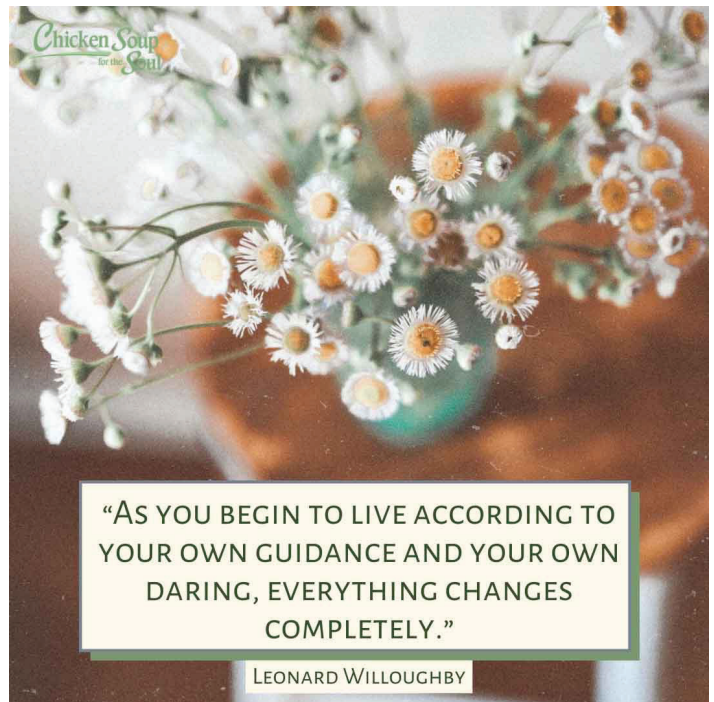


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**GDILIVE.COM**

School Board  
Meeting

7 p.m., Mon., Sept. 14, 2020  
Groton Elementary Commons



**OPEN:** Recycling Trailer in Groton

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



**A county deputy is pictured at the scene of the crash which was covered up to protect the evidence.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

## **Devastating end to the Groton Fly-In**

The second annual Groton Fly-In at the Groton Municipal Airport came to a devastating end late Sunday morning when an airplane crashed just outside the airport in the ditch of 128th Avenue. One victim died on the scene, and the other was transported to Avera St. Luke's Hospital, where they were pronounced dead, according to the Brown County Coroner Michael Carlsen.

The National Transportation Safety Board and Federal Aviation Administration will be investigating.

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The Minnesota Vikings opened the regular season with a home game against division rival Packers, who are headed back to Green Bay with a victory while the Vikings are left to pick up the pieces. There is a lot to process after the 43-34 loss, from the defensive disappointment to the "home field advantage" that was non-existent.

The game started off on the right foot. Green Bay got the ball first and drove all the way down the field, but the Vikings' defense stiffened up in the red zone, holding the Packers to a field goal.

On their ensuing offensive possession, the Vikings went 75 yards on eight plays, capping off the drive with a one-yard Dalvin Cook touchdown (Cook, by the way, received a five-year, \$62.5 million extension the day before the game). On the Packers' next drive, they once again drove down the field but stalled in the red zone after a failed fourth-and-goal attempt. This was where the game turned sideways for the Vikings...

The Vikings gave up a safety two plays later, then gave up a field goal, giving the Packers an 8-7 lead. The next drives went like this:

Vikings – 3 plays, -5 yards, punt

Packers – 11 plays, 60 yards, touchdown

Vikings – 2 plays, 0 yards, interception

Packers – 2 plays, 45 yards, touchdown

The Vikings got the ball back with 14 seconds left in the half and managed to move down the field and kick a field goal, going into halftime down 22-10.

Both teams played hot potato to start the second half until the Packers reached the end zone again with 9 seconds left in the third quarter. The Vikings' offense went into hurry-up mode and impressively scored touchdowns on their next three possessions (including 3/3 two-point attempts). However, the Vikings defense was unable to stop Green Bay, who also scored three straight touchdowns to prevent any chance of a Vikings' comeback. By that point the Vikings' defense was exhausted, having been on the field over 41 minutes (compared to under 19 minutes for the offense).

