "we packed up, got our ducks out, and went to the hospital and had a baby."

Thanks, but no: Small businesses shun payroll tax deferral

By JOYCE M. ROSENBERG AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — As employees of small businesses get their first September paychecks, they're probably receiving their usual amount — company owners are still withholding money for Social Security despite a presidential order allowing the tax to be deferred.

The order President Donald Trump signed Aug. 8 allows employers to stop withholding the 6.2% payroll tax from Sept. 1 through Dec. 31. Employees must make under \$4,000 every two weeks to qualify. Trump said the order was aimed at putting more money into Americans' pockets during the coronavirus outbreak.

Small business owners are wary about the plan. The tax must still be paid between Jan. 1 and April 30 of next year, which means employees could take an unwanted financial hit or companies might ultimately have to pay the government if staffers leave.

Attorney John Strohmeyer is having the payroll for his Houston firm processed as per usual.

"It doesn't make much sense. I'm not getting a tax break as an employee or employer. The money is still due by April 30 of next year," Strohmeyer says.

Jay Starkman says the businesses calling his human resources consulting firm for advice about tax deferral ask whether it's a good benefit for employees. But they're not inclined to implement the plan.

"If the employee doesn't pay the money back, you're on the hook for it. Till that changes, it just doesn't make sense to give somebody a few more months of money," says Starkman, CEO of Engage PEO, based in Hollywood, Florida.

Owners also have questions about the payment process that aren't answered in the guidelines the IRS issued last week.

The three-page document is silent on how the money is to be collected after Jan. 1, leaving owners wondering if they would have to deduct it paycheck by paycheck or whether staffers would need to come up with a lump sum. Owners also don't know if they'd have to poll staffers individually to see who wants or doesn't want their taxes deferred.

While many companies use payroll processors or human resources consultants to handle staffers' pay, implementing a temporary tax deferral is still another layer of work for owners who are focused on running their companies during a pandemic.

Strohmeyer says business owners would prefer to focus on changes that affect the long-term running of their companies. "This is a four-month delay. Why would you upset your business?"

Owners already see the possibility of a bureaucratic headache in tax deferral, says Karen Kerrigan, president of the advocacy group Small Business & Entrepreneurship Council.

"The vast majority of small businesses will likely opt out due to complexity, and the fact that it puts owners or managers in an awkward position of collecting funds or deducting funds from employees' paychecks in the future, and these could be substantial amounts," she says.

Owners are finding that employees aren't eager to defer their taxes. Attorney Arash Hashemi's sole staffer is looking down the road to paying the tax in 2021 and "she's afraid that will hurt her pocket more than it will help," he says.

Hashemi, whose practice is in Los Angeles, is also saying "no, thanks."

"I already have so many obligations to the government, not only federal but state and local. I don't want to make one more burden for the business," he says.

Michael Kipness has surveyed his five staffers and found that "they're very concerned about having to pay this back later." His financial advisers tell him that the IRS guidance about the tax deferral is confusing.

"We will continue to withhold it, as there's too much uncertainty right now," says Kipness, CEO of Wizard Race and Sports, a company that gives sports gamblers analyses of races and games.

Payroll processor ADP is ready to adjust its computer systems to stop withholding the tax if companies request it, says Pete Isberg, the company's vice president for government affairs. But so far, there's little interest, Isberg says.

"A lot of businesses are looking at this and saying, 'I don't think so,'" Isberg says.

AP FACT CHECK: Trump on McCain; Biden's stretch on virus

By CALVIN WOODWARD and HOPE YEN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump said he never called John McCain a loser — he did — and denigrated the record of the late Republican senator on veterans affairs despite routinely appropriating one of McCain's crowning achievements on that front as his own.

)Trump distorted events in Kenosha, Wisconsin, over the past week and his own hand in them before a furor over his reported comments on fallen soldiers diverted his rhetoric.

Democratic rival Joe Biden claimed to have been the first person to have called for the use of emergency production powers in the pandemic, when he was not.

A review:

VETERANS and McCain

TRUMP: "I was never a big fan of John McCain, disagreed with him on many things including ridiculous endless wars and the lack of success he had in dealing with the VA and our great Vets." — part of a series of tweets Thursday.

THE FACTS: He's ignoring McCain's singular successes on behalf of fellow veterans.

McCain was a leading force in the Senate behind the law that gave veterans an option to go outside the Department of Veterans Affairs' health care system and get private care at public expense under certain conditions. President Barack Obama signed the VA Choice legislation into law. Ignoring that reality, Trump persistently claims that he brought Choice into law when no one else could.

Trump signed a law in 2018 that expanded the options for using the Choice program established by Obama, McCain and other lawmakers.

The 2018 law is named after three lawmakers who were veterans of war. All of them now are dead. They are Rep. Samuel R. Johnson, R-Texas, and Democratic Sen. Daniel K. Akaka, D-Hawaii, and McCain, R-Ariz.

TRUMP: "Also, I never called John a loser and swear on whatever, or whoever, I was asked to swear on, that I never called our great fallen soldiers anything other than HEROES." — tweet Thursday.

THE FACTS: He called McCain a loser.

In addition, The Associated Press has confirmed many of the comments Trump was reported by The Atlantic to have made disparaging fallen or captured U.S. service members, such as his description of the American dead in a military graveyard as "losers."

As for McCain, Trump told a conservative forum in Iowa in 2015 that his view of McCain changed when

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McCain lost the 2008 presidential election to Obama. "He lost, so I never liked him as much after that, 'cause I don't like losers," he said. Trump went on to dismiss McCain's war service: "He's not a war hero. He's a war hero because he was captured. I like people that weren't captured."

Trump in 2015 also tweeted a news article on Twitter calling McCain a "loser."

PANDEMIC

BIDEN: "When it got up to March, I kept saying, 'Look, you've got to invoke,' and you remember, I think I was the first — I may be mistaken — person calling for the Defense Production Act." — comment after a news conference Wednesday.

THE FACTS: He is correct about being mistaken.

Biden issued a statement March 18 saying he was issuing a call for Trump to invoke the Defense Production Act to give priority to "and immediately increase domestic production of any critical medical equipment required to respond to this crisis — such as the production of ventilators and associated training to operate." His call came the same day Trump signed an order to use his authority under the act.

Five days earlier a group of Democrats in Congress wrote to Trump asking him to use powers under the act, a step that Trump officials and others had been discussing publicly for several weeks.

PROTESTS and VIOLENCE

TRUMP, on Wisconsin officials and the National Guard: "Once they responded and once we took, you know, control of it, things went really well." — remarks in Kenosha on Tuesday.

TRUMP: "One of the reasons I'm making the trip today and going to Wisconsin is we've had such a big success in shutting down what would be, right now, a city — that would've been Kenosha — a city that would've been burnt to the ground by now. ... And it all stopped immediately upon the National Guard's arrival." — remarks Tuesday before visiting Wisconsin.

THE FACTS: Not true. He had nothing to do with the deployment of the National Guard in Wisconsin. The federal government never "took control of it."

Gov. Tony Evers, D-Wis., activated the state's National Guard the day after a Kenosha police officer shot Jacob Blake, sparking protests and violence over police actions and racism. When National Guard forces from three other states came in to help, it was because the governor had asked for that help from fellow governors, not the White House.

Evers said National Guard troops from Arizona, Michigan and Alabama were operating under the control of those states and Wisconsin, "not in a federal status." National Guards answer to governors and sometimes state legislatures, not Washington.

The federal government sent deputy marshals from the U.S. Marshals Service and agents from the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, about 200 in all. The restoration of order was primarily in the hands of National Guard units and local law enforcement.

As of Monday, 1,000 National Guard troops from Wisconsin were in Kenosha along with 500 National Guard troops from the other three states, said Wisconsin National Guard Maj. Gen. Paul Knapp.

TRUMP, asked if would condemn the actions of Kyle Rittenhouse, the 17-year-old charged in the shooting deaths of two men during Kenosha protests: "You saw the same tape as I saw. And he was trying to get away from them, I guess; it looks like. And he fell, and then they very violently attacked him. And it was something that we're looking at right now and it's under investigation. But I guess he was in very big trouble. He would have been — I — he probably would have been killed." — news conference Monday.

THE FACTS: His implication that Rittenhouse only shot the men after he tripped and they attacked him is wrong. The first fatal shooting happened before Rittenhouse ran away and fell.

Trump did not say whom he meant by "they" — the two men he shot or others in pursuit of him. But he spoke in defense of someone who opposed racial justice protesters, who authorities say was illegally carrying a semi-automatic rifle and who prosecutors accuse of committing intentional homicide.

According to the criminal complaint released by prosecutors, victim Joseph Rosenbaum was shot and

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killed first, after following Rittenhouse into a parking lot, where Rosenbaum threw a plastic bag at the gunman and tried to take the weapon from him.

The medical examiner found that Rosenbaum was shot in the groin and back — which fractured his pelvis and perforated his right lung and liver — and his left hand. He also suffered a superficial wound to his left thigh and a graze wound to his forehead.

Rittenhouse then ran down the street and was chased by several people trying to stop him and shouting that he just shot someone, according to the criminal complaint and cellphone video footage.

He tripped and fell. Anthony Huber, who was carrying a skateboard, was shot in the chest after apparently trying to wrest the gun from Rittenhouse, the complaint said. A third man was shot and injured.

Rittenhouse's lawyer said he acted to defend himself.

VOTING FRAUD

ATTORNEY GENERAL WILLIAM BARR on fraud in the vote-by-mail process: "Elections that have been held with mail have found substantial fraud and coercion." — CNN on Wednesday.

THE FACTS: Actually, multiple studies have debunked the notion of pervasive voter fraud in general and in the vote-by-mail process.

The five states that relied on mail-in ballots even before the coronavirus pandemic — Colorado, Hawaii, Oregon, Washington and Utah — have said they have necessary safeguards in place to ensure against fraud and to prevent hostile foreign actors from co-opting the vote. More states intend to rely more heavily on mail-in voting this fall because of the pandemic.

The attorney general cited a report from more than a decade ago from a commission led by former President Jimmy Carter and former Secretary of State James Baker that said vote-by-mail was vulnerable to fraud. But the commission pointed out in a statement in May that it had found little evidence of fraud in states such as Oregon that had sufficient safeguards.

Barr also said he was basing on "logic" his concern that a hostile foreign actor could produce bogus ballots for the election. But senior U.S. officials said on a conference call with reporters last month that they had no intelligence to suggest that was happening.

JOBS

BIDEN: "Donald Trump may be the only president in modern history to leave office with fewer jobs than when he took office." — Wilmington, Delaware, speech Friday.

THE FACTS: Maybe yes, maybe no.

Not since Depression-era Herbert Hoover has a president left office with a record of fewer jobs than when he began.

This could happen to Trump because of the pandemic, but he could also end up with a small gain.

In August there were 4.7 million fewer jobs than there were when Trump was inaugurated in January 2017. But if he leaves office in five months, and if the economy adds more than 1 million jobs each month, as happened in July and August, he could end up in the black. There are signs, though, that the gains are slowing as businesses have recalled many of the workers who were temporarily laid off from restaurants, bars, retailers and other businesses. So Biden's prediction could come true.

Associated Press writers Will Weissert, Eric Tucker, Josh Boak and Christopher Rugaber contributed to this report.

EDITOR'S NOTE — A look at the veracity of claims by political figures.

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Environment activists blockade UK newspaper printing plants

LONDON (AP) — Police arrested more than 70 environmental activists who blockaded two British printing plants, disrupting the distribution of several national newspapers on Saturday.

The group Extinction Rebellion said it targeted printworks at Broxbourne, north of London, and Knowsley in northwest England, that are owned by Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

Dozens of protesters locked themselves to trucks and bamboo scaffolding to block the road outside the plants. The facilities print Murdoch-owned papers The Sun and The Times, as well as the Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail and the Financial Times.

The group said it was disrupting the newspapers "to expose the failure of these corporations to accurately report on the climate and ecological emergency, and their consistent manipulation of the truth to suit their own personal and political agendas."

Police said they had arrested 42 people by Saturday morning at the Broxbourne plant. Another 30 people were arrested in Knowsley. Extinction Rebellion said all remaining protesters ended their demonstration at 11 a.m.

Newsprinters, which operates the printing plants, said the protest was an "attack on all of the free press."

Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Twitter that "a free press is vital in holding the government and other powerful institutions to account" and that it "is completely unacceptable to seek to limit the public's access to news in this way."

Journalism groups also criticized the disruption. Ian Murray, executive director of the Society of Editors, said peaceful protest was a right, but "it is not acceptable for those who wish only their voices to be heard to attempt to silence others."

Extinction Rebellion has blocked roads and bridges in several British cities since Monday as part of two weeks of civil disobedience to press for stronger action against climate change. Hundreds of people have been arrested.

Last year, more than 1,700 arrests were made during Extinction Rebellion's 10-day "Autumn Uprising," which disrupted traffic and business activity in several parts of the U.K.

'World's loneliest elephant' okayed to quit zoo for new life

By KATHY GANNON Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — An elephant who has become a cause celebre for animal rights activists around the world will be allowed to leave his Pakistani zoo and transferred to better conditions, the animal welfare group helping with the case said Saturday.

Dubbed the 'world's loneliest elephant' by his supporters, Kaavan has languished at a zoo in the Pakistani capital of Islamabad for more than 35 years.

Martin Bauer, a spokesman for Four Paws, said the elephant has been finally given medical approval to travel, most likely to Cambodia, where he will find companionship and better conditions.

The overweight elephant Kaavan underwent a full medical examination at the zoo on Friday, said Bauer.

In May, Pakistan's High Court ordered the Marghazar Zoo closed because of its abysmal conditions blamed on systemic negligence.

Rescuing Kaavan from the zoo's dire conditions attracted the attention of animal activists around the world, and celebrities including U.S. singer Cher, who lobbied for his relocation.

"Unfortunately, the rescue comes too late for two lions that died during an attempted transfer at the end of July after local animal handlers set a fire in their enclosure to force them into their transport crates," Bauer said in a statement released on Saturday.

He said Four Paws was invited by the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board to safely transfer the remaining animals in the zoo. Kaavan has until now been forced to live a solitary life in a small enclosure.

Friday's medical examination showed the elephant was overweight, even as he showed signs of malnutrition. His nails were cracked and overgrown apparently from years of living in an improper enclosure with flooring that damaged his feet.

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"Following the checks, which confirmed Kaavan is strong enough, steps will now be taken to finalize his relocation to an animal sanctuary potentially in Cambodia," Bauer said.

His recovery will be a long one, said Bauer, adding that Kaavan's wounds are more than just physical. He also suffers behavioral issues.

Kaavan, who lost his partner in 2012, has battled loneliness as well as poor living conditions. Both have taken their toll, said Bauer in an interview.

"He also developed stereotypical behavior, which means he shakes his head back and forth for hours. This is mainly because he is simply bored," said Bauer.

The Four Paws team that carried out Kaavan's physical included wildlife veterinarians and experts.

It wasn't immediately known when Kaavan would be able to travel. Rights activists have lobbied for his relocation since 2016.

Ex-FBI agent: Attacks from Trump 'outrageous' and 'cruel'

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Peter Strzok spent his FBI career hunting Russian and Chinese spies, but after news broke of derogatory text messages he had sent about President Donald Trump, he came to feel like he was the one being hunted.

There were menacing phone calls and messages from strangers, and anxious peeks out window shades before his family would leave the house. FBI security experts advised him of best practices — walk around your car before entering, watch for unfamiliar vehicles in your neighborhood — more commonly associated with mob targets looking to elude detection.

"Being subjected to outrageous attacks up to and including by the president himself, which are full of lies and mischaracterizations and just crude and cruel, is horrible," Strzok told The Associated Press in an interview. "There's no way around it."

A new book by Strzok traces his arc from veteran counterintelligence agent to the man who came to embody Trump's public scorn of FBI and his characterization of its Russia investigation as a "witch hunt." The texts cost Strzok his job and drew vitriol from Trump. But even among Trump critics, Strzok isn't a hero. His anti-Trump texts on a government phone to an FBI lawyer gave Trump and his supporters a major opening to undercut the bureau's credibility right as it was conducting one of the most consequential investigations in its history.

Trump's attacks have continued even as two inspector general reports found no evidence Strzok's work in the investigations were tainted by political bias and multiple probes have affirmed the Russia probe's validity.

Strzok expresses measured regret for the texts in "Compromised: Counterintelligence and the Threat of Donald J. Trump," due out Tuesday.

"I deeply regret casually commenting about the things I observed in the headlines and behind the scenes, and I regret how effectively my words were weaponized to harm the Bureau and buttress absurd conspiracy theories about our vital work," Strzok writes.

Before becoming a virtual household name, Strzok spent two decades at the FBI toiling in relative anonymity on sensational spy cases. He helped uncover Russian sleeper agents inside the U.S., worked the Edward Snowden case and led the investigation into whether Hillary Clinton mishandled classified information. (She did, he writes, but not in a way meriting prosecution).

After the Clinton case concluded in July 2016, Strzok opened an investigation into whether the campaign of her Republican opponent was coordinating with Russia, conceiving the "Crossfire Hurricane" codename he says proved prescient.

In the interview, Strzok said he wanted his book to lend insight into the Clinton probe, Russian election interference and, "first and foremost, the counterintelligence threat that I see in Donald Trump."

"To do that," he added, "I wanted to show the reader what happened but also why they should believe me."

As the investigation progressed, Strzok came to regard the Trump administration's actions regarding Russia as "highly suspicious" and the president as compromised by Russia, including because of financial

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dealings in Moscow about which Strzok says Trump repeatedly lied.

Those concerns deepened after Trump fired James Comey as FBI director and bragged to a Russian diplomat that "great pressure" was removed. The FBI began investigating whether Trump himself was under Russia's sway, finding "too much smoke" to not look for fire, Strzok writes.

"And the closer we got to the Oval Office, the stronger the smell seemed to become," he said.

Special counsel Robert Mueller's investigation revealed significant contacts between the Trump campaign and Russia but found insufficient evidence of a criminal conspiracy.

Strzok documents pivotal moments during the investigation, recounting for instance how then-national security adviser Michael Flynn "baldly lied" to him and another agent about his Russian contacts even though Flynn had not shown customary signs of deceit agents are trained to look for.

Though Trump supporters contend the interview was designed to get Flynn to lie, Strzok says the FBI actually gave him multiple prompts to refresh his memory. While Attorney General William Barr has said the interview was done without a legitimate purpose, Strzok says it was necessary to better understand the Trump orbit's ties to Russia and Flynn's own "hidden negotiation with a foreign power that had just attacked our elections."