Kirk Cousins: 19/25, 259 yards, 2 TD, 1 INT

Dalvin Cook: 12 carries, 50 yards, 2 TD

Adam Thielen: 6 catches, 110 yards, 2 TD

Eric Kendricks: 10 tackles, 1 tackle for a loss

The play that made the biggest impact on the outcome of this game happened early in the second quarter. The score was 7-3 and the Vikings' defense had just forced a turnover. The Vikings were starting from their own 2-yard line, which is always risky. After a failed run by Cook, Cousins faked the handoff before dropping back to pass. The Vikings weren't able to pick up the cornerback blitz and Cousins ended up on his backside, giving Green Bay two points and the ball. Had the Vikings been able to pick up the blitz, Cousins had Thielen wide open running down the left sideline. It was a gamble to call that play in that situation. Had it worked, it could have changed the outcome of the game. It didn't work, however, and the game went downhill from there.

Looking ahead, the Vikings (0-1) travel to Indianapolis and take on Philip Rivers and the Colts (0-1). The Colts are coming off a loss to the Jaguars, and at this point it's anybody's guess who wins this matchup. I think the Vikings will bounce back and get a nice win next Sunday. Skol!



By Jordan Wright

## When We Know Better

Early in the pandemic, I had occasion to page through photo albums my mother assembled during my childhood. Some of those happy images chilled my physician heart. There I was, two months old, sleeping peacefully on my stomach, in the middle of a sheepskin rug.

There I am, seven years later, seated with my siblings on lawn chairs in the bed of the pickup truck as my parents drove us home. We navigated that 15-mile trip multiple times a week for months.

There I am, age 12, grinning from my perch atop a wagon load of corn. On the way home from the co-op, I would ride standing on the wagon hitch while my siblings sat on the fenders.

Bear in mind, my parents seemed especially safety conscious for the time as evidenced by snapshots of us buckled into our primitive car seats. And, when sunscreen was introduced, I remember my classmates basking in baby-oil while I was slathering on the SPF4.

As the saying goes, when we know better, we can do better. That philosophy should apply to us all, throughout our lives.

During my years in medical school, we taught parents to lay their babies down for sleep on their backs or their sides. Now we know better...back sleeping on a firm mattress with a taut fitted sheet and no blankets or teddy bears, presents the lowest risk of SIDS. And, research continues.

Early in my career, we recommended children not be allowed to eat peanut products until at least age two to reduce allergy risk. Now we know better...early introduction to small amounts of peanut butter and other highly allergenic foods is the preferred strategy for most children. Still, research continues.

The history of medicine, and of science, is one of constant research and evolution. Some things we once thought we knew, did not hold up under further objective study. It is critically important that we challenge and examine our options and re-evaluate the way we have always done things. We must expect adjustments and be willing to change when healthier alternatives are revealed.

Obviously, I survived the dangerous situations of my childhood. However, too many children do not. We can never eliminate all risk, but we can, and must, continue to invest in the scientific process, using the best available data to determine the most effective solutions, even to old questions.

Debra Johnston, M.D. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine in Brookings, South Dakota. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org) and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.



By Debra Johnston, M.D ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

## GROTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT #06-6

### School Board Meeting

September 14, 2020 – 7:00 PM – Groton Area Elementary Commons

#### AGENDA:

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

#### POTENTIAL CONFLICTS DISCLOSURE PURSUANT SDCL 23-3

#### CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of minutes of August 10, 2020 school board meeting and August 31, 2020 and September 7, 2020 special school board meetings as drafted or amended.
2. Approval of August 2020 Financial Report, Agency Accounts, and Investments.
3. Acknowledge receipt of public school exemption #21-09B.
4. Acknowledge receipt of public school exemption #21-10.
5. Acknowledge receipt of public school exemption #21-11.
6. Acknowledge receipt of public school exemption #21-12.

#### OLD/CONTINUING BUSINESS:

1. Open Forum for Public Participation...in accordance with Board Policy & Guidelines.
2. Continued discussion and necessary action on District response to COVID-19.
  - a. Amendments to 2020 Back-to-School Plan
  - b. Close Contacts/Quarantines
  - c. Symptom Screenings/School Exclusions
  - d. Discussion on School-Sponsored Activities
  - e. Federal Payroll Tax Deferral
3. Administrative Reports: (a) Superintendent's Report; (b) Principal's Reports; (c) Business Manager Report

#### NEW BUSINESS:

1. Approve academic lane change for Ashley Seeklander MS+30 to MS+45 (\$750).
2. Executive session pursuant SDCL 1-25-2(4) for negotiations.
3. Approve 2020-2021 GASA Negotiated Agreement.

#### ADJOURN

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**#203 in a series**

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

Usual low Sunday numbers. They seem to have been trending lower this past week, so I am hopeful this is a sign of something that can continue. We had 35,300 new cases reported today, a 0.5% increase to 6,537,700 cases. This is our second consecutive day below 40,000, although we've been bouncing around that 40,000-case mark all week. We're now averaging 35,243 per day over the past week and 37,971 over the past two weeks.

Here is our Sunday two-week summary. The rates of growth continue to gradually drop—eighth week of decreases. We still have a lot of states showing growth, some of them places where things had been quiet for a while; I am watching to see whether those are going to start with the steep increases again. I certainly hope not. One-week increase in total cases was 284,900 (4.7%) last week and is 246,700 (3.9%) this week. Two-week increase was 577,500 (10.1%) last week and is 531,560 (8.9%) this week. I'd like to see this decline accelerate, but the direction is a good one.

I track 54 states and US territories, including the District of Columbia; and five of these showed two-week rates of increase greater than 25%. Here are the states with the greatest rate of growth in cases over 14 days with their percentage increase in that time: North Dakota (33.09% - decreased), Hawaii (29.98% - another big decrease), South Dakota (28.75% - decrease), West Virginia (25.61%), and Guam (25.53% - big decrease). Montana fell off this list this week; West Virginia is new to it. We still have 32 states and territories with growth rates above the US growth rate, which is still an indication how widespread the problems are.

We're down to just nine states with 14-day trends that are high and staying high: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Missouri, Arkansas, Wisconsin, Tennessee, and South Carolina. I have five states and territories high and declining; these are Guam, Kansas, Iowa, Alabama, and Mississippi. I have six states low but increasing: Wyoming, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, West Virginia, and Delaware. I have 34 staying low: Hawaii, Alaska, Washington, Oregon, California, Nevada, Idaho, Montana, Colorado, Utah, Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Minnesota, Louisiana, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Kentucky, Maine, Vermont, New York, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, Maryland, District of Columbia, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Puerto Rico, and the US Virgin Islands. There is a fair amount of sometimes inexplicable movement among these categories from day to day. I am looking for a better tool for evaluating these trends; I am not as comfortable with this one as I once was. Stay tuned there for developments.

To the specific trends in various parts of the country, we know we're seeing large numbers of case reports in the Midwest with peaks well above anything seen thus far in this pandemic while national reports have dropped to two-thirds of their earlier peaks. North Dakota, South Dakota, Missouri, and Iowa have added more cases per capita than any other state in recent weeks. These are places that have, until now, avoided the worst when other states were suffering. What they are not seeing so far is the spikes in hospitalizations and deaths; instead, because these surges have been driven largely by younger adults who don't get as sick. Much of the increase has been linked to universities, which accounts for the younger age profile of the cases. With their small populations, these states see an outsized effect from campus outbreaks. Colleges and universities are not the only epicenters of outbreaks; there cases with no obvious link at all.

Worse, test positivity rates are high as well, and that's a pretty good signal there is uncontrolled spread underway and insufficient monitoring of that spread. Public health officials note that control is particularly difficult in these states where "half of the citizens who don't believe or are still not sold that face coverings are critical to the spread of Covid-19," according to the city manager of Maryville, Missouri, Greg McDanel.

Additionally, we are seeing reemergence of some Southern states with increasing caseloads. And there are hot spots popping up in the Northeast and the West as well. I have this mental image of a game of Whack-a-Mole, and it causes me great unease.

New deaths today are well below yesterday at 395, a 0.2% increase to 193,915. This is a standard Sunday thing we're used to by now. The average death count over the past week is just 732, well below last

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week, but far above where we were in May.

There is another update on that superspreader wedding in Maine: We now have over 160 cases with two clusters, one in a jail where 48 inmates, 18 employees, and 17 household contacts have been infected and the other in a nursing home where 18 residents and 15 staff have been infected. There have now been five deaths, four of them associated with the nursing home. I believe it is important to think about ripples when you consider this event; a wedding guest transmitted the virus to a parent who, in turn, infected another child who works in the nursing home. And now four residents of that nursing home have lost their lives. Hard to tell whether the dying's done. We'll keep watching.

An interesting analysis of UCLA hospital and clinic records by UCLA and University of Washington researchers gives rise to the suggestion that the coronavirus may have been circulating in Los Angeles as early as December, that is, before the world was even aware of that unusual cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan, China. They took a look at more than 9.5 million outpatient visits, over half a million emergency room visits, and a quarter of a million hospital admissions going back five years, including in their analysis any patient complaining of a cough. What they found in the 13-week period whose records were studied was a significantly higher number of such cough patients, starting around December 22 and continuing through February, that suggests community spread. At that point no patients were tested for Covid-19, of course; we didn't even know there was something to test for and there was no test.