Flynn later pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI. Barr's request to dismiss the case is pending.

In another episode, he says then-Deputy Attorney General Rod Rosenstein asked him to remain behind after a meeting and pressed him skeptically about a perjury investigation into Attorney General Jeff Sessions for statements made at his confirmation hearing. Sessions was never charged. Rosenstein declined to comment.

Strzok's stint on Mueller's team was short-lived, upended in the summer of 2017 by the inspector general's discovery of anti-Trump text messages he'd exchanged during the campaign with an FBI lawyer with whom he had had an extramarital relationship.

He was summoned to meet with Mueller, who in a "soft voice" told Strzok he was being removed.

Transferred into the more bureaucratic Human Resources Division, Strzok says Deputy Director David Bowdich reassured him the situation could be worse, including if Trump had gotten hold of the texts.

That's exactly what happened two months later when news broke about the texts and the Justice Department disclosed them to reporters. By his own count, Strzok says, Trump has attacked him since then more than 100 times in tweets.

The text message leak is part of a lawsuit from Strzok, who also conveys discontent at how his career ended.

After Trump accused Strzok of treason, Strzok appealed to the FBI for a statement condemning the remarks, but got none. The FBI scrambled to remove his access to categories of classified information so Director Chris Wray could inform lawmakers the next day. Senior leadership overturned a lower-level decision in firing him.

Today, Strzok is teaching at Georgetown University and watching from the outside for election interference from Russia, which he warns had information it did not use in 2016.

"I can't talk in a lot of detail about that," he added, "but I do think they returned those arrows to their quiver and made them better for this year."

Gas pipeline blast kills 16 praying at Bangladesh mosque

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP) — An underground gas pipeline near a mosque exploded during evening prayers outside Bangladesh's capital, leaving 16 Muslim worshipers dead and dozens injured with critical burns, officials said Saturday.

The blast occurred Friday night as people were finishing their prayers at Baitus Salat Jame Mosque at Narayanganj, local police chief Zayedul Alam said.

By Saturday afternoon, 16 people, including a 7-year-old boy, had succumbed to their injuries. Doctors at a burn unit of a state-run hospital were treating at least 37 people with burns on up to 90% of their bodies, said Samanta Lal Sen, a coordinator of the unit.

TV stations reported that because of the impact of the blast, at least six air conditioners also exploded

inside the mosque.

Firefighters were investigating the cause of the explosion.

Abdullah Al Arefin, assistant director of the Fire Service and Civil Defense, said that officials suspected that gas had accumulated inside the mosque from a leak in the underground pipeline, and that it had gone unnoticed.

"The gas could not go out as the windows of the mosque were shut because of the air conditioners," he said.

Faulty installation of gas lines are often reported by Bangladeshi media, while unplanned road-digging work often leads to disasters in the country, which is seeking rapid industrial expansion and economic development.

India coronavirus caseload crosses 4M, stretching resources

By SHEIKH SAALIQ and ANIRUDDHA GHOSAL Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — India's coronavirus caseload surpassed 4 million on Saturday, deepening misery in the country's vast hinterlands, where surges have crippled the underfunded health care system.

Initially, the virus ravaged India's sprawling and densely populated cities. It has since stretched to almost every state, spreading through villages and small towns.

With a population of nearly 1.4 billion, India's massive caseload isn't surprising experts. The country's delayed response to the virus forced the government to implement a strict lockdown in late March. For more than two months, the economy remained shuttered, buying time for health workers to prepare for the worst.

But with the cost of the restrictions also rising, authorities saw no choice but to reopen businesses and everyday activities.

Most of India's cases are in western Maharashtra state and the four southern states of Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. But new surges are popping up elsewhere.

The 86,432 cases added in the past 24 hours pushed India's total to 4,023,179. Brazil has confirmed 4,091,801 infections, while the U.S. has had 6,200,186 cases, according to Johns Hopkins University.

India's Health Ministry on Saturday also reported 1,089 deaths for a total of 69,561.

Even as testing in India has increased to over a million a day, a growing reliance on screening for antigens or viral proteins is creating more problems. These tests are cheaper and yield faster results but aren't as accurate. The danger is that the tests may falsely clear many who are infected with the virus.

In Uttar Pradesh, India's most populous state with a limited health care system, the situation is already grim. With a total 253,175 cases and 3,762 deaths, the heartland state is staring at an inevitable surge and with the shortage of hospital beds and other health infrastructure.

Sujata Prakash, a nurse in the state capital, Lucknow, recently tested positive for the coronavirus. But the hospital ward where she worked diligently refused her admission because there was no empty bed. She waited for over 24 hours outside the surgical ward, sitting on patients' chairs, before she was allotted one.

"The government can shower flower petals on the hospitals in the name of corona warriors, but can't the administration provide a bed when the same warrior needs one?" said Prakash's husband, Vivek Kumar.

Others haven't been so lucky.

When journalist Amrit Mohan Dubey fell sick this past week, his friends called the local administration for an ambulance. It arrived two hours late and by the time Dubey was taken to the hospital, he died.

"Had the ambulance reached in time, we could have saved Amrit," said Zafar Irshad, a colleague of the journalist.

In rural Maharashtra, the worst-affected state with 863,062 cases and 25,964 deaths, doctors said measures like wearing masks and washing hands had now largely been abandoned.

"There is a behavioral fatigue now setting in," said Dr. S.P. Kalantri, the director of a hospital in the village of Sevagram.

He said that the past few weeks had driven home the point that the virus had moved from India's cities

to its villages.

"The worst is yet to come," said Kalantri. "There is no light at the end of the tunnel."

Associated Press writer Biswajeet Banerjee in Lucknow, India, contributed to this report.

Spanish doctors hope beach trips can help ICU virus patients

By EMILIO MORENATTI and HERNAN MUÑOZ Associated Press

BARCELONA, Spain (AP) — After nearly two months of being sedated and connected to IV lines in a hospital's intensive care unit, Francisco Espana took a moment to fill his ailing lungs with fresh air at a Barcelona beachfront.

Lying on a hospital bed at the beach promenade and surrounded by a doctor and three nurses who constantly monitored his vital signs, Espana briefly closed his eyes and absorbed as much sunshine as possible.

"It's one of the best days I remember," he said.

A medical team at the Hospital del Mar — the Hospital of the Seas — is seeing if short trips to the beach just across the street can help COVID-19 patients after long and sometimes traumatic ICU stays.

Dr. Judith Marín says it is part of a program to "humanize" ICUs that the group had been experimenting with for two years before the coronavirus hit Spain.

The strict isolation protocols that have had to be adopted since mid-March undid months of efforts to integrate ICU patients with professionals in the rest of the hospital, the doctor said.

In April, the hospital was operating several additional ICU wards and expanded its normal capacity of 18 patients to 67.

"It was a big blow, coping with scarce resources and with a big emotional toll among the medical workers. We had to roll back all this great work that we had been doing in the field of therapeutic care," Marín said. "We were suddenly reverting to the old habits of keeping relatives away from their loved ones. And it's really hard to convey bad news over a phone call."

Since restarting the program in early June, doctors said that even 10 minutes at the beach seems to improve a patient's well-being. The team wants to take this anecdotal evidence further, and see whether such outdoor trips can help in the mid- and long-term recovery of COVID-19 patients.

Spain managed to bring down its infection curve with a strict three-month lockdown that ended June 21. But the country now leads Europe's new wave of infections, with a surge that has brought to the total number of cases to nearly half a million. At least 29,400 people have died in Spain.

"It's important to keep in mind the emotional well-being of patients and to try to work on it in the early stages of the recovery," added Marín.

For Espana, who works in a local market and has a passion for music, his memories of 52 days in intensive care are "cloudy."

"They say I've overcome something really big. I am starting to realize that I should be very happy," the man known to his friends as "Paco" said as joggers and passers-by were attracted by the sight of a hospital bed under the boulevard's palm trees beside the Mediterranean.

"The Paco we said goodbye to was in a very bad state. He couldn't talk and he could hardly breathe, he was choking," said Xavi Matute, a longtime friend who was with Espana when an ambulance brought him to the hospital.

Matute was back on Friday to greet his friend.

The warm rendezvous was followed by a quick update on everything Espana had missed, including the latest soccer developments: Real Madrid's win of the Spanish League and Barcelona's debacle, first with a shameful 8-2 loss that disqualified the team in the Champions League and then an unraveling drama over the future of its greatest star, Leo Messi.

For the 60-year-old Espana, the trip to the beach was a good sign.

"Let's see if they now let me get a beer at the hospital cafeteria," he joked before returning to the ICU.

Associated Press writer Aritz Parra in Madrid contributed.

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

Trump out to build 'permission structure' to win back voters

By JONATHAN LEMIRE Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Showcasing Black Americans at the Republican National Convention to allay white voters' fears that President Donald Trump is a racist. Sharing touching stories about the president's concern for the military. Painting Democrat Joe Biden as an unacceptable alternative who threatens the American way of life.

It's all part of the Trump campaign's effort to construct a "permission structure" — a clunky catchphrase for creating an emotional and psychological gateway to help disenfranchised voters feel comfortable voting for the president again despite their reservations about him personally.

Both the GOP convention and the president's recent "law and order" mantra have been aimed squarely at former Trump supporters who've grown unhappy with his inflammatory rhetoric and handling of the coronavirus pandemic. The goal is to humanize Trump and demonize Biden so that these voters, particularly women and suburbanites, feel that they can vote for Trump again anyway.

"Their new theme is that it's OK to support Trump even if you don't care for him," said Alex Conant, a Republican strategist who advised Florida Sen. Marco Rubio's presidential bid four years ago. "People don't like him because they think he is racist, sexist or doesn't care about average people. But their message now is 'Don't look at what he said, look at what he does.'"

The phrase "permission structure" got a political cameo in 2013 when President Barack Obama advanced his theory that many congressional Republicans agreed with his proposals but withheld their support because of political considerations and the fear they would face challenges in GOP primaries.

"We're going to try to do everything we can to create a permission structure for them to be able to do what's going to be best for the country," Obama said then. "But it's going to take some time."

Variations of the same phrase had been used in political circles and the marketing world long before then.

In advertising, it's sometimes known as "permission to believe," meaning that Madison Avenue needed to pitch a product — be it laundry detergent or high-end vodka — in a way that would help consumers justify spending the money on themselves.

Donny Deutsch, an advertising executive and former cable host, said he has observed, in his own surveys, that some voters keep their support of Trump secret because it benefits their bottom lines. And he believes the president's recent messaging on the unrest has been effective.

"We can all left-brain it as much we want: It's his America, it's his violence, how can he run as an outsider when he's president?" said Deutsch, a vocal Trump critic. "But it's a very primal thing. I think it works."

Within months of Trump taking office, aides noticed he was beginning to lose support among women, particularly those in the suburbs, who were turned off by some of his callous behavior and bellicose tweets. The suburbs, and female voters, largely broke for Democrats during the 2018 midterm elections in which the GOP suffered massive losses in House races.

The loss of support only accelerated this spring after the pandemic arrived. Many suburban voters and some seniors were unhappy with Trump's perceived lack of empathy for those affected by COVID-19 and those marching for racial justice after the death of George Floyd and other Black Americans.

Much of the four-day Republican convention was meant to repair the damage and soften Trump's rough edges. There were testimonials from female staffers vouching for Trump's caring side, as well as from minority staffers, elected officials and friends.

The campaign would like to improve Trump's standing with Black men, despite his reflexive support for law enforcement involved in the killing of Black men, as well as his at times racist rhetoric and the disproportionate loss of life to COVID-19 in communities of color.

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But the campaign's message on race was largely aimed at a different audience.

"It was beamed at the suburbs, particularly college-educated suburban women: They don't want to vote for somebody viewed as a racist," said Larry Sabato, director of the University of Virginia's Center for Politics.

A similar repair effort was launched this week after reports emerged that Trump had repeatedly disparaged American servicemembers who were killed or captured. The president denied the allegations and GOP allies rushed to share stories of the president's caring attitude toward the military.

House GOP leader Kevin McCarthy recounted how the president earlier this year cut short a rally in New Hampshire so he could meet families receiving fallen servicemen at Dover, Delaware.

"I watched the president walk out there, stand in the rain, accepting the bodies coming down with the family," McCarthy told The Associated Press in an interview Friday.

Creating a permission structure for a voter to come home to Trump can be, at times, just as much about making the other candidate appear unacceptable as getting past reservations about the president.

Sabato said the campaign is "trying to make Trump an acceptable alternative again as they drive up fears of Biden."

Trump has made a ferocious push to tear down Biden by asserting he is in thrall to left-wing radical forces that the Republican nominee has blamed for violence in cities like Portland, Oregon, and Kenosha, Wisconsin.

The Biden campaign has notched some high-profile national security endorsements and believes it is currently winning 9% of Trump's 2016 voters. And Democrats have celebrated the resources the president has needed to expend to win back Republicans.

"As Joe Biden said when he accepted the Democratic nomination for president," said Biden campaign spokesman Andrew Bates, "he would strive to represent all Americans, regardless of whether they are members of his base or not — the polar opposite of Trump's toxic approach."

The Trump campaign says it has growing support from Black and Latino communities and points to the president's sky-high approval rating within the GOP.

"Joe Biden — with no support and a dwindling base — is attempting to appeal to Republican voters, but his efforts are futile as President Trump is experiencing strong, unified support from the Republican Party," said campaign spokeswoman Samantha Zager.

Associated Press writer Lisa Mascaro in Washington contributed to this report.

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Dueling versions of reality define 1st week of fall campaign

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — On the campaign trail with President Donald Trump, the pandemic is largely over, the economy is roaring back, and murderous mobs are infiltrating America's suburbs.

With Democrat Joe Biden, the pandemic is raging, the economy isn't lifting the working class, and systemic racism threatens Black lives across America.

The first week of the fall sprint to Election Day crystallized dizzyingly different versions of reality as the Republican incumbent and his Democratic challenger trekked from Washington and Delaware to Wisconsin and Pennsylvania and back, each man on an urgent mission to sell his particular message to anxious voters.

All the conflicting messages carry at least a sliver of truth, some much more than others, as the candidates fight to navigate one of the most turbulent election seasons in modern history. And beyond legitimate crises threatening public health, the economy and public safety, a new divide erupted Friday over the military.

Trump aggressively denied allegations reported late Thursday that in 2018, he described U.S. service members killed in World War I and buried at an American military cemetery in France as "losers" and "suckers." The report, sourced anonymously by The Atlantic and largely confirmed by The Associated Press, comes as Trump tries to win support from military members and their families by highlighting a

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commitment to veterans' health care and military spending.

"I've done more for the military than almost anyone else," Trump said Friday from the Oval Office, after describing the allegations on social media as "a disgraceful attempt to influence the 2020 Election."

At roughly the same time at a podium in Delaware, Biden leaned into the damaging reports about his opponent.

"Let me be clear: My son Beau, who volunteered to go to Iraq, was not a sucker," Biden declared, pounding the podium. "The men and women who served with him are not suckers, and the service men and women he served with, who did not come home, are not losers."

The back-and-forth was a final flash point in a week that demonstrated much broader challenges for the candidates and voters alike in 2020.

Trump and his allies consistently downplayed the threat posed by the coronavirus. Yet there are still several hundred Americans dying from the disease each day. And the government's top infectious disease expert, Anthony Fauci, warned that this Labor Day weekend could fuel a further surge in cases if people don't take social distancing seriously.

The outbreak is blamed for about 187,000 deaths and almost 6.2 million confirmed infections in the U.S., by far the highest totals in the world. Cases of COVID-19, which spiked from about 20,000 per day to around 70,000 during the summertime surge in the South, are now down to about 40,000 every day.

Biden on Friday linked the pandemic and Trump's push to revive the economy: "You can't have an economic comeback when almost a thousand Americans die a day from COVID."

Earlier in the day, the government announced that the unemployment rate dropped sharply in August from 10.2% to 8.4%. That means roughly half of the 22 million jobs lost to the coronavirus outbreak have been recovered. Or, depending on your messenger, it means roughly half of the 22 million jobs lost during the pandemic remain lost.

Objectively, the nation's economic conditions are still dire, said Michael Strain, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute.

"We are now moving from historical disaster territory to really bad recession territory," he said.

Trump cannot afford to let Americans believe the economy is in "really bad recession territory," however, given that his economic leadership is a central theme in his reelection message. Needing to spin the data to their advantage, Trump and his allies seized on Friday's news as evidence that things were headed in the right direction.

"It's another great day for American jobs and American workers," Vice President Mike Pence said on CNBC. "This president's advanced policies ... have laid a foundation for this great American comeback. Joe Biden and the Democrats are advocating policies that would turn us back."

And while the impact of the Democrats' policies cannot be known, Biden drew on the data to paint an accurate, yet distinctly different portrait of the U.S. economy in line with the message he has delivered for much of the last year, even before the pandemic began to wreak havoc.

"We're still down 720,000 manufacturing jobs," Biden said. "In fact, Trump may well be the only president in modern history to leave office with fewer jobs than when he took office."

"Talk to a lot of real working people who are being left behind," he added. "Ask them, do you feel the economy is coming back? They don't feel it."

One key factor as the candidates deliver conflicting messages to voters: trustworthiness. And so far, voters say they are far more likely to believe Biden than Trump on most issues.

About 6 in 10 registered voters say values like "cares about people like you," "honest" and "strong leader" do not describe Trump well, according to a poll released by The Associated Press and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research in late July. By comparison, roughly the same majority say those characteristics describe Biden at least somewhat well.

And on race relations, another defining crisis of the fall campaign, strong majorities of voters consistently disapprove of Trump's leadership.

But sensing political opportunity as protest-related violence surged earlier in the week, Trump further

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pressed his divisive approach as he campaigned in Kenosha, Wisconsin, the latest epicenter of the nation's sweeping civil unrest.

Less than two weeks after a white police officer shot Jacob Blake, a Black man, in the back seven times, Trump reaffirmed his support for the police and businesses affected by the sometimes violent protests that followed.

Trump did not meet with Blake's family while in Wisconsin, as Biden did Thursday when he visited the area for the first time. Instead, the president focused on the threat posed by protesters, telling reporters he does not believe systemic racism is a problem in America's law enforcement agencies.

Trump described protest-related violence as "domestic terror" and decried "violent mobs" threatening to rape and murder local residents.