In clinics, there were 2938 patients seeking help for a cough, 1047 more than five-year average for the period and 739 more than the worst winter of those studied (2016-17). The number of cough patients coming into clinics during the three-month study period was statistically significantly higher in 10 out of the 13 weeks studied. In the emergency rooms, there were 1708 patients, 514 more than the five-year average and 229 more than the busiest year (2018-29). The number in emergency rooms was significantly higher in six of the 13 weeks. And for in-patients, 1138 were treated for acute respiratory failure, 387 more than the five-year average and 210 more than the worst winter (2018-19). This number was significantly higher in seven of the 13 weeks.

Now there are some other things that could account for some of the excess patients seen this past winter: a flu season that peaked earlier than usual this last winter and an outbreak of a vaping-related respiratory illness; but those likely do not account for all of the excess. The authors wrote, "It is possible that some of this excess represents early COVID-19 disease before clinical recognition and testing. We do now know that seven patients treated at Los Angeles County-USC Medical Center in mid-March for what was thought to be flu actually had Covid-19. None of them had visited an area with known cases, so this is evidence there was sustained community transmission in the area well before that. There were similar cases in Santa Clara County (Bay Area—around San Francisco) around the same time, so it seems likely the virus was in the community there also.

So this brings us to the Who-cares? portion of our program. No one thinks this is the last pandemic looming over us from another brand new viral disease never seen before. So it seems likely we may have identified a means for monitoring for such events: Data from medical records can provide sort of an early warning system. The authors add, "Lessons learned from this pandemic will hopefully lead to better preparation and the ability to quickly provide warnings and track the next pandemic." And that would be a very good thing.

There is an online group calling themselves the Survivor Corps who are documenting the symptoms of the so-called long-haulers, people who have recovered from Covid-19, but continue to experience symptoms weeks and months after virus is no longer detectable in them. The group also donates plasma, raises money for research, and provides support to members, some of whom are not being taken seriously by their physicians. There are around 100,000 members who have, in partnership with Indiana University, conducted a survey of symptoms, resulting in a list of 98 different ailments. According to the CDC, one third of people who have had Covid-19 but were not sick enough to be hospitalized are suffering long-term effect. These include damage to nearly every organ system, a reflection of the vascular effects of the virus. Respiratory symptoms are the most common symptom, but there are many neurological issues as

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well, including debilitating headaches. There are also diabetes, lupus, joint inflammation, skin problems, and tachycardia (rapid heartbeat which can lead to strokes or heart attacks). This severity of symptoms coupled with the incidence of the condition are cause for serious concern.

Pfizer has requested FDA approval to expand its US phase 3 vaccine clinical trial from 30,000 to 44,000 participants. I am not knowledgeable enough about the protocols for clinical trials to form an opinion what this could mean. I do know that on occasion trials are expanded, sometimes radically, when people aren't getting sick fast enough, usually because a disease is waning in incidence; but evidence indicates there's still plenty of community transmission around the US. As a result, I haven't a guess what this is about. If pharmaceutical companies were willing to be more transparent about their trial protocols, it would be easier to sort out what's happening here. Transparency is an issue some leading vaccine scientists are speaking out about; saying the companies need to build trust in society for their vaccines and the best way to do this is to provide information to people who can evaluate what they're doing and then reassure the public about any vaccine which is approved. They also point out that we, the taxpayers, have provided a fair amount of financial support for these research efforts and, therefore, the companies owe the public this information. I tend to agree. We shall see how this develops.

As a high school history teacher, Cathy Cluck had to face the possibility she was going to have to teach remotely, something for which she has little experience, so she tried to think of how she could teach effectively when she is not in class with students, but at home with herself. She asked herself, "What can I do now that I wouldn't be able to do in a normal year?"

Her answer was an inspired one: "I just kind of had this idea: that I teach American history and what if I went to the places where American history happened?" So she did. She took a two-week road trip to visit some of the places she teaches about. She streamed her visits for her students and posted highlights to YouTube, creating her tour through history. She started in Colonial Williamsburg and traveled where she could, given coronavirus restrictions.

Now that she's back home, she is planning to go to in-person teaching in a couple of weeks if all goes well. She is also thinking about her next trip if school needs to shut down again. I hope she has a safe and productive school year. Teachers who go out of their way to give students a valuable experience deserve that. Not just when there's a pandemic on.

We can all make an effort to see folks who are doing good work are rewarded as they deserve, if nothing else by showing them some sort of appreciation for their efforts. We'd want that if it were us, right? Let's go to work on that.

Take care. I'll be back.



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## Area COVID-19 Cases

	Sept. 9	Sept. 10	Sept. 11	Sept. 12	Sept. 13	Sept. 14
Minnesota	81,608	81,868	82,249	82,659	83,588	84,311
Nebraska	36,477	36,917	37,373	37,841	38,108	38,188
Montana	8,381	8,468	8,663	8785	8925	9021
Colorado	59,674	59,920	60,185	60,492	60,907	61,324
Wyoming	3,483	3520	3559		3,635	3,679
North Dakota	13,872	14,110	14,443	14,684	15,151	15,577
South Dakota	15,403	15,571	15,834	16,117	16,437	16,638
United States	6,328,099	6,359,313	6,397,547	6,452,607	6,486,401	6,517,326
US Deaths	189,699	190,784	191,802	193,177	193,705	194,036

Minnesota	+383	+260	+381	+410	+929	+723
Nebraska	+502	+440	+456	+468	+267	+80
Montana	+65	+87	+195	+122	+140	+86
Colorado	+187	+246	+265	+307	+415	+417
Wyoming	+58	+37	+39		+76	+44
North Dakota	+71	+238	+337	+244	+468	+431
South Dakota	+105	+169	+263	+283	+320	+201
United States	+28,930	+31,214	+38,234	+55,060	+33,794	+30,925
US Deaths	+533	+1,085	+1,018	+1,375	+528	+331

	Sept. 2	Sept. 3	Sept. 4	Sept. 5	Sept. 6	Sept. 7	Sept. 8
Minnesota	76,355	77,085	78,123	78,966	79,880	80,587	81,225
Nebraska	34,574	34,995	35,469	35,661	35,805	35,886	35,975
Montana	7,509	7,691	7,871	8,018	8,164	8,264	8,316
Colorado	57,775	58,019	58,287	58,655	58,989	59,274	59,487
Wyoming	3,282	3,311	3,334		3,386	3,425	No Report
North Dakota	12,000	12,267	12,629	12,974	13,334	13,631	13,801
South Dakota	13,749	14,003	14,337	14,596	14,889	15,109	15,300
United States	6,073,121	6,115,098	6,151,101	6,210,699	6,246,162	6,277,902	6,299,169
US Deaths	184,644	185,752	186,606	187,874	188,540	188,942	189,166

Minnesota	+491	+730	+1,038	+843	+914	+707	+638
Nebraska	+287	+421	+474	+192	+144	+81	+89
Montana	+88	+182	+180	+147	+146	+100	+52
Colorado	+351	+244	+268	+368	+334	+285	+213
Wyoming	+18	+29	+23		+52	+39	
North Dakota	+184	+267	+362	+345	+360	+297	+170
South Dakota	+240	+254	+334	+259	+293	+220	+191
United States	+41,835	+41,977	+36,003	+59,598	+35,463	+31,740	+21,267
US Deaths	+1,042	+1,108	+854	+1,268	+666	+402	+224

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## September 13 COVID-19 UPDATE

### Groton Daily Independent from State Health Lab Reports

There was one more death recorded in South Dakota. She was in the 80+ age group from Meade County. I'm going to mention that I added a feature today to the county report. I have added a sentence indicating the change from last week. It's nice seeing the daily report, but is actually happening to a county really will not show up unless you see a weekly report. It is something we will do only on the Sunday report. For example, South Dakota's active cases are down 596 from last week. North Dakota's active cases increased by 215 from last week.

Locally, Brown County seen a decrease of 25 active cases from last week and Day County seen a decrease of 5. Those seeing increases from last week were Edmunds with 21, McPherson with 5, Marshall with 6 and Spink with 8.

We lost Miner County in the fully recovered list, leaving just Aurora, Mellette and Sully counties on that list.

Today, South Dakota seen 201 positive and 254 recovered. North Dakota had 431 positive cases and 205 recovered.

Locally, Brown had 16 positive cases and 32 recovered, Day and McPherson each had one positive and one recovered, Marshall had 2 positive and Spink had four positive and one recovered.