Two days later, Biden condemned the violent protests during his own visit to Kenosha, but first he met privately with Blake's family and later criticized what he described as centuries of systemic racism.

Biden addressed head-on the Democratic frustration with Trump's final-weeks message.

"He doesn't want to talk about anything, anything at all about the job he hasn't done," Biden said Friday of Trump, suggesting the president is far more eager to exaggerate the threat posed by those protesting police brutality.

"And so it's a conundrum," Biden said. "And in a sense, every time I speak about it I feel like I'm playing in his game."

Biden slams Trump over alleged comments mocking US war dead

By ZEKE MILLER and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden has declared President Donald Trump "unfit" for the presidency, delivering an impassioned reaction to a report that Trump — who never served in uniform — allegedly mocked American war dead.

The president and his allies have dismissed the report in *The Atlantic* as false.

The allegations, sourced anonymously, describe multiple offensive comments by the president toward fallen and captured U.S. service members, including calling World War I dead at an American military cemetery in France "losers" and "suckers" in 2018.

The reported comments, many of which were confirmed independently by *The Associated Press*, are shining a fresh light on Trump's previous public disparagement of American troops and military families. That opens a new political vulnerability for the president less than two months from Election Day.

Voice cracking, Biden told reporters on Friday that "you know in your gut" Trump's comments, if true, are "deplorable."

"I've just never been as disappointed, in my whole career, with a leader that I've worked with, president or otherwise," Biden added. "If the article is true — and it appears to be, based on other things he's said — it is absolutely damning. It is a disgrace."

He added that "the president should humbly apologize to every Gold Star mother and father, to every Blue Star family that he's denigrated. ... Who the heck does he think he is?"

Trump, in the Oval Office, said no apology was necessary, because it was a "fake story."

Trump was alleged to have made the comments in November 2018, as he was set to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery during a trip to France. The White House said the visit was scrubbed because foggy weather made the helicopter trip from Paris too risky and a 90-minute drive was deemed infeasible.

Speaking Friday in the Oval Office, Trump denied ever uttering such comments: "It was a terrible thing that somebody could say the kind of things — and especially to me 'cause I've done more for the military than almost anyone anybody else."

Later, in a press briefing, Trump suggested the source of the story was his former chief of staff, retired Marine Gen. John Kelly. "It could have been a guy like John Kelly," Trump told reporters, saying his former top aide "was unable to handle the pressure of this job."

Biden's critique was personal. The former vice president often speaks about his pride for his late son

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Beau's service in the Delaware Army National Guard. As he spoke, Biden grew angry, raising his voice to rebut Trump's alleged comments that Marines who died in battle were "suckers" for getting killed.

"When my son was an assistant U.S. attorney and he volunteered to go to Kosovo when the war was going on, as a civilian, he wasn't a sucker," Biden declared.

"When my son volunteered to join the United States military as the attorney general, he went to Iraq for a year, won the Bronze Star and other commendations, he wasn't a sucker!"

Beau Biden died of cancer in 2015.

Returning to Washington from a Thursday visit to Pennsylvania, Trump told reporters that the Atlantic report was "a disgraceful situation" by a "terrible magazine."

"I would be willing to swear on anything that I never said that about our fallen heroes," Trump told the reporters, gathered on the tarmac in the dark. "There is nobody that respects them more. No animal — nobody — what animal would say such a thing?"

Biden has framed the election from the start as a referendum on Trump's character. His allies quickly seized on the reported comments in hopes they could drive a wedge between military families and veterans and Trump. They also believe the issue could help win over disaffected Republican voters who are fed up with Trump's constant controversies.

In particular, Biden's team believes his well-documented experience, both personally and politically, with military issues could help him make inroads with a population that broadly supported Trump in the 2016 election and could help sway the election this year in a number of close swing states. Biden himself has not served in the military.

Military families were broadly supportive of Trump in the 2016 election, and a Pew Research Center survey of veterans conducted in June 2019 found overall that veterans were more supportive of Trump than the general public, and that roughly 60% of the veterans polled identified as Republicans.

On a call with reporters hosted by the Biden campaign Friday, Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth lambasted Trump for "belittling the sacrifices of those who have shown more bravery than he's capable of."

Duckworth, a retired Army National Guard lieutenant colonel who lost both of her legs in the Iraq War, has been a prominent critic of Trump's handling of military issues. Knocking Trump for allegedly inventing an injury to avoid serving in the Vietnam War, Duckworth said she'd "take my wheelchair and my titanium legs over Donald Trump's supposed bone spurs any day."

Khizr Khan, the Gold Star father who drew national attention after criticizing Trump during the 2016 Democratic National Convention, joined Duckworth on the call and said Trump's "life is a testament to selfishness."

"Words we say are windows into our souls. So when Donald Trump calls anyone who places their lives in service of others a loser, we understand Trump's soul," he said. Khan's son, Humayun, was killed in action in Iraq in 2004.

In 2016, Trump responded to the criticism from Khan by claiming he'd made sacrifices of his own and by making an Islamophobic attack on Khan's wife, Ghazala Khan, who was wearing a headscarf at the Democratic convention, saying: "She had nothing to say. She probably — maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say. You tell me."

Trump also denied calling the late Arizona Sen. John McCain, a decorated Navy officer who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam, a "loser" after his August 2018 death.

Trump acknowledged Thursday he was "never a fan" of McCain and disagreed with him, but said he still respected him and approved everything to do with his "first-class triple-A funeral" without hesitation because "I felt he deserved it."

In 2015, shortly after launching his presidential candidacy, Trump publicly blasted McCain, saying, "He's not a war hero." He added, "I like people who weren't captured." At the time, Trump also shared a news article on Twitter calling McCain a "loser."

Trump only amplified his criticism of McCain as the Arizona lawmaker grew critical of his acerbic style of politics, culminating in a late-night "no" vote scuttling Trump's plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

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That vote shattered what few partisan loyalties bound the two men, and Trump has continued to attack McCain for that vote, even posthumously.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told "Fox & Friends" on Friday that he was with the president for a good part of the trip to France. "I never heard him use the words that are described in that article," Pompeo said.

Asked Friday about the possibility of seeing Trump when they will both be in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, for the anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks next week, Biden said: "I didn't know he was going until after I announced on my own. Of course."

Asked if he'd be willing to share a stage with Trump, he said: "Yes. He's still the president of the United States of America."

AP writers James LaPorta and Jill Colvin contributed.

Trump targets 'white privilege' training as 'anti-American'

By ZEKE MILLER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump has directed the Office of Management and Budget to crack down on federal agencies' anti-racism training sessions, calling them "divisive, anti-American propaganda."

OMB director Russell Vought, in a letter Friday to executive branch agencies, directed them to identify spending related to any training on "critical race theory," "white privilege" or any other material that teaches or suggests that the United States or any race or ethnicity is "inherently racist or evil."

The memo comes as the nation has faced a reckoning this summer over racial injustice in policing and other spheres of American life. Trump has spent much of the summer defending the display of the Confederate battle flag and monuments of Civil War rebels from protesters seeking their removal, in what he has called a "culture war" ahead of the Nov. 3 election.

Meanwhile, he has rejected comments from Democratic nominee Joe Biden and others that there is "systemic racism" in policing and American culture that must be addressed.

Vought's memo cites "press reports" as contributing to Trump's decision, apparently referring to segments on Fox News and other outlets that have stoked conservative outrage about the federal training.

Vought's memo says additional federal guidance on training sessions is forthcoming, maintaining that "The President, and his Administration, are fully committed to the fair and equal treatment of all individuals in the United States."

"The President has a proven track record of standing for those whose voice has long been ignored and who have failed to benefit from all our country has to offer, and he intends to continue to support all Americans, regardless of race, religion, or creed," he added. "The divisive, false, and demeaning propaganda of the critical race theory movement is contrary to all we stand for as Americans and should have no place in the Federal government."

Portland killing suspect and victim had guns, documents say

By ANDREW SELSKY Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Both the suspect in the slaying of the right-wing protester in Portland, Oregon last weekend and the victim had handguns when their confrontation started after dueling street demonstrations, according to court documents made public Friday.

The documents said victim Aaron "Jay" Danielson, a supporter of a right-wing group called Patriot Prayer, was wearing a loaded Glock pistol in a holster and had bear spray and an expandable metal baton when someone said something like "wanna go," which is frequently a challenge to a fight.

Authorities have said they believe antifa supporter Michael Forest Reinoehl, who was fatally shot by federal agents late Thursday in Washington state, then opened fire and killed Danielson after he took part in a caravan of President Donald Trump supporters who drove pickup trucks through downtown Portland.

Some of the Trump supporters fired paint ball pellets at counter-demonstrators, while Black Lives Matter protesters tried to block the vehicles.

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Law enforcement officials released the information they had compiled — justifying an arrest warrant for Reinoehl on a second-degree murder charge in the Aug. 29 killing — one day after Reinoehl's killing shook a quiet suburb of Olympia, Washington.

Bystanders Thursday night ducked for cover behind automobiles from dozens of gunshots as four agents serving on a U.S. Marshals Service task force opened fire at Reinoehl.

Authorities said Reinoehl, 48, was armed with a semi-automatic handgun. A witness who was driving to the small apartment complex that Reinoehl was leaving said she saw him open fire from a car and that the officers returned fire.

Reinoehl then got out of the car and started running away but collapsed amid more gunfire, the witness, Deshirlynn Chatman, told The Olympian newspaper.

"He did open fire first," she said in a video posted by The Olympian. Lt. Ray Brady of the Thurston County Sheriff's Department said investigators have not concluded whether Reinoehl fired any shots.

Another video shot during the immediate aftermath showed Reinoehl lying motionless on the street with law enforcement officers in tactical gear and automatic rifles milling around. After several minutes, one man performed chest compressions on Reinoehl.

"Yeah, I don't think he's going to make it," Jashon Spencer narrated on the video that he posted on Facebook.

Brady said he did not believe the officers involved in the shooting had body cameras or dashboard cameras on their vehicles.

In a videotaped interview broadcast the evening of his death by Vice News, Reinoehl came close to admitting he shot Danielson, a supporter of a right-wing group called Patriot Prayer, on Aug. 29 after a caravan of President Donald Trump backers drove their pickup trucks through downtown Portland.

Reinoehl said he "had no choice" but to do what he did because he thought he and a friend were about to be stabbed.

"I hate to say it, but I see a civil war right around the corner," Reinoehl, with a partially covered tattoo of a raised fist on the right side of his neck, said in the interview.

Reinoehl told Vice News he was an anti-fascist but was not a member of antifa, an umbrella description for far-left-leaning militant groups that resist neo-Nazis and white supremacists at demonstrations and other events. Reinoehl previously described himself in a social media post as "100% ANTIFA."

Facebook said on Friday they removed pages related to Patriot Prayer, whose members have brawled with protesters from antifa and other demonstrators in the past.

"They were removed as part of our ongoing efforts to remove violent social militias from our platform," Facebook spokesperson Sally Aldous said.

It was not immediately clear where Reinoehl hid out in the five days that elapsed since shooting in Portland.

Brady said the "suspect" who was killed — he declined to name him as Reinoehl — left an apartment shortly around 7 p.m. Thursday, got into a vehicle, and was confronted by the task force members. They fired into the vehicle, Reinoehl got out and ran and was shot, Brady said.

Federal agents from the FBI and the U.S. Marshals Service had located Reinoehl on Thursday after a warrant was issued for his arrest and Reinoehl pulled a gun during the encounter, a senior Justice Department official in Washington said. The official wasn't authorized to discuss the matter publicly and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

A U.S. Marshals Service statement issued later said the fugitive task force had "attempted to peacefully arrest him."

"Initial reports indicate the suspect produced a firearm, threatening the lives of law enforcement officers" the statement said.

U.S. Marshals Service fugitive task forces — comprised of deputy marshals, other federal agents and local law enforcement officers from a variety of agencies — apprehend violent felons and other suspects.

Brady said the four task force members who fired their weapons were two Pierce County Sheriff's deputies, a police officer from the Washington city of Lakewood and Washington State Department of Corrections officer.

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Brady said investigators haven't yet determined how many rounds were fired but witnesses Chad Smith and Chase Cutler, who were working on cars nearby, told The News Tribune they saw two SUVs converge on a man in a vehicle at the apartment complex. They said they heard 40 to 50 shots, the Tacoma, Washington, newspaper reported.

Brady said he doesn't think the suspect lived at the address where he was shot, and that it was not clear what brought him to Lacey, on the outskirts of Olympia, the state capital.

Reinoehl's sister, who requested her name not be used because of the threats she and her family have been receiving, said in an interview with The Associated Press Friday that she had had not been in touch with him for three years.

She said her brother's son and daughter "need to be allowed to grieve what happened."

"My heart breaks for those kids but hopefully they can put their lives back together and sort through this and process the trauma that no one that young should ever have to deal with," the sister said.

Selsky reported from Salem, Oregon. Associated Press writers Michael Balsamo in Washington, DC; Rebecca Boone in Boise, Idaho, Michael Liedtke in San Ramon, California; and Suman Naishadham in Atlanta contributed to this report.

Follow Selsky on Twitter at <https://twitter.com/andrewselsky>

Brazil leader rapped for stirring doubt on COVID-19 vaccine

By MAURICIO SAVARESE and TATIANA POLLASTRI Associated Press

SAO PAULO (AP) — Critics of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro are again speaking out against the leader's stance on the coronavirus pandemic, this time rejecting his view that vaccination for the virus shouldn't be mandatory.

Bolsonaro's first such comments came Monday, when he told a supporter, "No one can force anyone to get a vaccine." He repeated it Thursday night during a live broadcast on Facebook, adding his opposition to administering vaccines that are yet to be proven on Brazilian soil.

"It has been proven in other countries, but not here in Brazil," he said, without specifying to which potential vaccine he was referring. "We cannot be irresponsible and put a vaccine into people's bodies. As I said, nobody can oblige someone to take a vaccine."

The comments were swiftly rebuked by opponents on social media.

Sao Paulo state Gov. João Doria, a former Bolsonaro ally turned foe, said in an interview with The Associated Press on Friday that immunization cannot be viewed as a personal decision. Sao Paulo, with 46 million residents, is the pandemic's epicenter in Brazil, with its more than 30,000 dead from COVID-19 accounting for about a fourth of the country's death toll from the illness.

"It is sad that once again Brazil's president is setting a denialist example," Doria said in a video call. "It should be obligatory, except in special cases or under health circumstances that justify not taking a vaccine. An infected person infects others, and makes possible the death of others."

Brazil's Workers' Party, an adversary of both Bolsonaro and Doria, said in a statement that the president's efforts to create an air of doubt about a future vaccine "ignores the importance of the shots to protect the health of the entire population."

The national health council, which is a branch of Bolsonaro's own health ministry, said in a statement that the government should not be talking about vaccination against COVID-19 not being mandatory.

"The right to individual liberty is not absolute to the point of being above the collective well-being," the council said.

Since the onset of the crisis, Bolsonaro has set himself against lockdowns and other broad restrictions on activity imposed by governors at the recommendation of health experts. The president called COVID-19 "a little flu," and warned that shutting down the economy would inflict a greater hardship on the millions who live hand to mouth.

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Brazil's health ministry to date has confirmed more than 4 million cases of the disease and 125,000 deaths. Both numbers trail only the United States, according to the tally kept by Johns Hopkins University.

Because Brazil's caseload is so high, and it has a large, dispersed population of 210 million people, several vaccine developers selected the nation to conduct human trials of their products.

Bolsonaro's federal government struck an initial deal with AstraZeneca for 30 million doses of its vaccine, which could later rise to 100 million in total.

Sao Paulo's state government, meanwhile, forged an agreement with Chinese vaccine developer Sinovac for 60 million shots, if it is proven effective. But Bolsonaro supporters frequently call COVID-19 a "Chinese virus" and reject working with companies from China.

Doria said Bolsonaro's move to stir skepticism about foreign-made vaccines is a mistake.

"With one vaccine we cannot immunize the entire Brazilian population. We need two, three, maybe four, produced in large scale," the governor said. "As long as it is proven to be efficient, it doesn't matter if it is Chinese, Russian, French, American or British. What matters is that it saves lives."

A recent poll by Ipsos Institute in 27 countries published Wednesday found 88% of Brazilians surveyed said they would get immunized against COVID-19 if a vaccine was available.

Brazil's health ministry expects the distribution of vaccines can start in the first months of 2021.

Max Igor Lopes, an infectious disease specialist at Sao Paulo's Hospital das Clinicas, believes controversy about mandatory vaccination isn't helpful.

"What is important is that people take the vaccine because they understand that it brings a benefit to them," he said. "And this is the vaccine's purpose."

Biden slams Trump over alleged comments mocking US war dead

By ZEKE MILLER and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden declared President Donald Trump "unfit" for the presidency on Friday, delivering an impassioned reaction to a report that Trump — who never served in uniform — allegedly mocked American war dead.

The president and his allies have dismissed the report in *The Atlantic* as false.

The allegations, sourced anonymously, describe multiple offensive comments by the president toward fallen and captured U.S. service members, including calling World War I dead at an American military cemetery in France "losers" and "suckers" in 2018.

The reported comments, many of which were confirmed independently by *The Associated Press*, are shining a fresh light on Trump's previous public disparagement of American troops and military families. That opens a new political vulnerability for the president less than two months from Election Day.

Voice cracking, Biden told reporters that "you know in your gut" Trump's comments, if true, are "deplorable."

"I've just never been as disappointed, in my whole career, with a leader that I've worked with, president or otherwise," Biden added. "If the article is true — and it appears to be, based on other things he's said — it is absolutely damning. It is a disgrace."

He added that "the president should humbly apologize to every Gold Star mother and father, to every Blue Star family that he's denigrated. ... Who the heck does he think he is?"

Trump, in the Oval Office, said no apology was necessary, because it was a "fake story."

Trump was alleged to have made the comments in November 2018, as he was set to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery during a trip to France. The White House said the visit was scrubbed because foggy weather made the helicopter trip from Paris too risky and a 90-minute drive was deemed infeasible.

Speaking Friday in the Oval Office, Trump denied ever uttering such comments: "It was a terrible thing that somebody could say the kind of things — and especially to me 'cause I've done more for the military than almost anyone anybody else."

Later, in a press briefing, Trump suggested the source of the story was his former chief of staff, retired Marine Gen. John Kelly. "It could have been a guy like John Kelly," Trump told reporters, saying his former

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top aide "was unable to handle the pressure of this job."

Biden's critique was personal. The former vice president often speaks about his pride for his late son Beau's service in the Delaware Army National Guard. As he spoke, Biden grew angry, raising his voice to rebut Trump's alleged comments that Marines who died in battle were "suckers" for getting killed.

"When my son was an assistant U.S. attorney and he volunteered to go to Kosovo when the war was going on, as a civilian, he wasn't a sucker," Biden declared.

"When my son volunteered to join the United States military as the attorney general, he went to Iraq for a year, won the Bronze Star and other commendations, he wasn't a sucker!"

Beau Biden died of cancer in 2015.

Returning to Washington from a Thursday visit to Pennsylvania, Trump told reporters that the Atlantic report was "a disgraceful situation" by a "terrible magazine."

"I would be willing to swear on anything that I never said that about our fallen heroes," Trump told the reporters, gathered on the tarmac in the dark. "There is nobody that respects them more. No animal — nobody — what animal would say such a thing?"

Biden has framed the election from the start as a referendum on Trump's character. His allies quickly seized on the reported comments in hopes they could drive a wedge between military families and veterans and Trump. They also believe the issue could help win over disaffected Republican voters who are fed up with Trump's constant controversies.

In particular, Biden's team believes his well-documented experience, both personally and politically, with military issues could help him make inroads with a population that broadly supported Trump in the 2016 election and could help sway the election this year in a number of close swing states. Biden himself has not served in the military.

Military families were broadly supportive of Trump in the 2016 election, and a Pew Research Center survey of veterans conducted in June 2019 found overall that veterans were more supportive of Trump than the general public, and that roughly 60% of the veterans polled identified as Republicans.

On a call with reporters hosted by the Biden campaign Friday, Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth lambasted Trump for "belittling the sacrifices of those who have shown more bravery than he's capable of."

Duckworth, a retired Army National Guard lieutenant colonel who lost both of her legs in the Iraq War, has been a prominent critic of Trump's handling of military issues. Knocking Trump for allegedly inventing an injury to avoid serving in the Vietnam War, Duckworth said she'd "take my wheelchair and my titanium legs over Donald Trump's supposed bone spurs any day."

Khizr Khan, the Gold Star father who drew national attention after criticizing Trump during the 2016 Democratic National Convention, joined Duckworth on the call and said Trump's "life is a testament to selfishness."

"Words we say are windows into our souls. So when Donald Trump calls anyone who places their lives in service of others a loser, we understand Trump's soul," he said. Khan's son, Humayun, was killed in action in Iraq in 2004.

In 2016, Trump responded to the criticism from Khan by claiming he'd made sacrifices of his own and by making an Islamophobic attack on Khan's wife, Ghazala Khan, who was wearing a headscarf at the Democratic convention, saying: "She had nothing to say. She probably — maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say. You tell me."

Trump also denied calling the late Arizona Sen. John McCain, a decorated Navy officer who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam, a "loser" after his August 2018 death.

Trump acknowledged Thursday he was "never a fan" of McCain and disagreed with him, but said he still respected him and approved everything to do with his "first-class triple-A funeral" without hesitation because "I felt he deserved it."

In 2015, shortly after launching his presidential candidacy, Trump publicly blasted McCain, saying, "He's not a war hero." He added, "I like people who weren't captured." At the time, Trump also shared a news article on Twitter calling McCain a "loser."

Trump only amplified his criticism of McCain as the Arizona lawmaker grew critical of his acerbic style of politics, culminating in a late-night "no" vote scuttling Trump's plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act.

That vote shattered what few partisan loyalties bound the two men, and Trump has continued to attack McCain for that vote, even posthumously.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told "Fox & Friends" on Friday that he was with the president for a good part of the trip to France. "I never heard him use the words that are described in that article," Pompeo said.

Asked Friday about the possibility of seeing Trump when they will both be in Shanksville, Pennsylvania, for the anniversary of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks next week, Biden said: "I didn't know he was going until after I announced on my own. Of course."

Asked if he'd be willing to share a stage with Trump, he said: "Yes. He's still the president of the United States of America."

AP writers James LaPorta and Jill Colvin contributed.

No 7th trial for Mississippi man freed from prison in 2019

By EMILY WAGSTER PETTUS and JEFF AMY Associated Press

JACKSON, Miss. (AP) — A Mississippi man freed last year after 22 years in prison will not be tried a seventh time in a quadruple murder case, a judge ruled Friday after prosecutors told him they no longer had any credible witnesses.

Curtis Flowers was convicted multiple times in a bloody slaying and robbery at a small-town furniture store in 1996. The U.S. Supreme Court threw out the most recent conviction in June 2019, citing racial bias in jury selection.

"Today, I am finally free from the injustice that left me locked in a box for nearly twenty three years," Flowers said in a statement released by his lawyer. "I've been asked if I ever thought this day would come. I have been blessed with a family that never gave up on me and with them by my side, I knew it would."

Montgomery County Circuit Judge Joseph Loper signed the order Friday after the state attorney general's office, which had taken over the case, admitted the evidence was too weak to proceed with another trial.

"As the evidence stands today, there is no key prosecution witness ... who is alive and available and has not had multiple, conflicting statements in the record," Assistant Attorney General Mary Helen Wall wrote in a filing presented to Loper on Friday.

Four people were shot to death on July 16, 1996, in the Tardy Furniture store in Winona. They were owner Bertha Tardy, 59, and three employees: 45-year-old Carmen Rigby, 42-year-old Robert Golden and 16-year-old Derrick "Bobo" Stewart. Relatives of some of the victims have maintained their belief that Flowers is the killer.

Flowers was convicted four times in the slayings: twice for individual slayings and twice for all four killings. Two other trials involving all four deaths ended in mistrials.

Each of Flowers' convictions was overturned. In June 2019, the U.S. Supreme Court tossed out the conviction and death sentence from Flowers' sixth trial, which took place in 2010. Justices said prosecutors showed an unconstitutional pattern of excluding African American jurors in the trials of Flowers, who is Black.

The Supreme Court ruling came after American Public Media's "In the Dark" investigated the case. Crucially, the podcast recorded jailhouse informant Odell Hallmon in 2017 and 2018 recanting his testimony that Flowers had confessed to him. Hallmon's story of the confession had been key evidence in later trials, but he told the podcast on a contraband cellphone from behind bars that his story was "a bunch of fantasies, a bunch of lying."

"The only witness who offered direct evidence of guilt recanted his prior testimony, admitting he was lying when he said Mr. Flowers made a jailhouse confession to the murders," Wall wrote Friday.

The podcast also presented an analysis finding a long history of racial bias in jury selection by Montgomery County District Attorney Doug Evans, and found evidence suggesting another man may have committed the crimes. Evans stepped aside from the case after State Attorney General Lynn Fitch took office in January.

"This prosecution was flawed from the beginning and was tainted throughout by racial discrimination," said defense lawyer Rob McDuff of the Mississippi Center for Justice. "It should never have occurred and

lasted far too long, but we are glad it is finally over.”

After the Supreme Court ruling, Flowers was moved off death row at the Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman and taken to a regional jail in the central Mississippi town of Louisville. He remained in custody because the original murder indictment was still active.

At the request of Flowers’ attorneys, Loper set bond at \$250,000, with Flowers released in December after 10% of that amount was posted. The judge ruled Friday that all but \$10 of the \$25,000 should be returned to Matthew Popoli, who donated the money to support Flowers. Popoli had remained anonymous until Friday.

Winona sits near the crossroads of Interstate 55, the major north-south artery in Mississippi, and U.S. Highway 82, which runs east to west. It about a half-hour’s drive from the flatlands of the Mississippi Delta. Among its 4,300 residents, about 48% are Black and 44% are white. Census Bureau figures show that about 30% live in poverty.

US Forest Service police dog survives second stabbing attack

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — A highly decorated U.S. Forest Service police dog suffered nine stab wounds during a marijuana raid in Northern California. But he survived after he was airlifted to a veterinary clinic, the agency said Friday.

What’s more, it’s the second time the dog, an 11-year-old Belgian Malinois named Ice, recovered after being seriously injured on the job.

Ice was wounded Aug. 27 in the Klamath National Forest south of the Oregon border when he was released to catch a suspect who had fled down a steep hill to escape the raid that unearthed more than 5,500 marijuana plants. He kept hold of the suspect even after he was stabbed, while his handler, Patrol Capt. Christopher Magallon, made the arrest.

Magallon then gave his dog first aid while calling in a helicopter, which flew Ice more than 70 miles to the Veterinary Specialty Center in Medford, Oregon. The dog, which had been wearing a protective vest, was released later that afternoon, and federal prosecutors are still considering charges.

“Thankfully, despite the attack, no major areas were struck, and Ice will quickly recover and return to service until his expected retirement at the end of this month,” Cody Wheeler, the Forest Services’ North Zone patrol commander, said in a statement.

Ice had multiple stab wounds that were more severe during a similar raid in 2016, the agency said.

He received the 2016 Law Enforcement and Investigations Director’s Award for Valor and Heroism after surviving the earlier assault. He was also honored then as a “Top Dog” award winner in the international category by American Humane Hero Dogs, appearing in a nationally televised award ceremony in 2017.

In Barr, Trump has powerful ally for challenging mail voting

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — As President Donald Trump sows doubt about the legitimacy of the 2020 election, he’s found a powerful partner in Attorney General William Barr.

Like Trump, Barr has repeatedly sounded alarms about the November vote despite a lack of evidence pointing to pervasive problems with the process.

That’s important — and worrisome to Democrats — because Barr is no ordinary Cabinet member. As head of the Justice Department, he can shape investigations into election interference and voting fraud. Though the department doesn’t oversee elections, it could inject itself into court fights over disputed contests. And any statements from America’s top law enforcement officer questioning election results could further shake public confidence in the vote at a time of widespread disinformation and rumors.

“Those who think that Barr is watching over the interests of Trump rather than the interests of the country have reason to be concerned that he would weaponize the Justice Department’s investigative authority to help Trump at least politically, if not legally, in any post-election challenge,” said Richard Hasen, an election

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law expert at the University of California, Irvine.

Concerns about Barr among Democrats and election experts outside the department are heightened because he is seen as a loyalist to the president, as well as an ardent defender of broad executive power and a passionate critic of the FBI's Russia probe.

Barr's comments, most recently in a CNN interview Wednesday, have been consistent with efforts by Trump and his campaign to attack mail voting as rife with fraud and to potentially lay the groundwork for lawsuits challenging election results. The attacks have continued even though research contradicts the idea of pervasive fraud in the vote-by-mail process and even though intelligence officials say they don't have information to suggest some of Barr's gravest concerns, like adversaries printing counterfeit ballots, are close to becoming reality.

Justice Department spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said Barr "has pledged again and again to make decisions according to the law and facts, without regard to political considerations." Barr has also said he will abide by longstanding Justice Department policy against taking any investigative steps, including prosecutions, designed to affect the outcome of an election.

There are important limits on the Justice Department's potential impact on an election. The federal government, for instance, doesn't administer elections and many core voting functions, like tallying ballots, are handled at the local or state level.

Though the department can prosecute voter fraud cases, it is not empowered to decide which votes count and which do not, nor could it intervene in an unresolved local election and declare a winner, said Justin Levitt, a Loyola Law School professor and former Justice Department voting rights official in the Obama administration.

"There is no piece of litigation, there is no case I can think of, that the attorney general can bring in mid-November to sort out who won," Levitt said.

But, he added, Barr and the department could very well "take to the airwaves and take to the TV stations" and bang the drum against mail-voting. A potent public messaging campaign from the Justice Department bully pulpit could go a long way in weakening confidence in election results.

In the event of a challenge over a disputed election, brought by an aggrieved campaign or someone else, the Justice Department probably wouldn't have grounds to initiate a lawsuit but could try to intervene or file a brief supporting a campaign's argument. Such a move may not have much practical sway on a court but would have symbolic value.

Having to wait until a campaign files a lawsuit, "would not be an enormous barrier to the Justice Department still being able to play a very active role in the litigation," said New York University law school professor Richard Pildes.

The department's National Security Division was intimately involved in the 2016 election as it investigated ties between the Trump campaign and Russia. This week, Barr tightened restrictions for national security surveillance of federal candidates and advisers, and though he said Wednesday that Russia may look to interfere again, he considers China a more assertive threat.

He did not disclose the intelligence he said had led him to the conclusion, but an intelligence assessment last month suggested that Russia's interference was so far more direct than Beijing.

Historically, and particularly before foreign interference came to dominate public attention, the Justice Department's most direct connection to the election process has been through its Civil Rights Division, which enforces laws including the Voting Rights Act and generally brings cases designed to ensure that voters are not denied access at the polls.

That includes a 2009 lawsuit in the waning days of the George W. Bush administration alleging voter intimidation by the New Black Panther Party and a 2013 case challenging North Carolina provisions seen as discriminating against minority voters.

"We used to get immense pressure from the liberal advocacy organizations who wanted us to get involved and wanted us to put our thumb on the scale in order to achieve whatever policy aims they wanted," said Bradley Schlozman, who led the division during the Bush administration and supervised voting rights issues.

He said he didn't view Barr as sowing doubt in the election but rather drawing attention to what he sees

as a legitimate problem.

In the last few months, as states have scrambled to adjust to the coronavirus pandemic, the public discussion from the Justice Department has centered less on general voting access and more on the possibility of fraud in a vote-by-mail system expected to be in far broader use this year.

Barr described that rapid expansion by states on Wednesday as "playing with fire." Experts say while voting by mail raises additional concerns in relation to in-person voting, there is no evidence of rampant fraud.

"The notion that the attorney general would invent widespread fraud in a system that many and maybe most Americans are going to use in November is deeply concerning," Levitt said. "The notion that he might cast doubt on the validity of the election results even before the election has happened is deeply concerning."

Follow Eric Tucker on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/etuckerAP>

US wildlife agency seeks to carve out areas from protections

By MATTHEW BROWN Associated Press

BILLINGS, Mont. (AP) — A Trump administration proposal released Friday would allow the government to deny habitat protections for endangered animals and plants in areas that would see greater economic benefits from being developed — a change critics said could open lands to more energy development and other activities.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials described the proposal as giving more deference to local governments when they want to build things like schools and hospitals.

But the proposal indicates that exemptions from habitat protections would be considered for a much broader array of developments, including at the request of private companies that lease federal lands or have permits to use them. Government-issued leases and permits can allow energy development, grazing, recreation, logging and other commercial uses of public lands.

It's the latest move by the Trump administration in a years-long effort to repeal regulations across government that has broadly changed how the Endangered Species Act gets used. Other steps under Trump to scale back species rules included lifting blanket protections for animals newly listed as threatened, setting cost estimates for saving species and a pending proposal to restrict what areas fit under the definition of "habitat".

Governors from 22 Western states and Pacific territories in a Thursday letter to the wildlife service demanded more say in how habitat gets defined, since that decision could further restrict what land and waterways can be protected.

Wildlife advocates say the administration's approach has elevated natural resource extraction and commercial development over the protection of sites that are home to dwindling populations of endangered species.

Animals that could be affected by the latest change include the struggling lesser prairie chicken, a grasslands bird found in five states in the south-central U.S., and the rare dunes sagebrush lizard that lives among the oil fields of western Texas and eastern New Mexico, wildlife advocates said.

Friday's proposal and the habitat definition offered in July were triggered by a 2018 U.S. Supreme Court ruling involving a highly endangered Southern frog — the dusky gopher frog.

In that case, a unanimous court faulted the government over how it designated "critical habitat" for the 3 ½-inch-long (8.9-centimetre-long) frogs that survive in just a few ponds in Mississippi. The ruling came after a timber company, Weyerhaeuser, had sued when land it owned in Louisiana was designated as critical.

The new proposal would require federal officials to consider factors such as economic or employment losses when making habitat decisions. That includes decisions affecting federal land for which private companies have permits or leases, such as for drilling, grazing, logging or other development.

Those areas could be carved out from protections by the Secretary of Interior "so long as the exclusion of a particular area does not cause extinction of a species," Fish and Wildlife officials wrote.

Agency Director Aurelia Skipwith said in a statement that the proposal would provide "greater transpar-

ency for the public, improve consistency and predictability for stakeholders affected by ESA (Endangered Species Act) determinations and stimulate more effective conservation.”

But the former director of the federal wildlife service during the Clinton administration, Jamie Rappaport Clark, said the change — if finalized — was sure to harm species on the edge of extinction.

“This new proposal puts a heavy thumb on the scale in favor of developers and industry,” said Clark, who now heads the advocacy group Defenders of Wildlife

Follow Matthew Brown on twitter: @matthewbrownap

Pentagon reaffirms Microsoft as winner of disputed JEDI deal

By ROBERT BURNS AP National Security Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Pentagon on Friday reaffirmed Microsoft as winner of a cloud computing contract potentially worth \$10 billion, although the start of work is delayed by a legal battle over rival Amazon’s claim that the bidding process was flawed.

“The department has completed its comprehensive re-evaluation of the JEDI cloud proposals and determined that Microsoft’s proposal continues to represent the best value to the government,” the Pentagon said.

The Pentagon had requested time to review how it evaluated certain technical aspects of the bids after the judge who is presiding over Amazon’s bid protest in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims issued a preliminary injunction on Feb. 13. The judge said that Amazon’s challenge likely had merit in some respects.

The contract was awarded to Microsoft last October, prompting Amazon to cry foul.

Amazon Web Services, a market leader in providing cloud computing services, had long been considered a leading candidate to run the Pentagon’s Joint Enterprise Defense Infrastructure project, known as JEDI. The project will store and process vast amounts of classified data, allowing the U.S. military to improve communications with soldiers on the battlefield and use artificial intelligence to speed up its war planning and fighting capabilities.

In a statement Friday, Amazon said the Pentagon’s further review was not based on the relative strengths of the two companies’ bids.

“That is exactly where we find ourselves today, with the DoD’s re-evaluation nothing more than an attempt to validate a flawed, biased, and politically corrupted decision,” Amazon said.

Amazon has asserted that the bidding was improperly influenced by President Donald Trump’s dislike of Amazon and its chief executive officer, Jeff Bezos. Bezos owns The Washington Post, a news outlet often criticized by Trump.

In its statement Friday, Amazon said its concerns about political corruption have only grown.

“We strongly disagree with the DoD’s flawed evaluation and believe it’s critical for our country that the government and its elected leaders administer procurements objectively and in a manner that is free from political influence,” it said. “The question we continue to ask ourselves is whether the president of the United States should be allowed to use the budget of the Department of Defense to pursue his own personal and political ends?”