#### **Brown County:**

Total Positive: +16 (921) Positivity Rate: 14.0%

Total Tests: 114 (9,168)

Recovered: +32 (775)

Active Cases: -16 (143)

Ever Hospitalized: +0 (31)

Deaths: 0 (3)

Percent Recovered: 84.1% (+2.0)

#### **South Dakota:**

Positive: +201 (16,638 total) Positivity Rates: 7.6%

Total Tests: 2,644 (221,871 total)

Hospitalized: +13 (1,165 total). 110 currently hospitalized (up 1 from yesterday)

Deaths: +1 (184 total)

Recovered: +254 (13,993 total)

Active Cases: -54 (2,461) down 596 from last week

Percent Recovered: 84.1% +0.5

Staffed Hospital Bed Capacity: 4% Covid, 50%

Non-Covid, 46% Available

ICU Bed Capacity: 8% Covid, 62% Non-Covid, 30% Available

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

Fully recovered from positive cases (lost Miner):  
Aurora 42-42, Mellette 25-25, 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, +3 recovered (26 active cases) up 2 from last week

Bennett (1): +2 positive, +2 recovered (14 active cases) down 2 from last week

Bon Homme (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (15 active cases) - no change

Brookings (1): +6 positive, +22 recovered (129 active cases) down 60 from last week

Brown (3): +16 positive, +32 recovered (143 active cases) down 25 from last week

Brule: +1 recovered (11 active cases) down 4 from last week

Buffalo (3): 2 active cases) down 2 from last week

Butte (1): +1 recovered (15 active cases) down 10 from last week

Campbell: 1 active case) up 1 from last week

Charles Mix: +1 positive (12 active cases) up 1 from last week

Clark: 7 active cases) up 2 from last week

Clay (4) +2 positive, +9 recovered (76 active cases) down 116 from last week

Codington (2): +13 positive, +12 recovered (182 active cases) down 1 from last week

Corson (1): 8 active cases) down 7 from last week

Custer (2): +1 positive, +1 recovered (51 active case) down 11 from last week

Davison (2): +2 positive, +3 recovered (21 active cases) down 7 from last week

Day: +1 positive, +1 recovered (6 active cases) down 5 from last week

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Deuel: +1 recovered (10 active cases) down 6 from last week

Dewey: 41 active cases) up 25 from last week

Douglas: +1 positive (14 active cases) up 3 from last week

Edmunds: +6 positive, +5 recovered (28 active cases) up 21 from last week

Fall River (1): +2 positive, +1 recovered (22 active cases) down 12 from last week

Faulk (1): +1 positive, +2 recovered (11 active cases) up 3 from last week

Grant (1): +3 positive, +1 recovered (21 active cases) up 5 from last week

Gregory (1): 3 positive, +2 recovered (24 active cases) No change

Haakon: +1 positive, +1 recovered (4 active cases) up 3 from last week

Hamlin: +3 recovered (10 active cases) down 9 from last week

Hand: 3 active cases) up 1 from last week

Hanson: 1 active case) down 3 from last week

Harding: 1 active case) up 1 from last week

Hughes (4): +3 positive, +4 recovered (20 active cases) down 1 from last week

Hutchinson (1): +3 positive, +6 recovered (12 active cases) down 8 from last week

Hyde: 3 active cases) up 1 from last week

Jackson (1): +1 positive (1 active case) up 1 from last week

Jerauld (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (5 active cases) up 1 from last week

Jones: 3 active cases) up 1 from last week

Kingsbury: +1 positive, +1 recovered (9 active cases) up 4 from last week

Lake (6): +3 positive (32 active cases) up 16 from last week

Lawrence (4): +3 positive, +10 recovered (62 active cases) down 43 from last week

Lincoln (2): +15 positive, +10 recovered (153 active cases) down 10 from last week

Lyman (3): +2 recovered (2 active cases) down 11 from last week

Marshall: +2 positive (8 active cases) up 6 from last week

McCook (1): +1 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases) up 5 from last week

McPherson: +1 positive, +1 recovered (8 active case) up 5 from last week

Meade (3): +6 positive, +7 recovered (79 active

cases) down 57 from last week

Mellette: Fully Recovered) down 1 from last week

Miner: +2 positive (2 active cases) No change

Minnehaha (74): +35 positive, +43 recovered (541 active cases) down 119 from last week

Moody: +3 recovered (13 active cases) down 1 from last week

Oglala Lakota (3): +3 positive, +1 recovered (22 active cases) down 12 from last week

Pennington (33): +29 positive, +34 recovered (353 active cases) down 96 from last week