In April, a government watchdog concluded that the contracting process was in line with legal and government purchasing standards. The Defense Department inspector general found no evidence of White House interference in the contract award process. But the report said investigators could not fully review that aspect of the matter because the White House would not allow unfettered access to witnesses.

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Dueling versions of reality define 1st week of fall campaign

By STEVE PEOPLES AP National Political Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — On the campaign trail with President Donald Trump, the pandemic is largely over, the economy is roaring back, and murderous mobs are infiltrating America's suburbs.

With Democrat Joe Biden, the pandemic is raging, the economy isn't lifting the working class, and systemic racism threatens Black lives across America.

The first week of the fall sprint to Election Day crystallized dizzily different versions of reality as the Republican incumbent and his Democratic challenger trekked from Washington and Delaware to Wisconsin and Pennsylvania and back, each man on an urgent mission to sell his particular message to anxious voters.

All the conflicting messages carry at least a sliver of truth, some much more than others, as the candidates fight to navigate one of the most turbulent election seasons in modern history. And beyond legitimate crises threatening public health, the economy and public safety, a new divide erupted Friday over the military.

Trump aggressively denied allegations reported late Thursday that in 2018, he described U.S. service members killed in World War I and buried at an American military cemetery in France as "losers" and "suckers." The report, sourced anonymously by The Atlantic and largely confirmed by The Associated Press, comes as Trump tries to win support from military members and their families by highlighting a commitment to veterans' health care and military spending.

"I've done more for the military than almost anyone else," Trump said Friday from the Oval Office, after describing the allegations on social media as "a disgraceful attempt to influence the 2020 Election."

At roughly the same time at a podium in Delaware, Biden leaned into the damaging reports about his

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opponent.

"Let me be clear: My son Beau, who volunteered to go to Iraq, was not a sucker," Biden declared, pounding the podium. "The men and women who served with him are not suckers, and the service men and women he served with, who did not come home, are not losers."

The back-and-forth was a final flash point in a week that demonstrated much broader challenges for the candidates and voters alike in 2020.

Trump and his allies consistently downplayed the threat posed by the coronavirus. Yet there are still several hundred Americans dying from the disease each day. And the government's top infectious disease expert, Anthony Fauci, warned that this Labor Day weekend could fuel a further surge in cases if people don't take social distancing seriously.

The outbreak is blamed for about 187,000 deaths and almost 6.2 million confirmed infections in the U.S., by far the highest totals in the world. Cases of COVID-19, which spiked from about 20,000 per day to around 70,000 during the summertime surge in the South, are now down to about 40,000 every day.

Biden on Friday linked the pandemic and Trump's push to revive the economy: "You can't have an economic comeback when almost a thousand Americans die a day from COVID."

Earlier in the day, the government announced that the unemployment rate dropped sharply in August from 10.2% to 8.4%. That means roughly half of the 22 million jobs lost to the coronavirus outbreak have been recovered. Or, depending on your messenger, it means roughly half of the 22 million jobs lost during the pandemic remain lost.

Objectively, the nation's economic conditions are still dire, said Michael Strain, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute.

"We are now moving from historical disaster territory to really bad recession territory," he said.

Trump cannot afford to let Americans believe the economy is in "really bad recession territory," however, given that his economic leadership is a central theme in his reelection message. Needing to spin the data to their advantage, Trump and his allies seized on Friday's news as evidence that things were headed in the right direction.

"It's another great day for American jobs and American workers," Vice President Mike Pence said on CNBC. "This president's advanced policies ... have laid a foundation for this great American comeback. Joe Biden and the Democrats are advocating policies that would turn us back."

And while the impact of the Democrats' policies cannot be known, Biden drew on the data to paint an accurate, yet distinctly different portrait of the U.S. economy in line with the message he has delivered for much of the last year, even before the pandemic began to wreak havoc.

"We're still down 720,000 manufacturing jobs," Biden said. "In fact, Trump may well be the only president in modern history to leave office with fewer jobs than when he took office."

"Talk to a lot of real working people who are being left behind," he added. "Ask them, do you feel the economy is coming back? They don't feel it."

One key factor as the candidates deliver conflicting messages to voters: trustworthiness. And so far, voters say they are far more likely to believe Biden than Trump on most issues.

About 6 in 10 registered voters say values like "cares about people like you," "honest" and "strong leader" do not describe Trump well, according to a poll released by The Associated Press and the NORC Center for Public Affairs Research in late July. By comparison, roughly the same majority say those characteristics describe Biden at least somewhat well.

And on race relations, another defining crisis of the fall campaign, strong majorities of voters consistently disapprove of Trump's leadership.

But sensing political opportunity as protest-related violence surged earlier in the week, Trump further pressed his divisive approach as he campaigned in Kenosha, Wisconsin, the latest epicenter of the nation's sweeping civil unrest.

Less than two weeks after a white police officer shot Jacob Blake, a Black man, in the back seven times, Trump reaffirmed his support for the police and businesses affected by the sometimes violent protests that followed.

Trump did not meet with Blake's family while in Wisconsin, as Biden did Thursday when he visited the area for the first time. Instead, the president focused on the threat posed by protesters, telling reporters he does not believe systemic racism is a problem in America's law enforcement agencies.

Trump described protest-related violence as "domestic terror" and decried "violent mobs" threatening to rape and murder local residents.

Two days later, Biden condemned the violent protests during his own visit to Kenosha, but first he met privately with Blake's family and later criticized what he described as centuries of systemic racism.

Biden addressed head-on the Democratic frustration with Trump's final-weeks message.

"He doesn't want to talk about anything, anything at all about the job he hasn't done," Biden said Friday of Trump, suggesting the president is far more eager to exaggerate the threat posed by those protesting police brutality.

"And so it's a conundrum," Biden said. "And in a sense, every time I speak about it I feel like I'm playing in his game."

Undercover drug detective, informant killed; 3 are arrested

By MARK GILLISPIE Associated Press

CLEVELAND (AP) — A Cleveland police detective who had just joined a federal violence task force was shot and killed in his unmarked car along with a police informant during a drug operation, officials said Friday.

Three people have been arrested in the shooting that killed Detective James Skernivitz, 53, and another man on Thursday night. Cleveland Safety Director Karrie Howard said at a news briefing Friday afternoon that two juveniles and an adult taken into custody for unrelated arrest warrants are being questioned. Their names have not been released.

Scott Dingess, 50, has been identified by the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office as the other man killed inside Skernivitz's car.

An emotional Police Chief Calvin Williams did not provide details about the shootings during the briefing.

"It could have been random, it could have been targeted," Williams said. "We don't know. We're still investigating."

Skernivitz and Dingess were shot around 10 p.m. Thursday on the city's west side. A Cleveland police official knowledgeable about some details of the shooting, but who was not authorized to speak publicly, told The Associated Press that Skernivitz was working undercover as part of a drug operation and that Dingess was a police informant.

Jeff Follmer, president of the Cleveland Police Patrolmen's Association, said there were no other officers in the area when the two men were shot.

Officials have not said whether Skernivitz was working Thursday night as part of the federal task force or as a member of the Cleveland police gang unit to which he was normally assigned.

Skernivitz was a 25-year veteran. Williams at Friday's briefing called him a "policeman's policeman."

Skernivitz and other law enforcement officers were sworn in Wednesday at the Cleveland FBI office to become members of the FBI's Violent Crime Task Force in support of Operation Legend, a Justice Department effort to crack down on violent crime in a number of U.S. cities, including Cleveland, FBI spokesperson Vicki Anderson.

U.S. Attorney General William Barr called Skernivitz's death "a very sad day for the city of Cleveland and the entire law enforcement community."

"It takes a special kind of courage to be a police officer," Barr said. "Our men and women in blue put their lives on the line day after day in order to keep us safe. We will not forget Detective Skernivitz and his life of service and sacrifice."

Gov. Mike DeWine ordered the U.S. and state flags to be flown at half-staff at public buildings in Cuyahoga County and at the Statehouse in Columbus.

U.S. Attorney Justin Herdman said Thursday that 54 defendants have been charged criminally, including 39 people for drug-related offenses, since Operation Legend got underway in Cleveland on July 29.

It has been more than 10 years since an on-duty Cleveland police officer was fatally shot.

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Patrol Officer Derek Owens, 36, was killed in February 2008 while chasing a suspect. Owens caught up to the man, who turned and shot Owens in the abdomen below his bulletproof vest.

The man was found guilty of aggravated murder and was sentenced to life in prison with no chance for parole.

NOT REAL NEWS: A look at what didn't happen this week

By The Associated Press undefined

A roundup of some of the most popular but completely untrue stories and visuals of the week. None of these are legit, even though they were shared widely on social media. The Associated Press checked them out. Here are the facts:

CLAIM: A Black woman speaking at a community event with Joe Biden in Kenosha, Wisconsin, exposed the Democratic presidential candidate by saying she would not "go off" a paper she was provided by his campaign.

THE FACTS: Porsche Bennett, the woman speaking, was given the paper to read by her organization, not by Biden's campaign. On Thursday when Biden visited Kenosha social media users circulated a video clip of Bennett speaking at Grace Lutheran Church in Kenosha. In the video, Bennett appears to go off script during a question and answer period, saying: "I'm just going to be honest, Mr. Biden, I was told to go off this paper, but I can't. We need the truth and I am a part of the truth." Bennett told reporters after speaking that she was given the paper by Black Lives Activists Kenosha (BLAK), where she is an organizer. Biden's campaign told the AP that when Bennett said she was going off script, she was referring to prewritten questions given to her by her organization. The campaign said it did not provide any scripts or written material for participants to read. The Trump War Room, an official Twitter account for the president's campaign, tweeted the video of Bennett on Thursday, stating: "Woman at Biden event in Kenosha says she was given a 'paper' telling her what to say." The tweet was retweeted thousands of times and the clip of Bennett making the comment was widely shared across Facebook and Twitter. "AMERICA EXPOSES BIDEN!! @JoeBiden & his Dem handlers give out questions to constituents to ask ONLY what THEY wrote down. Porsche Bennett was not having that!" said one tweet. Biden visited Kenosha in response to protests and unrest that followed the shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, by a white Kenosha police officer on Aug. 23. At the event, Bennett said her community was angry over the shooting of Blake, and demanded change.

— Associated Press writer Beatrice Dupuy reported this item from New York.

CLAIM: Video shows Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden sleeping when he is supposed to be on air for a live morning television interview.

THE FACTS: The video was fabricated using a television news clip from 2011. In the original, an anchor with KBAK-TV in Bakersfield, California, attempted to interview the singer Harry Belafonte remotely, but when they cut to him his eyes were closed and he did not respond. After repeated attempts to reach him, the anchor laughed and said, "He's meditating, He's taking a little nap." In the 30-second altered video, Belafonte is replaced with video that appears to show Biden with his eyes closed and snoring sounds are added. A chyron was added to the bottom of the screen to read "THE IMPORTANCE OF THIS ELECTION." The Biden clip was pulled from an April 2020 town hall in which Biden turns his gaze downward for about 15 seconds as former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton discussed the effects of COVID-19 on women. He then lifted his gaze. There were no snoring sounds. The altered video racked up thousands of shares and hundreds of thousands of views on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. A social media user identified as Damon Imani confirmed to The Associated Press that he created the altered video. The video posted on his YouTube account on Saturday amassed more than 121,000 views before it was taken down in response to a report by the copyright owner. It was shared by public figures including Trump communications adviser Dan Scavino, whose Sunday tweet was labeled "manipulated media" by the social media site. Belafonte's

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publicist said at the time the performer was meditating before the interview and his earpiece malfunctioned.
— Associated Press writer Ali Swenson reported this item from Seattle.

CLAIM: The new vaccine for COVID-19 will be the first of its kind ever. It will be an “mRNA vaccine” which will literally alter your DNA. It will wrap itself into your system. You will essentially become a genetically modified human being.

THE FACTS: Experts say mRNA vaccines do not alter your DNA. As researchers work to test vaccines to stop the spread of COVID-19, social media posts are sharing misinformation to sow doubt even before they become available to the public. The posts on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram suggest that a new coronavirus mRNA vaccine will genetically modify humans. The Moderna and Pfizer vaccine candidates that began phase 3 testing in July both use mRNA. Such vaccines are a new and unproven technology that experts say offer an easier and faster way to produce vaccines compared to traditional methods. They work by introducing a messenger RNA molecule into your body, which causes cells to produce a protein that resembles one of the viral proteins that make up SARS-CoV-2, said Brent R. Stockwell, a Columbia University biology and chemistry professor. “Your immune cells then recognize this viral protein and generate an immune response against it, primarily by generating antibodies that recognize the viral protein,” he said in an email. While there are other concerns with mRNA vaccines, such as the degree and length of protection and possible side effects, Stockwell said, modifying DNA is not one of them. Dr. Dan Culver, a lung specialist at Cleveland Clinic, agreed it’s not possible for an mRNA vaccine to alter your DNA. “This cannot change your genetic makeup,” he said. “The time that this RNA survives in the cells is relatively brief in the span of hours. What you are really doing is sticking a recipe card into the cell making protein for a few hours.”

— Beatrice Dupuy

CLAIM: Law enforcement found 39 missing children in a double-wide trailer in Georgia.

THE FACTS: A law enforcement operation in August did locate 39 children in Georgia over a two week period, but the children were not all found in one trailer or in a single location. On August 27, the U.S. Marshals Service announced the completion of a two-week operation that located 39 children in Macon, Georgia, and the greater Atlanta area. During “Operation Not Forgotten,” the U.S. Marshals Service and other law enforcement agencies rescued 26 children and arrested nine people. Law enforcement also located an additional 13 children who had previously been reported missing, and confirmed the children were with the proper custodian. Posts on social media distorted some facts of the operation. “How is finding 39 missing children in a double wide trailer in Georgia NOT the biggest news story in America?” reads a post that has been widely shared and copied on Facebook. But the children were not all found in a double-wide trailer or even in a single location or on a single date, said Dave Oney, a spokesperson for the U.S. Marshals Service. “The children were found in a variety places — houses, hotel rooms,” Oney told the AP. Other children were located in apartments and “even on the streets,” according to Darby Kirby, chief inspector with the U.S. Marshals Service Missing Child Unit. Neither Oney or Darby were able to confirm if any of the children had been located in a trailer. Oney said some of the children had been missing for a few days while others had been missing for a couple of years. “Fifteen of the children were identified as victims of trafficking. The other children were victims of parental kidnappings, children who absconded from the Division of Family and Children Services, Department of Juvenile Justice custody, and were believed to be in danger or critically missing,” reads a statement Oney provided to the AP. While social media posts suggest the story about the children found in the trailer is not getting enough attention, that is because the claim about the trailer is false. Operation Not Forgotten was covered by many media outlets, including The Associated Press, CNN, CBS and others.

— Associated Press writer Jude Joffe-Block reported this item from Phoenix.

CLAIM: California just passed SB 145, a bill that would end felonies for child rape and legalize pedophilia in the state.

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THE FACTS: SB 145, which has passed the California legislature and awaits the governor's signature, would not legalize pedophilia. It would only give judges expanded discretion to determine whether an adult must register as a sex offender. Under current law, judges can make that decision in cases of voluntary, but illegal, vaginal sex with a minor age 14 to 17 and an adult within 10 years of the minor's age. SB 145 would expand that law to include voluntary oral and anal sex within the same age parameters. The bill would not apply to any minor under the age of 14, nor would it apply to any age gap larger than 10 years. It also would not apply if either party claims the sex was involuntary. Advocates say the bill makes existing California law more inclusive for the LGBTQ community. The bill has been widely condemned by social media users falsely claiming it would legalize pedophilia. "PEDOPHILIA is now LEGAL in CALIFORNIA," read a Facebook post viewed more than 8 million times. "Now a 21 year old can have sex with an 11 year old, and not be listed on the sex registry as a sex offender. This is unbelievable California!" Posts making such claims fundamentally misrepresent what SB 145 does, according to the bill's authors and outside experts. Jessica Levinson, a professor at Loyola Law School, called the claims "hogwash" in an interview with The Associated Press. "The accusation that it somehow allows pedophilia is simply not true," Levinson said. Also, contrary to false posts on social media, the bill would not apply when a minor is under the age of 14, when the age gap is larger than 10 years, or when either party says the sex was not consensual. If passed, the bill would "bring much-needed parity" to California sex offender registration law, according to a statement from Los Angeles County District Attorney Jackie Lacey, who drafted the bill. "This bill allows judges and prosecutors to evaluate cases involving consensual sex acts between young people, regardless of their sexual orientation, on an individual basis," the statement said. The bill did face opposition in the legislature by some lawmakers, including Democratic Assemblywoman Lorena Gonzalez, who said she thought the 10-year age gap was too broad. The bill has passed both houses of the California legislature and awaits a signature from Gov. Gavin Newsom.

CLAIM: Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser proposed using her power to remove the Washington Monument and Lincoln Memorial in the wake of George Floyd's death.

THE FACTS: Bowser did not call for the removal of the Washington Monument or Lincoln Memorial. The monuments are on federal land outside the mayor's jurisdiction. Social media posts making the claim misrepresented a report released Tuesday by the District of Columbia Facilities and Commemorative Expressions task force. The task force was formed by Bowser over the summer in response to nationwide protests over police brutality. The task force recommended renaming, relocating and adding context to monuments, schools, parks and buildings. The Washington Monument and the Jefferson Memorial were named in the report. The Lincoln Memorial was not mentioned, as posts suggested. The mayor has not called for the changes or endorsed them, according to a spokesperson in her office. "Mayor Bowser has asked the DC FACES Working Group to clarify and refine their recommendations to focus on local DC, so no one attempts to confuse the Working Group's focus on contextualizing not removing important monuments and memorials in DC," LaToya Foster, director of communications for the mayor, said in an email. The Associated Press reported Wednesday that many of the monuments and statues in the nation's capital are on federal land, which would be outside the local government's control. The false posts online received hundreds of thousands of shares on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. The posts suggested that the mayor was attempting to erase or rewrite history for the city. Following the backlash, a page reviewing statues and memorials was removed from the report. The White House responded to the task force's report saying that the president would not allow the recommendations to move forward. "As long as President Trump is in the White House, the mayor's irresponsible recommendations will go absolutely nowhere, and as the mayor of our Nation's capital city — a city that belongs to the American people — she ought to be ashamed for even suggesting them for consideration," White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said in a statement Tuesday. The mayor's office told the AP that it was interesting that the White House was commenting on "an intragovernmental report about how to recognize all sides of our history."