Perkins: +1 recovered (5 active cases) down 8 from last week

Potter: +2 positive, +1 recovered (13 active cases) down 5 from last week

Roberts (1): +1 positive (25 active cases) up 9 from last week

Sanborn: +1 recovered (4 active cases) down 1 from last week

Spink: +4 positive, +1 recovered (30 active cases) up 8 from last week

Stanley: +2 positive (5 active case) up 3 from last week

Sully: Fully Recovered - no change

Todd (5): +1 positive (8 active cases) up 2 from last week

Tripp: +2 positive, +2 recovered (12 active cases) up 9 from last week

Turner: +2 positive, +3 recovered (17 active cases) down 4 from last week

Union (5): +1 positive, +5 recovered (43 active cases) down 1 from last week

Walworth: +3 positive (24 active cases) up 4 from last week

Yankton (3): +7 positive, +8 recovered (52 active cases) down 14 from last week

Ziebach: 15 active cases) up 3 from last week

North Dakota Dept. of Health Report  
COVID-19 Daily Report, September 13:

- 8,505 tests (2,292)
- 15,577 positives (+431)
- 12,655 recovered (+205)
- 168 deaths (+1)
- 2,754 active cases (+220)

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County	Positive Cases	Recovered Cases	Negative Persons	Deceased	Community Spread
Aurora	42	42	463	0	None
Beadle	664	629	2185	9	Moderate
Bennett	44	29	616	1	Substantial
Bon Homme	65	49	1044	1	Moderate
Brookings	595	465	3949	1	Substantial
Brown	921	775	6128	3	Substantial
Brule	80	69	933	0	Substantial
Buffalo	113	108	692	3	Minimal
Butte	65	49	949	1	Substantial
Campbell	5	4	131	0	None
Charles Mix	129	117	1876	0	Minimal
Clark	27	20	477	0	Minimal
Clay	501	421	2041	4	Substantial
Codington	570	386	4049	2	Substantial
Corson	72	63	667	1	Substantial
Custer	154	101	872	2	Substantial
Davison	171	148	2997	2	Substantial
Day	47	41	825	0	Moderate
Deuel	64	54	563	0	Substantial
Dewey	103	62	2617	0	Substantial
Douglas	43	29	491	0	Moderate
Edmunds	63	35	513	0	Moderate
Fall River	77	54	1204	1	Substantial
Faulk	48	36	261	1	Substantial
Grant	63	41	937	1	Substantial
Gregory	57	32	557	1	Substantial
Haakon	11	7	312	0	Minimal
Hamlin	76	66	878	0	Substantial
Hand	18	13	395	0	None
Hanson	24	23	286	0	Minimal
Harding	3	2	60	0	None
Hughes	163	139	2366	4	Moderate
Hutchinson	64	51	1080	1	Substantial