— Beatrice Dupuy/ Ashraf Khalil contributed to this report

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AP Explains: 5 key takeaways from the August jobs report

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — By some measures, the shrunken U.S. job market continued a solid recovery last month, with many employers recalling workers who had been temporarily laid off when the coronavirus erupted in the spring.

The economy added nearly 1.4 million jobs in August, and the unemployment rate sank to 8.4% from 10.2% in July. Those improvements came despite a summertime surge in confirmed COVID-19 cases and the failure of Congress to pass another rescue aid package that most economists say is essential to sustain any recovery.

"The recovery continues to plow on," said Andrew Hunter, senior U.S. economist at Capital Economics.

Yet hiring slowed for a second straight month. The August job gain was also the smallest in four months. And Friday's jobs report suggested that many of the springtime job cuts have become permanent.

Here are five takeaways from the August jobs report:

THERE'S STILL A LONG WAY TO GO

As the pandemic slammed the United States in March and April, employers slashed 22 million jobs. Since then, the job market has been gradually bouncing back. From May through August, it's added 10.6 million positions. That's a robust gain. But it equals not even half the jobs that vanished in the springtime collapse. To take one example, factories now employ 720,000 fewer workers than they did in February.

"There obviously remains a lot of work to be done to return the labor market to a semblance of health," said Sophia Koropecjy, a managing director at Moody's Analytics. "If the labor market were to generate jobs at the August rate, it would take 8.5 months to get back to the pre-pandemic level.

"And that is a big if, since we expect that pace of recovery to slow in coming months as the U.S. grapples with the containment of the spread of the virus in the absence of a widely available vaccine for COVID-19."

THE EASY PART IS OVER

Much of the job growth in August — and since May — comes from employers recalling workers they had laid off when the viral outbreak forced them to either curb operations or close down entirely. As businesses have begun to reopen, the number of Americans on temporary layoff has dropped sharply, from 18.1 million in April to 6.2 million in August. Last month alone, the number fell by 3.1 million.

But lots of jobs aren't coming back. The number of people who are considered permanently laid off has risen from 1.3 million in February to 3.4 million in August. As a result, the number of Americans who have been without a job for at least six months has grown for four straight months. The figure reached 1.6 million in August even though the overall number of unemployed people dropped.

"The recovery has been rapid, but this is still the easy part of it — with the harder part ahead," Jason Furman, a professor at Harvard Kennedy School who was chief economic adviser in the Obama White House, wrote on Twitter. "Recalling people from layoff is easier than creating new jobs."

HISPANIC EMPLOYMENT ROSE, BUT DISPARITIES PERSIST

The unemployment rate dropped for all races in August. But white Americans, as always, enjoyed much lower joblessness than Black and Hispanic workers.

One million more Hispanics reported having jobs in August, a 4% increase from July. Hispanics are disproportionately likely to work in the kinds of services jobs — at restaurants or construction sites, for example — that have been returning as businesses reopen. The unemployment rate for Hispanics tumbled to 10.5% from 12.9% in July.

In August, the number of white Americans with jobs rose by 3.1 million, or 2.8%. White unemployment fell to 7.3% from 9.2%.

Black employment increased by 367,000, or 2.1%. The Black unemployment rate dropped to 13% from

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14.5%.

CENSUS JOBS PARTLY OFFSET SLOWDOWN IN PRIVATE SECTOR

In August, the federal government brought on 238,000 temporary Census workers. That burst of hiring drove up the number of government workers at all levels — federal, state and local — by 344,000. It was the sharpest such monthly gain since May 2010.

By contrast, hiring by companies in the private sector has decelerated, to 1 million added jobs last month from 1.5 million in July and 4.7 million in June.

And the private companies that are now hiring tend to be those, like banks and retail stores, that provide services, rather than goods-producing employers like manufacturers, which tend to pay higher wages. Goods-producing companies had accounted for 21% of added jobs in May and 10% in June. In July and August, they represented just 4%.

A TALE OF TWO SURVEYS

Last month's 1.4 million added jobs were about what economists had expected. The gain marked the continuation of a worrisome slowdown in the pace of hiring from 2.7 million in May, 4.8 million in June and 1.7 million in July.

But the big drop in the unemployment rate was a pleasant surprise.

The disparity between comparatively weak hiring and a steep drop in unemployment reflects how the government compiles its monthly jobs report.

The Labor Department conducts one survey to determine how many jobs were added and another to determine the unemployment rate. The two reports sometimes tell different stories, though the differences tend to even out over time.

For its payroll survey, which tracks added jobs, the department asks mostly large companies and government agencies how many people they employed.

For its household survey, it asks households whether the adults living there have a job. Those who don't have a job but are looking for one are counted as unemployed. Those who aren't working but aren't seeking work are not counted as unemployed.

Unlike the payroll survey, the household survey counts farm workers, the self-employed and people who work for new companies. It also does a better job of capturing small-business hiring.

But the results of the household survey are likely less precise. The Labor Department surveys just 60,000 households. By contrast, it surveys 145,000 businesses and government agencies for the payroll survey.

In August, the household survey was a blockbuster: Compared with July, 3.8 million more people had jobs. The number of unemployed plummeted by 2.8 million.

Hold the applause, warns Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at Pantheon Macroeconomics. In a research report, Shepherdson noted that the household survey "is both more volatile and much less reliable than the payroll numbers. Household employment does not lead payrolls; rather, it tends to oscillate around the payroll trend."

Given that the household employment gains have outpaced payrolls since April, Shepherdson wrote, they "could easily fall outright in September" to move more in line with the payroll survey.

AP Economics Writer Christopher Rugaber contributed to this report.

Follow Paul Wiseman on Twitter at @PaulWisemanAP.

Biden confirms virus test, says he'll be tested regularly

By BILL BARROW and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP) — Joe Biden said Friday that he's been tested at least once for the COVID-19 virus and promised he will be tested regularly during his general election campaign against President Donald Trump.

The Democratic presidential nominee told reporters of his testing protocol during a wide-ranging news

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conference in which he blasted Trump for downplaying the coronavirus and thus ensuring that it will continue to kill Americans and ravage the economy.

For much of the summer, Biden's advisers deflected questions about whether the former vice president was being tested himself as he anchored his campaign almost exclusively from his Delaware home, traveling sparingly as a precaution.

"They're going to do it on a regular basis," Biden said of the testing.

He noted that the Secret Service agents assigned to protect him and "everyone" else who comes into his home is tested already. Biden said he didn't know specifically when his next test would be.

"I just, 'yes, sir,' show up and put my head back," Biden said. "I imagine it'll be sometime this week, but it will be a regular basis."

Biden and Trump offer voters a sharp contrast on the pandemic and its economic fallout.

In the Oval Office on Friday, Trump hailed a new jobs report and repeated his optimism that a COVID-19 vaccine could be available even before the Nov. 3 election.

Hours later, during a fundraiser, Biden said, "I hope like hell they have a vaccine," but questioned Trump's timeline and ability to distribute it. "We've got to make sure they're not just hyping ... that they actually finish all the testing," Biden said, adding that Trump's public questioning of scientists and medical experts will reduce confidence in a vaccine whenever it comes online.

"People don't trust a damn thing he says," Biden quipped.

Further, the former vice president questioned how well the administration is planning for distribution, given the White House's rocky distribution of COVID-19 tests and protective equipment. "Discovery of a safe vaccine isn't enough," Biden said. "The road from approval to injection is a long road."

Biden said Trump's statements about an impending vaccine and the August unemployment rate (it fell to 8.4% from 10.2% in July) still underplays the severity of coronavirus and its full effects on the economy, especially the working class.

"We can't deal with an economic crisis until you beat the pandemic," Biden said. "It's almost like he doesn't care, doesn't affect him, because it doesn't affect him or his class of friends."

The gulf between the two rivals extends even to masks.

Defying public health experts' guidance on social distancing, Trump has resumed regular campaign travel to events where his supporters crowd airplane hangars, most of them without masks. The president, who doesn't wear a mask regularly himself, has mocked Biden for covering his face as infectious disease experts advise.

"Did you ever see a man that likes a mask as much as him?" Trump asked a rally crowd Thursday night in Pennsylvania. He added: "You know what, it gives him a feeling of security. If I were a psychiatrist — right? I'd say, this guy's got some big issues."

Biden smiled widely Friday when asked about the president's remarks. "I'm a smart fella. I listen to scientists," Biden said, before turning serious. "This is not a game. Life and death. Life and death. ... It's hard to respond to something so idiotic."

Barrow reported from Atlanta.

Survivor search grips a grieving Beirut a month after blast

By ZEINA KARAM Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — People throughout Lebanon observed a moment of silence Friday to mark one month since the devastating Beirut explosion, while rescuers dug through the rubble of a building destroyed in the blast, hoping to find a survivor.

The split-screen images reflected the pain and anguish that persists one month after the Aug. 4 blast that killed 191 people, injured 6,000 others and traumatized Lebanon, which already was suffering under a severe economic crisis and financial collapse.

The search operation in the historic Mar Mikhail district — on a street once filled with crowded bars

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and restaurants — has gripped the nation for the past 24 hours. The possibility, however unlikely, that a survivor could be found after one month gave hope to people who followed the live images on television, wishing for a miracle.

The operation began Thursday after a dog used by the Chilean search-and-rescue team TOPOS detected something as it toured Gemmayzeh and Mar Mikhail streets and rushed toward the rubble. Rescue workers used cranes, shovels and their bare hands in a meticulous search after a pulsing signal was detected.

Images of the black-and-white 5-year-old dog named Flash, wearing red shoes to protect its paws, circulated on social media and was trending on Twitter in Lebanon. People thanked the dog and said it cared more about the Lebanese people than their own government.

Across from Mar Mikhail, near the wreckage of Beirut's port, a commemoration was held for the victims of the blast in the presence of some of their relatives. Soldiers fired a salute, then laid a white rose for each of the 191 victims at a memorial. The crowd fell silent at 6:08 p.m., the moment of the most destructive explosion in Lebanon's violent history.

Church bells tolled, mosques made a call for prayers and ambulances blared their sirens simultaneously. Some people wept silently. Others held ropes tied as nooses -- a sign of the grief and raw anger toward officials that persists in the country.

The blast was caused by nearly 3,000 tons of ammonium nitrate that had been improperly stored at the port for years. In addition to the dead and injured, thousands of homes were damaged by the blast, which smashed windows and doors for miles and was felt on the Mediterranean island of Cyprus.

It still isn't clear what caused the fire that ignited the ammonium nitrate. The public blames the corruption and negligence of Lebanon's politicians, security and judicial officials, many of whom knew about the storage of the chemicals and did nothing.

"We will hold you accountable," one banner read. A firefighting force drove from headquarters in the direction of the port, marking the route that 10 of their colleagues took when they rushed to put out the fire but were killed instead.

The state still has failed to provide any answers as to how such a thing could happen, the investigation has been slow and ineffective, and no senior official has been detained, although many of them knew the dangers and did not act for six years.

"I know rationally it's been one month, but at a very visceral level it all just feels like one long bad day, that moment stretches out for what feels like forever," posted Carmen Geha, an activist and university professor. "I cannot rest, we cannot rest with bodies still under rubble. We need accountability like air."

At the Mar Mikhail search site, rescue workers slowly removed debris from the building. The more they dug, the more careful the work became to protect anyone buried there. Later, a 360-degree camera at the end of a long pole was pushed into a hole in the building. Images did not turn up any trace of humans in that particular section.

On Thursday, the team used audio equipment to try to hear signals or a heartbeat and detected what could be a pulse of 18 to 19 beats per minute. The origin of the pulsing sound was not immediately known but it was enough to set off the frantic search.

On Friday morning, the beats dropped to seven per minute, according to a Chilean volunteer who spoke to local TV station Al Jadeed. The head of the Chilean team, Francisco Lermada, said he could not confirm or deny the presence of a person — dead or alive — under the rubble and that the work would continue.

The Chilean group has been part of multiple international rescue efforts, including the earthquakes in 2010 in Chile and in 2017 in Mexico. It is credited with rescuing 14 people found after the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, one of them 28 days after it struck.

"As far as I can understand from my Chilean colleagues, the search area is quite narrow," said a French civil engineer who identified himself only as Emmanuel. He added that the search area is not very deep and is just above the vault of the ground floor.

"What we are searching for at the moment is likely one person" not under much material, he said.

The anger on the street was palpable, especially when the search was suspended briefly before midnight

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Thursday, apparently to find a crane.

Outraged protesters at the site claimed the Lebanese army had asked the Chileans to stop the search. In a reflection of the staggering distrust of the authorities, some protesters donned helmets and started searching, while others tried to arrange for a crane.

"Where's your conscience? There's life under this building and you want to stop the work until tomorrow?" one woman screamed at a soldier.

Members of Lebanon's Civil Defense team returned after midnight and resumed work.

The army issued a statement Friday in response to the criticism, saying the Chilean team stopped work at 11:30 p.m. because it feared a wall might collapse. It added that army experts inspected the site and two cranes were brought in to remove the wall, after which the search resumed.

Recent weeks have been extremely hot in Lebanon, with high humidity.

The Chilean team occasionally called for people on the streets, including a group of journalists, to turn off their mobile phones and be quiet for five minutes to avoid interfering with their instruments.

Two days after the explosion, a French rescue team and Lebanese civil defense volunteers had searched the same building, which had a bar on the ground floor. At the time, they had no reason to believe there was anyone still at the site.

Associated Press writer Eva Vergara in Santiago, Chile and Hussein Malla and Bassem Mroue in Beirut contributed reporting.

Tiz the Law is a big favorite in a Derby unlike any other

By BETH HARRIS AP Racing Writer

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — Forget the mint juleps in souvenir glasses, men in seersucker suits and women wearing hats exploding in a floral frenzy. The Kentucky Derby still has horses — Tiz the Law is the biggest favorite in 31 years — but just about everything else makes the 146th edition unlike any other.

"It's going to be weird," said five-time Derby-winning trainer Bob Baffert.

None of the cheering — or cursing after losing wagers — from 150,000 fans will be heard this year at Churchill Downs, where America's longest continuously held sports event will go on Saturday, four months later than usual. The track initially planned to allow 23,000 fans to attend until escalating positivity rates for COVID-19 in Louisville dictated otherwise.

"Quietude can't hurt," said Barclay Tagg, trainer of 3-5 favorite Tiz the Law. "We've had quiet for almost all his races this year."

Of course, silence changes the very nature of the Derby, known for a mix of the raucous and refined, the freakish and fashionable.

Gone will be the parade of celebrities on the red carpet, the who's who of sports, politics and entertainment crowding Millionaires Row, the national anthem sung by a big name. The University of Louisville marching band won't strike up "My Old Kentucky Home" while the crowd sings along as the horses step onto the track, and the traditional call of "Riders up!" won't be shouted by a bold-faced name standing in the paddock.

Tiz the Law has already won the Belmont Stakes, the kickoff to the Triple Crown that was run in June at a shorter distance. A victory in the Derby would set him up for a Triple try in the Preakness on Oct. 3.

Also in his favor is that he's already proved he can handle the Derby distance of 1 1/4 miles, often the biggest question for any 3-year-old colt. Tiz the Law won the Travers by 5 1/2 lengths over the same distance at Saratoga a month ago.

"He's checked all those boxes, and I believe he very well could win the Triple Crown this year," said Jerry Bailey, the retired Hall of Fame jockey and NBC Sports analyst.

Tiz the Law has won six of seven career starts — his only loss came at Churchill Downs last year — by staying close to the pace and making one big run at the top of the stretch.

"I'd like for us to be laying third all the way around until we get down for business," Tagg said. "You think

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he's gotten in trouble here, in trouble there and next thing you know he's in front. He's a pretty amazing horse."

Mark Casse, trainer of Enforceable, isn't ready to hand Tiz the Law the roses. "He still has to have a clean trip," he said.

The field has been reduced to 16 horses, smallest since 2003 when Funny Cide won. That gelding was owned by Sackatoga Stable, which owns Tiz the Law. Managing partner Jack Knowlton and his co-owners will ride yellow school buses to the track, just as Sackatoga did 17 years ago.

Honor A. P. is the 5-1 second choice. His trainer is John Shirreffs and the jockey is Mike Smith, who teamed to win the 2005 Derby with 50-1 shot Giacomo.

"The odds don't guarantee anything," Shirreffs said. "We just have to see how the race is run."

Authentic is the third choice at 8-1. He's trained by Baffert, who also saddles 15-1 shot Thousand Words. A victory by either colt would tie the white-haired trainer with Ben Jones for the most Derby victories with six.

After Tiz the Law, Honor A. P. and Authentic, the other 13 horses are listed at double-digit odds. Churchill Downs is using a new 20-horse starting gate especially for the Derby, although posts 1, 18, 19 and 20 will be left vacant after King Guillermo and Finnick the Fierce were scratched.

A win by Tiz the Law would make Tagg the oldest trainer to win a Derby at age 82.

It will be the last Derby run on Lasix. Churchill Downs and the other Triple Crown tracks will ban the anti-bleeding medication starting next year.

Outside the track's main entrance on Central Avenue, the scene figures to be different, too.

The death of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman shot and killed by police in her apartment in March, has fueled tense demonstrations for 100 consecutive days in the city. The three officers involved in her death have not been charged.

The prospect of unrest on Derby day has its participants unsure what to expect.

"I couldn't be anything else but very concerned," Tagg said. "Hopefully, we can pull it off without anything disastrous happening."

Saturday's forecast calls for partly sunny skies and a high of 82 degrees (27 Celsius) to go with humidity — quite a contrast to the cool and rainy weather when the race is usually run in late spring.

Post time is 7:01 p.m. EDT.

More AP sports: <https://apnews.com/apf-sports> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

US unemployment rate falls to 8.4% even as hiring slows

By CHRISTOPHER RUGABER AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. unemployment dropped sharply in August from 10.2% to a still-high 8.4%, with about half the 22 million jobs lost to the coronavirus outbreak recovered so far, the government said Friday in one of the last major economic reports before Election Day.

Employers added 1.4 million jobs last month, down from 1.7 million in July and the fewest since hiring resumed in May. And an increasingly large share of Americans reported that their jobs are gone for good, according to the Labor Department report.

Altogether, that was seen by economists as evidence that further improvement is going to be sluggish and uneven.

"The fact that employment is settling into a trend of slower, grinding growth is worrisome for the broader recovery," said Lydia Boussour, an economist at Oxford Economics.

Still, President Donald Trump, who is seeking reelection in less than two months amid the worst economic downturn since the Depression in the 1930s, exulted over the latest unemployment figure, saying, "That is many, many months ahead of schedule."

Democratic nominee Joe Biden downplayed the report and said the viral outbreak is still weighing on the economy.

"Donald Trump may be the only president in modern history to leave office with fewer jobs than when

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he took office," Biden said. The U.S. has 4.7 million fewer jobs now than when Trump was inaugurated, but if the monthly gains continue at the same pace as in August, those jobs would be recovered by January.

Friday's figures were the next-to-last employment report before the presidential election Nov. 3. For many voters, the unemployment rate is the most visible measure of the economy.

Should unemployment keep dropping rapidly, it could near 7% by early November, said Michael Strain, an economist at the American Enterprise Institute.

"That's bad, it's too high, many people will be suffering, but you can see healthy from there," Strain said. "The question always has been: What's going to matter more on Election Day — the rate of improvement of the economy or the absolute condition of the economy?"

The drop in unemployment was sharper than most economists expected and was attributed mainly to businesses recalling workers who had been temporarily laid off.

Private companies added just over 1 million jobs in August, with the government providing nearly 350,000 others, including a quarter-million temporary census workers. The fall in private hiring from 1.5 million jobs in July was seen as a sign that employers remain cautious with the virus still out of control.

The outbreak is blamed for about 187,000 deaths and almost 6.2 million confirmed infections in the U.S., by far the highest totals in the world.

Richard Moody, chief economist at Regions Financial, noted that about half the private-sector job gains were in three categories: retail, restaurants, hotels and casinos, and health care. All have benefited from the reopening of most states' economies.

"When the reopening effect wears off, the overall job gains in coming months should be considerably smaller," he said.

Retailers added 250,000 jobs, led by big gains at warehouse clubs and supercenters, and restaurants, hotels and entertainment firms gained 174,000. Health care added 90,000. But manufacturers, which are enjoying a jump in demand, particularly for cars, added just 29,000 jobs, one-tenth of their job growth in June. Construction added just 16,000 despite strong home building.

After an epic collapse in the spring, when the economy shrank at a roughly 30% annual rate, growth has been rebounding as states have reopened at least parts of their economies. But uncertainty is running high, and many companies are still cutting jobs, with most of the layoffs permanent.

Casino and hotel operator MGM Resorts, slammed by declines in travel and tourism, said last week that it is eliminating 18,000 jobs. Coca Cola, which derives half its sales from stadiums, theaters and other venues that have been largely shut down, is offering buyouts to 4,000 employees. Bed, Bath & Beyond will shed 2,800 jobs.

More than 20% of small businesses are still closed, a figure that has been flat since June, according to Homebase, a provider of time-management software to small companies.

Millions of people have given up looking for work since the outbreak began, many to avoid contracting the coronavirus. That has helped bring down the jobless rate, because the government doesn't count people as unemployed unless they are actively seeking jobs.

In Friday's report, less than half of the 13.6 million unemployed said their layoffs were temporary, down from three-quarters in April.

Brandon Stephens, president of Christmas Decor, is struggling with the uncertainty. The business has 300 franchised outlets across the U.S. that are mostly landscape and pest control companies but turn to setting up lights and decorations for Christmas, Halloween and other holidays in the colder months. That switch typically enables the franchisees to save 3,000 jobs.

Stephens said he is seeing a big increase in interest in holiday decorations from consumers. But businesses are much more cautious about committing to big holiday displays.

"The challenge with our business is we don't know if we're screwed until the last couple of weeks of the year," he said.

Roughly 29 million Americans are receiving state unemployment benefits but are no longer drawing an extra \$600 a week in federal jobless aid, which expired more than a month ago. The Trump administration

has set up a program to provide some of the unemployed with \$300 a week. But the new rules will make many ineligible.

One consequence of the crisis is that rising stress and anxiety are evident at therapists' offices and mental health hotlines around the country.

"Not many days go by where I don't have a couple where one partner or both are not working or furloughed," said Todd Creager, a therapist in Southern California who treats mostly middle- to upper-middle-class adults.

AP Writers Steven Peoples, Jill Colvin, Will Weissert and Lindsey Tanner in Chicago contributed to this report.

Police use of spit hoods scrutinized after Black man's death

By MICHAEL R. SISAK and MICHAEL BALSAMO Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Not five minutes after police slipped a "spit hood" over Daniel Prude's head, the 41-year-old Black man went limp. A week later, he was taken off life support.

Prude's suffocation in Rochester, New York, in March has drawn new attention to the hoods — mesh bags that have been linked to other deaths — and the frequent reliance on police to respond to mental health emergencies.

His death has underscored one of the top demands of the police reform movement: that certain duties should not be handled by law enforcement but by social workers or mental health experts. Seven officers involved in the encounter were suspended with pay Thursday.

While many in law enforcement defend the hoods as vital to prevent officers from being spit on or even bitten — a concern that has taken on new importance during the coronavirus pandemic — critics have denounced them as dangerous and inhumane. For some, they evoke hoods used on prisoners at U.S. government overseas detention sites or "black sites."

Amnesty International condemned the use of spit hoods Thursday, a day after Prude's family made public body camera video and police reports it obtained from the Rochester department. The organization said the hoods are particularly dangerous when a person is already in distress, as Prude appeared to be.

Police use of spit hoods often "looks like something out of Abu Ghraib," said Adanté Pointer, an Oakland civil rights lawyer who has handled several cases involving the devices. "They're often used in a punitive way."

Prude, in Rochester to visit his brother, was taken by police for a mental health evaluation just hours before the fatal encounter after he was said to have expressed suicidal thoughts. Prude's brother told police he was calm when he returned to his house but later got high on PCP and ran away, prompting the brother to call 911.

Police found Prude wandering the street naked after allegedly smashing a storefront window, and he could be seen on body camera footage spitting in the direction of officers and heard claiming to be infected with coronavirus. Officers said that led them to employ the hood.

Prude, handcuffed by this point, can be seen continuing to spit through the mesh and saying that he wanted an officer's gun. The officers then pinned him to the ground, one of them keeping a knee on his back and another pressing his face into the pavement for two minutes. Both appeared white.

Minutes later, an officer could be heard saying, "Ugh, he's puking." After realizing Prude had stopped breathing, paramedics who had arrived at some point, began CPR.

"They put a bag over his head, and they squeezed the air out of him," said Nicolette Ward, a lawyer for one of Prude's daughters. "He spent the last moments of his life breathing in his own vomit."

At a news conference Thursday announcing the officers' suspensions, Rochester Mayor Lovely Warren said: "Mr. Daniel Prude was failed by the police department, our mental healthcare system, our society and he was failed by me."

In fact, Prude's death has raised questions about how authorities respond to mental health emergencies.

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Many other deaths at the hands of police have resulted from an encounter that began with a call about someone's mental health and then devolved.

In many departments — New York City for example — there has been a push to better train police on how to manage the mentally ill or to bring in experts who do, but it remains a major issue.

Spit hoods vary in design, but Park City, Utah, police chief Wade Carpenter said the ones he's seen are made to be breathable and held in place with an elastic around the neck that can easily be broken.

"It wouldn't put any pressure on the carotid arteries in the neck. It wouldn't restrict blood flow to the brain and certainly wouldn't block the mouth or nose," said Carpenter, adding that officers in the ski town have used the devices for years without issues.

University of South Carolina criminal justice professor Geoffrey Alpert said the hoods have reduced the risk of officers and bystanders getting spit on for decades.

"Take away COVID, it's just a nasty thing anyway," Alpert said.

But Prude's death is the second one involving spit hoods to surface since the death of George Floyd at the hands of Minneapolis police sparked a national reckoning on racism and policing. Floyd's death did not involve a spit hood.

Just three weeks after Prude's deadly encounter, a similar one happened in Tucson, Arizona. Police handcuffed and placed a spit hood on the head of a naked man also in distress. Carlos Ingram Lopez died after gasping for air and pleading for water.

In both cases, details about that death didn't emerge until weeks after.

In another similar episode, a 45-year-old man died in 2015 after police in Bernalillo, New Mexico, placed him in a spit hood, possibly incorrectly.

A responding sergeant from a neighboring community told investigators a thick cotton part of the hood was covering Ben C de Baca's face, nose and mouth and that he hadn't seen the device "used in that fashion before."

A medical investigator's report concluded that improperly placed spit hoods have the potential to cause suffocation and that in this case, the possibility of asphyxia from use of the hood could not be ruled out. Bernalillo settled a wrongful death lawsuit brought by the man's family for an undisclosed sum.

Prison guards have also used spit hoods, sometimes to deadly effect. Their use varies by jurisdiction — police in Minneapolis deploy them but those in New York City don't. The NYPD, the nation's largest police force, said a team of police EMTs has only recently started testing their effectiveness in the wake of the pandemic.

When British police started using the hoods in recent years, civil liberties advocate Martha Spurrier slammed them as "primitive, cruel and degrading." Even some senior police officers have agreed.

Balsamo reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Jim Mustian in New York, Colleen Long in Washington, Jill Lawless in London and Amy Forliti in Minneapolis contributed to this report.

Follow Sisak at twitter.com/mikesisak and Balsamo at twitter.com/mikebalsamo1

Trump denies calling US war dead 'losers,' 'suckers'

By ZEKE MILLER and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump defended himself Friday against accusations that he mocked American war dead as his Democratic rival, Joe Biden, intensified efforts to frame the election as a referendum on the president's character.

The allegations, sourced anonymously in The Atlantic, describe multiple offensive comments by the president toward fallen and captured U.S. service-members, including calling World War I dead at an American military cemetery in France as "losers" and "suckers" in 2018. The reported comments, many of which were confirmed independently by the AP, are shining a fresh light on Trump's previous public disparaging of American troops and military families and opening a new political vulnerability for the president less

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than two months from Election Day.

"This is more made up Fake News given by disgusting & jealous failures in a disgraceful attempt to influence the 2020 Election!" Trump tweeted late Thursday, as aides mounted a concerted defense of the president, with Trump's campaign and allies taking to social media and broadcast interviews to denounce the report.

"I've done more for the military than almost anyone else," he added Friday in the Oval Office.

The president was alleged to have made the comments as he was set to visit the Aisne-Marne American Cemetery during a trip to France in Nov. 2018. The White House said the visit was scrubbed because foggy weather made the helicopter trip from Paris too risky and the 90-minute drive deemed infeasible.

Trump, who traveled to Pennsylvania on Thursday, told reporters after he returned to Washington that the Atlantic report was "a disgraceful situation" by a "terrible magazine."

"I would be willing to swear on anything that I never said that about our fallen heroes," Trump told the reporters, gathered on the tarmac in the dark. "There is nobody that respects them more. No animal — nobody — what animal would say such a thing?"

On a call with reporters hosted by the Biden campaign Friday, Illinois Sen. Tammy Duckworth lambasted Trump for "belittling the sacrifices of those who have shown more bravery than he's capable of."

"Of course he thinks about war selfishly," Duckworth said of Trump. "He thinks of it as a transactional cost, instead of in human life and American blood spilled, because that's how he's viewed his whole life. He doesn't understand other people's bravery and courage because he's never had any of his own."

Duckworth, a retired Army National Guard lieutenant colonel who lost both of her legs in the Iraq War, has been a prominent critic of Trump's handling of military issues. Knocking Trump for allegedly inventing an injury to avoid serving in the Vietnam War, Duckworth said that she'd "take my wheelchair and my titanium legs over Donald Trump's supposed bone spurs any day."

Khizr Khan, the Gold Star father who drew national attention after criticizing Trump during the 2016 Democratic National Convention, joined Duckworth on the call and said that Trump's "life is a testament to selfishness."

"Words we say are windows into our souls. So when Donald Trump calls anyone who places their lives in service of others a loser, we understand Trump's soul," he said. Khan's son, Humayun, was killed in action in Iraq in 2004.

In 2016, Trump responded to the criticism from Khan by claiming he'd made sacrifices of his own and making an Islamophobic attack on Khan's wife, Ghazala Khan, who was wearing a headscarf at the Democratic convention, saying, "She had nothing to say. She probably — maybe she wasn't allowed to have anything to say. You tell me."

Biden said that "if the revelations in today's Atlantic article are true, then they are yet another marker of how deeply President Trump and I disagree about the role of the President of the United States."

"Duty, honor, country — those are the values that drive our service members," Biden said in a statement Thursday night, adding that if he is elected president, "I will ensure that our American heroes know that I will have their back and honor their sacrifice — always." Biden's son Beau served in Iraq in 2008-09.

Trump also denied calling the late Arizona Sen. John McCain, a decorated Navy officer who was a prisoner of war in Vietnam, a "loser" after his Aug. 2018 death.

Trump acknowledged Thursday he was "never a fan" of McCain and disagreed with him, but said he still respected him and approved everything to do with his "first-class triple-A funeral" without hesitation because "I felt he deserved it."

In 2015, shortly after launching his presidential candidacy, Trump publicly blasted McCain, saying "He's not a war hero." He added, "I like people who weren't captured." At the time, Trump also shared a news article on Twitter calling McCain a "loser."

Trump only amplified his criticism of McCain as the Arizona lawmaker grew critical of his acerbic style of politics, culminating in a late-night "no" vote scuttling Trump's plans to repeal the Affordable Care Act. That vote shattered what few partisan loyalties bound the two men, and Trump has continued to attack McCain for that vote, even posthumously.

"It's sad the depths that people will go to during a lead-up to a presidential campaign to try to smear

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somebody," said White House Chief of Staff Mark Meadows Thursday.

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo told "Fox & Friends" on Friday that he was with the president for a good part of the trip to France. "I never heard him use the words that are described in that article," Pompeo said.

Former White House press secretary Sarah Sanders tweeted that she was part of the discussion about visiting the cemetery. "This never happened. I have sat in the room when our President called family members after their sons were killed in action and it was heart-wrenching. ... I am disgusted by this false attack."

—
AP writers James LaPorta and Jill Colvin contributed.

Russia publishes virus vaccine results, weeks after approval

By DARIA LITVINOVA and MARIA CHENG Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — Russian scientists have belatedly published first results from early trials into the experimental Sputnik V vaccine, which received government approval last month but drew considerable criticism from experts, as the shots had only been tested on several dozen people before being more widely administered.

In a report published in the journal *Lancet* on Friday, developers of the vaccine said it appeared to be safe and to prompt an antibody response in all 40 people tested in the second phase of the study within three weeks. However, the authors noted that participants were only followed for 42 days, the study sample was small and there was no placebo or control vaccine used.

One part of the safety trial included only men and the study mostly involved people in their 20s and 30s, so it is unclear how the vaccine might work in older populations most at risk of the more severe complications of COVID-19.

International experts remained cautious over the vaccine's effectiveness and safety. Nevertheless, its Russian developers made some bold claims Friday after presenting the findings to reporters.

Professor Alexander Gintsburg, director of the Moscow-based Gamaleya Institute that developed the vaccine with assistance from Russia's Defense Ministry, told reporters that the vaccine triggers "sufficient" immune response "to counteract any imaginable dose infecting (a person) with COVID-19."

"We are ready to assert that the protective effect of this vaccine will be detectable and remain at a proper level for 2 years, or maybe even more," Gintsburg said, without providing any evidence to back up the claim.

According to the *Lancet* report, the trials took place in two Russian hospitals involving healthy adults aged 18 to 60, who were required to self-isolate once they registered for the trial. They remained in the hospital for the first 28 days of the study after being vaccinated.

One part of the study involved a frozen formulation of the vaccine while another studied a freeze-dried variation. Scientists said the frozen vaccine would be suitable for current global vaccine supply chains while the freeze-dried version could be used in hard-to-reach areas.

Both vaccines used a modified version of the common cold-causing adenovirus to carry genes for the spike protein in the coronavirus, as a way to prime the body to react if a real virus causing COVID-19 comes along. That's a similar technology to the vaccines being developed by China's CanSino Biologics and Britain's Oxford University and AstraZeneca.

Russian researchers said all 40 participants produced a neutralizing antibody response, molecules which are key to blocking infection. The vaccines also appeared to trigger a reaction in the body's T-Cells, which help by destroying cells that have been invaded by the virus.

The most commonly reported side effects were pain at the injection site, fever, headache, and muscle or joint pain.

In an accompanying commentary, Dr. Naor Bar-Zeev of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and colleagues wrote that the studies were "encouraging but small." They said that the immune reaction elicited by the vaccine "bodes well" but that "efficacy for any COVID-19 vaccine has not yet been shown."

Bar-Zeev and colleagues said that proving the safety of any coronavirus vaccine would be critical.

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"Since vaccines are given to healthy people and during the COVID-19 pandemic, potentially to everyone after approval following (advanced) trials, safety is paramount," the scientists wrote.

Dr. Ohid Yaqub, senior lecturer at the Science Policy Research Unit at the University of Sussex, said the limited study size was not enough for regulatory approval, which the vaccine received last month.

"The design and size of (an early) study is not anywhere near sufficient for widely recognized standards of approval. The study was not randomized, and it was not large enough to detect rarer safety issues," Yaqub said.

The vaccine was approved by the Russian government with much fanfare on Aug. 11. President Vladimir Putin personally broke the news on national television and said that one of his daughters had already been vaccinated, experienced slight side effects and developed antibodies. Since then, several high-profile officials also said they had taken the shots, including Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin and Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu.

It remains unclear whether they were among the volunteers in clinical trials or accessed the vaccine in some other way.

Russian health authorities announced advanced trials of the vaccine among 40,000 volunteers last month. According to official records, it will be a randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled study. Officials also mentioned that vaccination of risk groups, such as doctors and teachers, may be carried out "in parallel" — but it remains unclear whether it will be done as part of the study.

Michael Head, a senior research fellow in global health at Britain's University of Southampton, agreed the Russian vaccine appeared to be "promising," but that further studies were needed.

"At this stage, we do not actually know if the vaccine works," he said. Head was not linked to the Russian research. "Public confidence in any vaccine is vital," he said in a statement, calling suggestions from Russian and other authorities that a vaccine could be fast-tracked without the proper research "problematic."

"Ultimately, we must not pour additional fuel on the anti-vaccine lobby fires," he said.

Numerous public health experts expressed concern last month that Russia had approved the Sputnik V vaccine before publishing any data.

The World Health Organization said last month it had started discussions with Russia to obtain more details about their candidate vaccine. But on Friday, WHO spokeswoman Dr. Margaret Harris said she "had no specific information on Russia ... and who is sharing what (data) with who." She said the agency's aim was "to get all countries together and get all the information."

Cheng reported from London. Jamey Keaten in Geneva contributed to this report.

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

Online bans fail to silence US extremists drawn to protests

By MICHAEL KUNZELMAN Associated Press

SILVER SPRING, Md. (AP) — After Wisconsin protests over Jacob Blake's shooting by police turned deadly last week, a member of an anti-government extremist group started posting updates from the scene for comrades in an encrypted chat room.

The group member named "Jake" said "two of my guys" rushed in to help after a gunman later identified as 17-year-old Kyle Rittenhouse shot and killed two people Aug. 25 on a street in Kenosha.

"Jake" was posting on the Keybase messaging platform, where the group migrated after Discord banned it from its instant messaging service in early July.

For months, the nationwide protests against racial injustice and COVID-19 lockdown orders have attracted all manner of extremists using online platforms to plan, coordinate and drum up support for their activities.

Facebook, Discord and other mainstream internet services have banned accounts linked to anti-government extremists, but the recent protests in Kenosha and elsewhere illustrate how easy it can be for them

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to work around these digital roadblocks.

"The whole landscape is too big and each individual player is very big," said Elon University Professor Megan Squire, a computer scientist who studies online extremism. "The number of people you would need to truly police this on the platforms is inadequate right now. The resources just aren't there."

Squire has been monitoring the messaging site to which "Jake" and hundreds of other users belong, collecting and reviewing their messages.

One of the posts about the Kenosha shooting said one of Jake's "guys" provided unspecified medical care while the other was "escorting the kid to safety," presumably referring to Rittenhouse.

Later, other members of the self-described "private intelligence agency" discussed whether the violence in Kenosha would be the catalyst for a civil war, according to a screenshot taken by Squire.

"Doubt it," the group's anonymous founder wrote. "Things like that take time, which is what is happening now."

"Ah. Gotcha," a user named "warhammer_actual" replied. "This is just one part of that escalation. Makes sense."

On June 30, Facebook announced that it had removed hundreds of Facebook and Instagram accounts, pages and groups linked to the anti-government "boogaloo" movement.

Boogaloo supporters, who use the loose movement's name as a slang term for a second civil war or collapse of civilization, frequently show up at protests armed with rifles and wearing Hawaiian shirts under body armor.

To avoid the ban, some boogaloo groups relaunched pages under innocuous sounding names. A day before the Kenosha protest shooting, a post on a private Facebook group with more than 2,000 members called "CNN Journalist Support Group" said "bois of the movement" would be "making their presence felt" in the city, wearing "regular clothes" or combat apparel instead of "luau" shirts.

"These are well known bois who no longer can post to social media due to the purge," said the post, according to a screenshot collected by the Tech Transparency Project, a research initiative of the nonprofit Campaign for Accountability.

Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg said the company made a mistake in not removing the page of a militia group that called for armed civilians to enter Kenosha amid the violent protests that erupted after police shot Blake, a Black man, in the back seven times, leaving him paralyzed.

The page for the "Kenosha Guard" violated Facebook's policies and had been flagged by "a bunch of people," Zuckerberg said in a video posted last Friday on Facebook.

An Aug. 12 report by the Tech Transparency Project found that Facebook's "slow and ineffective response" has allowed many boogaloo groups to avoid detection using simple re-branding techniques.

Project director Katie Paul said at least four private Facebook groups for "boogaloo" supporters used their accounts to promote plans to attend the protests in Kenosha before the shooting.

"This is systematic failure. It's not a one-off incident," Paul said. "Whatever Facebook's measures are, they are not effective and they are not being properly applied."

The boogaloo has been linked to a recent string of domestic terrorism plots, including the arrests of three Nevada men accused of conspiring to incite violence during protests in Las Vegas.

Authorities also found a boogaloo connection in the fatal shooting of a federal security officer outside an Oakland courthouse and the ambush killing of a California sheriff's deputy. Steven Carrillo, an Air Force sergeant charged with the killings, was tied to the boogaloo movement from social media posts and phrases he wrote in his own blood.

Ryan Balch, an Army veteran who spent time with Rittenhouse on the night of the shooting, said as many as 32 boogaloo adherents were in Kenosha that day. Balch described himself as a "Boog Boi" in a series of Facebook messages to the Chicago Sun-Times, but he said Rittenhouse had no connection to the boogaloo movement.

"Agitators did seem to focus on him because he seemed like an easier target than the rest of us," Balch said, according to the newspaper.

The group that Squire has been tracking on Keybase says it doesn't promote the boogaloo or any other movement, but she said that denial rings hollow based on her review of their communications on the messaging platform.

"It's pretty obvious that they're just saying that because they're worried they're going to be removed from the service," she said. "In their minds, they're planning for this war."

The user named "Jake" said he didn't see anybody in Kenosha "repping the redacted," an apparent reference to the boogaloo. "Most people had all their patches removed," he wrote.

"Stay frosty bois," wrote another user, named "vbboisrep."

Squire said the group had as many as 1,500 members on Discord before its ban. It has roughly 500 members on Keybase, where it has separate channels for discussing recent "riots" in Minneapolis, Chicago, Atlanta and other cities.

Stamping out the online footprints of extremist groups is "basically impossible unless the companies get together, unless there is a clear mandate to remove this stuff en masse," Squire said.

But the bans like the ones imposed by Facebook and Discord typically shrink the groups' membership and audience when they move to a new platform, she added.

"So it's still worth doing," Squire said.

Portland's grim reality: 100 days of protests, many violent

By GILLIAN FLACCUS Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP) — Once hailed as one of the most livable U.S. cities, Portland, Oregon, is grappling with an uncertain future as it reaches a stunning benchmark: 100 consecutive nights of racial injustice protests marred by vandalism, chaos — and the killing of a supporter of President Donald Trump.

The demonstrations that started in late May after the police killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis have divided residents and embarrassed the city's beleaguered Democratic mayor.

They have also transformed Oregon's largest city into a centerpiece of Trump's "law and order" re-election campaign theme, even as activists slam the police for aggressive tactics.

The slaying of the right-wing Trump supporter gunned down after he came downtown last weekend with a pro-Trump caravan of pickup trucks pushed the crisis further toward a breaking point. The prime suspect in the shooting, self-described anti-fascist Michael Forest Reinoehl, was killed Thursday night by law enforcement.

Amid the turbulence, Portland now finds itself as a proxy for the culture wars sweeping the nation.

The exact date of the 100-day milestone depends on how the protests are counted, but everyone agrees the benchmark falls over the Labor Day weekend. Black Lives Matter protests, vigils and speeches marking the occasion are planned over three days and Trump supporters are planning another caravan rally.

The events come after officials in suburban counties refused a call from Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat, for their deputies to assist Portland police following last weekend's violence.

"The worst-case scenario is that there's another incident and it just touches off so much that the city just can't survive it very well," said Ron Louie, a former suburban Portland police chief, author of a crisis negotiation book and current Portland State University professor.

And Trump has stepped up threats to send U.S. agents back to the city, like his administration did in July — when agents brought in to stop attacks on a federal courthouse and other U.S. property only reinvigorated the protesters.

Thousands of demonstrators turned out nightly, with some hurling fireworks, rocks, ball bearings and bottles at the agents. They responded with huge plumes of tear gas, rubber bullets and flash-bang grenades that created chaotic, war zone-like scenes.

Those clashes ended July 31, when state police took over from U.S. agents under a deal brokered by Brown and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security. But smaller protests have continued, with groups of 100 to 200 people marching nightly. Clashes are common.

The protesters want city officials to slash the police budget and reallocate that money to Black residents

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and businesses. Some demonstrators are also demanding the resignation of Mayor Ted Wheeler, a white man and the scion of a timber company fortune.

During the clashes, some have broken windows, set small fires, punctured police car tires with spikes, shined lasers in officers' eyes and pelted them with rocks and frozen water bottles.

The tension reached a new high last weekend when the pro-Trump caravan motored into downtown, with some shooting paintballs and spraying bear repellent at Black Lives Matter protesters who tried to block the streets.

Fist fights broke out and, as night fell, Trump supporter Aaron "Jay" Danielson, 39, was fatally shot as he walked on a sidewalk. Reinoehl, the suspected shooter, was killed late Thursday by a law enforcement task force sent to arrest him outside Lacey, Washington.

After Danielson's killing, Brown sent state police back into the city to help local police. Those troopers have been deputized as federal law enforcement officers by the U.S. Marshal's Service, which means protesters arrested by state troopers far from federal property could now face prosecution by the U.S. government.

The move appears to be a way to get around Portland's newly elected local prosecutor, who has dismissed hundreds of cases against demonstrators arrested for low-level, non-violent offenses.

Meanwhile, Wheeler is politically sandwiched between Trump and local business owners who want order restored and left-wing groups demanding his resignation for what they call his failure to rein in local police.

A video of an officer chasing down and tackling a protester and then punching him repeatedly in the face this week inflamed calls for more police accountability.

Wheeler announced this week he would move out of his upscale condominium complex after protesters broke windows and set fires there, spooking his neighbors.

"These acts of violence distract us. And they must stop," Wheeler said on Facebook.

Lost amid the escalating tensions are the voices of the city's Black residents, who are divided about the best way to keep up the momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement.

Some credit the protests with maintaining pressure on elected officials to address systemic racism, while acknowledging that vandalism and violence by a small subset of protesters distracts from the movement's message.

"It's a necessary place we're in," said Shanice Clarke, one of the founders of the Black Millennial Movement. "I think the whole notion of folks putting their bodies on the line is a pretty powerful act — and a necessary one — especially when that tactic is sometimes the only one available to people like me."

Others say the street activism — and particularly violence — is taking attention away from other urgent issues affecting the Black community.

A surge in gun violence and homicides has disproportionately impacted the Black community this summer and police say they are stretched so thin that they don't have time to adequately investigate — or even respond to routine calls.

Shootings in July reached a 30-year high and nearly two-thirds of the victims were Black.

Police Chief Chuck Lovell, who is Black, said the shooting death of a 16-year-old Black boy in a park in recent days was drowned out by national media attention on the killing of the Trump supporter.

"Portland desperately needs calm," Lovell said.

Behind the scenes, progress toward racial equity has advanced quietly.

A coalition called Reimagine Oregon has advanced statewide proposals to end systemic racism in everything from housing access to education to policing. Brown this week signed into law expanded statewide restrictions on police use-of-force.

The state legislature last month approved a fund to help finance Black-owned businesses and community organizations, launching it with \$62 million in federal coronavirus relief money.

And the Portland City Council in June reallocated nearly \$16 million from the police budget to community programs focused on the needs of people of color by eliminating a special gun violence task force and school resource officers in three urban school districts.

Protester Shane Braswell, who has marched in at least 60 of Portland's demonstrations, said people who

oppose or are indifferent to the goals of Black Lives Matter need to “wake up and understand that we’re going to make progress either way.”

“You can either get alongside us and move with us or you’re eventually going to be left behind,” he said.

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

Boseman honored as hometown hero in native South Carolina

ANDERSON, S.C. (AP) — Chadwick Boseman was remembered as a hometown hero who brought a sense of pride to his native Anderson, South Carolina.

The city paid tribute to Boseman in a public memorial on Thursday evening. The actor, who became widely popular through “Black Panther,” was honored after he shockingly died last week at the age of 43 following a private four-year battle with colon cancer.

A viewing of “Black Panther” was held at an outdoor amphitheater where people practiced social distancing. Most attendees wore masks, while others — mostly kids — dressed up in Black Panther costumes.

Some artwork of Boseman was displayed onstage during the tribute.

“He is the epitome of black excellence,” said Deanna Brown-Thomas, the daughter of legendary singer James Brown and president of her father’s family foundation. She remembered when Boseman visited her family in Augusta, Georgia, before the actor portrayed her father in the 2014 film “Get on Up.”

Boseman was a playwright who acted and directed in theater before playing the Marvel Comics character King T’Challa in “Black Panther,” which became one of the top-grossing films in history. He also wowed audiences in his portrayal of other Black icons, including Jackie Robinson in “42” and Thurgood Marshall in “Marshall,” and shined in other films such as Spike Lee’s “Da 5 Bloods.”

Brown-Thomas joked about how her family teased Boseman for being too tall to play her father. But she said Boseman was perfect for the role, admiring his humility as a high-profile actor.

“He wasn’t Hollywood, and that’s what I loved about him,” she said.

Anderson mayor Terence Roberts said people around town always knew Boseman would be special.

“You know, he was always reading and always trying to get better,” Roberts said. “So from a work ethic point of view, it just doesn’t happen overnight. He showed us that we’ve got to hone our skills and just persevere.”

In Anderson, a city of about 28,000 people, “there’s deep sadness and grief, but it has a bounce out of it that is such inspiration,” city spokeswoman Beth Batson said. That’s because Boseman inspired so many people in the community, she said.

“It has been amazing to watch the grief, so to speak, blossom,” she said. “Now young people say ‘what can I do, what can I be.’”

Pastor Samuel Neely said Boseman was active in church, speech and debate. The pastor said he baptized Boseman. He also praised Boseman for having high character.

“Even though he plays these different people, I still see the person I knew as a child,” said Neely, who was Boseman’s childhood pastor. “When I see him, it’s almost like seeing my own child. He’s still Chad.”

Thursday’s tribute was not a funeral, and members of Boseman’s immediate family did not plan to be in attendance, Boseman’s publicist, Nicki Fioravante, said in a statement.

“On behalf of the Boseman Family, we appreciate the community’s outpouring of love and admiration for Chadwick,” Fioravante said.

Associated Press Entertainment Writer Jonathan Landrum Jr. contributed to this report from Los Angeles.

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Saturday, Sept. 5, the 249th day of 2020. There are 117 days left in the year.

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Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 5, 1972, the Palestinian group Black September attacked the Israeli Olympic delegation at the Munich Games, killing 11 Israelis and a police officer. German forces killed five of the gunmen.

On this date:

In 1774, the first Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia.

In 1793, the Reign of Terror began during the French Revolution as the National Convention instituted harsh measures to repress counter-revolutionary activities.

In 1864, voters in Louisiana approved a new state constitution abolishing slavery.

In 1939, four days after war had broken out in Europe, President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued a proclamation declaring U.S. neutrality in the conflict.

In 1961, President John F. Kennedy signed legislation making aircraft hijackings a federal crime.

In 1975, President Gerald R. Ford escaped an attempt on his life by Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme, a disciple of Charles Manson, in Sacramento, California.

In 1984, the space shuttle Discovery ended its inaugural flight as it landed at Edwards Air Force Base in California.

In 1986, four hijackers who had seized a Pan Am jumbo jet on the ground in Karachi, Pakistan, opened fire when the lights inside the plane failed; a total of 20 people were killed before Pakistani commandos stormed the jetliner.

In 1995, France ended its three-year moratorium on nuclear tests, setting off an underground blast on a South Pacific atoll.

In 1997, breaking the royal reticence over the death of Princess Diana, Britain's Queen Elizabeth II delivered a televised address in which she called her former daughter-in-law "a remarkable person." Mother Teresa died in Calcutta, India, at age 87; conductor Sir Georg Solti (johrj SHOL'-tee) died in France at age 84.

In 2016, Phyllis Schlafly, the outspoken conservative activist who helped defeat the Equal Rights Amendment in the 1970s and founded the Eagle Forum political group, died in St. Louis at age 92.

In 2018, The New York Times published an opinion piece from an anonymous senior administration official claiming to be part of an internal "resistance" working to thwart President Donald Trump's "worst inclinations;" Trump responded that if such a "gutless" person exists, "the Times must, for National Security purposes, turn him/her over to the government at once!"

Ten years ago: A Los Angeles police officer shot and killed Manuel Jaminez, a Guatemalan immigrant, in a case that sparked angry protests. (A civilian oversight panel later said the officer was justified in using deadly force against Jaminez, who witnesses said was drunk and threatening passersby with a knife.) Jefferson Thomas, one of nine Black students to integrate a Little Rock high school in America's first major battle over school segregation, died in Columbus, Ohio, at age 67.

Five years ago: Germans waving welcome signs in German, English and Arabic gathered at a train station to welcome the first group of a wave of migrants fleeing conflict in the Middle East, Afghanistan and Africa.

One year ago: A jury in Oakland, California, acquitted one of the two men charged in a deadly warehouse fire and deadlocked on whether to convict or acquit the other. (Derick Almena is scheduled to be tried again in October on manslaughter charges; he was the founder of an artists' collective at the site where the fast-moving fire trapped and killed 36 partygoers in December, 2016.) The Education Department said it was fining Michigan State University a record \$4.5 million for failing to respond adequately to sexual assault complaints about Larry Nassar, a campus sports doctor who molested elite gymnasts and other female athletes. Drug chains CVS and Walgreens and grocery chain Wegmans joined retailers requesting that customers refrain from openly carrying firearms in their stores, even where state laws allow it. The NFL opened its 100th season in Chicago, where the Green Bay Packers beat the Chicago Bears 10-3 in the season's first game.

Today's Birthdays: Comedian-actor Bob Newhart is 91. Actor-singer Carol Lawrence is 88. Actor Lucille Soong is 85. Former NFL All-Pro quarterback and college football Hall of Famer Billy Kilmer is 81. Actor William Devane is 81. Actor George Lazenby is 81. Actor Raquel Welch is 80. Movie director Werner Herzog is 78. Singer Al Stewart is 75. Actor-director Dennis Dugan is 74. College Football Hall of Famer Jerry LeVias

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is 74. Singer Loudon Wainwright III is 74. Soul/rock musician Mel Collins is 73. "Cathy" cartoonist Cathy Guisewite (GYZ'-wyt) is 70. Actor Michael Keaton is 69. Actor Debbie Turner-Larson (Marta in "The Sound of Music") is 64. Actor Kristian Alfonso is 57. Rhythm-and-blues singer Terry Ellis is 57. Rock musician Brad Wilk is 52. TV personality Dweezil Zappa is 51. Actor Rose McGowan is 47. Actor Carice Van Houten is 44. Rock musician Kyle O'Quin (Portugal. The Man) is 35. Actor Andrew Ducote is 34. Olympic gold medal figure skater Yuna Kim is 30. Actor Skandar Keynes is 29.