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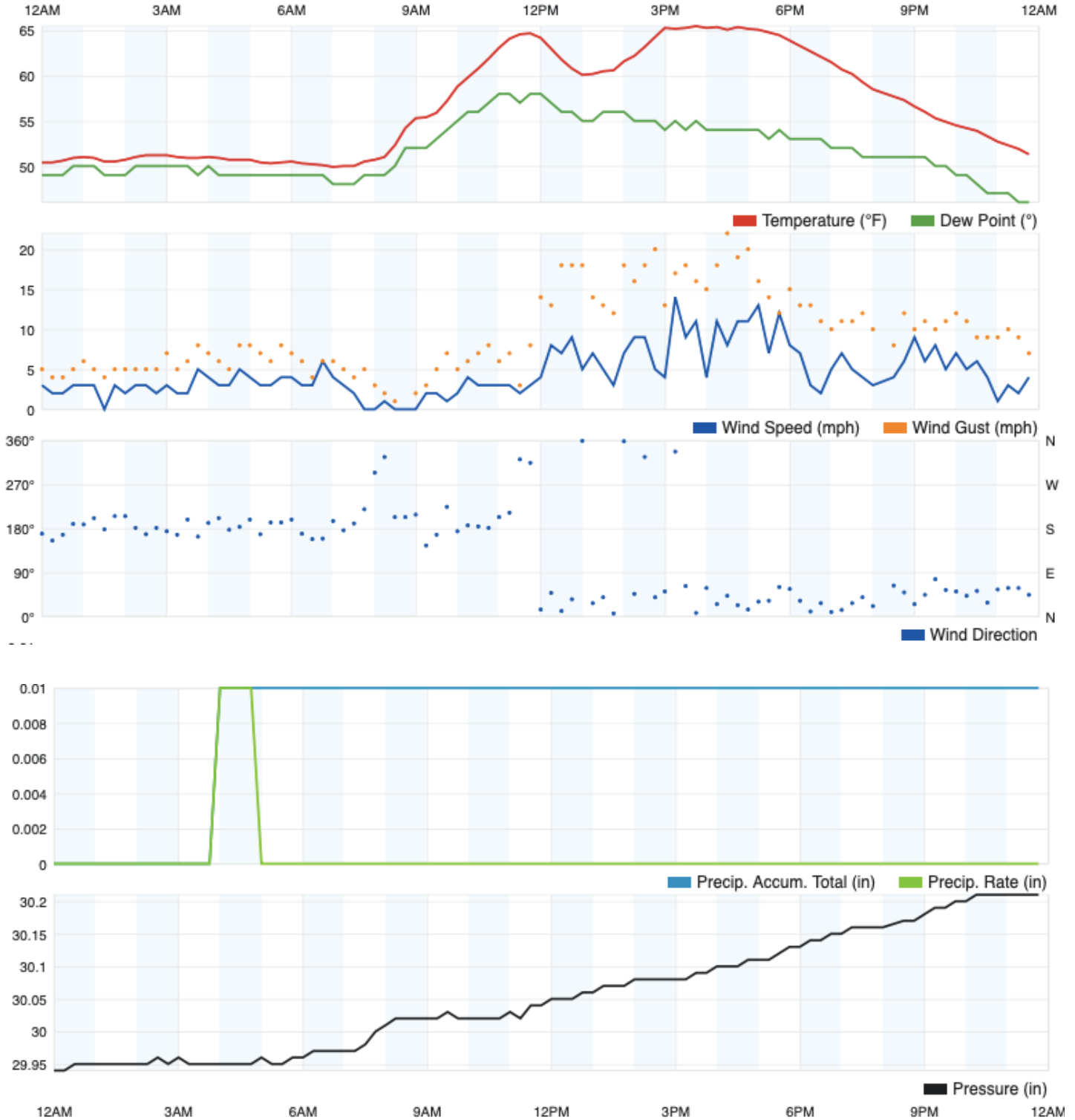
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Hyde	8	5	183	0	Minimal
Jackson	13	11	523	1	None
Jerauld	50	44	304	1	Moderate
Jones	6	3	80	0	Minimal
Kingsbury	32	23	709	0	Minimal
Lake	148	116	1151	6	Moderate
Lawrence	286	220	2485	4	Substantial
Lincoln	1079	924	9051	2	Substantial
Lyman	106	101	1136	3	None
Marshall	26	18	574	0	None
McCook	70	56	800	1	Moderate
McPherson	19	11	273	0	Minimal
Meade	384	302	2424	3	Substantial
Mellette	25	25	420	0	Minimal
Miner	19	17	301	0	Minimal
Minnehaha	5874	5259	34852	74	Substantial
Moody	63	50	787	0	Substantial
Oglala Lakota	203	181	3151	3	Substantial
Pennington	1795	1442	13331	33	Substantial
Perkins	24	19	247	0	Moderate
Potter	30	17	387	0	Moderate
Roberts	123	97	2349	1	Moderate
Sanborn	17	15	279	0	Minimal
Spink	83	53	1383	0	Substantial
Stanley	27	22	344	0	Minimal
Sully	8	8	116	0	None
Todd	91	78	2597	5	Moderate
Tripp	39	27	734	0	Moderate
Turner	107	90	1141	0	Substantial
Union	319	271	2402	5	Substantial
Walworth	69	45	986	0	Substantial
Yankton	295	240	3904	3	Substantial
Ziebach	58	43	480	0	Moderate
Unassigned	0	0	14020	0	

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## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



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Today



Haze

High: 84 °F

Tonight



Haze then  
Mostly Clear  
and Breezy

Low: 61 °F

Tuesday



Sunny

High: 87 °F

Tuesday  
Night



Mostly Clear

Low: 53 °F

Wednesday



Mostly Sunny

High: 68 °F

Warm Temperatures  
and Smokey Skies

Highs Today: 82-95°  
Warmer west

Highs Tuesday: 82-92°  
Warmest in south central SD

Dry conditions and above average temperatures are expected for the region today and Tuesday with highs in the low 80s to mid-90s. Although there won't be a lot of clouds in the sky, skies may appear overcast due to smoke from wildfires out west.

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## Today in Weather History

September 14, 1993: An early freeze and frost hit the state of South Dakota on the 14th and 15th. On the morning of the 14th, some low temperatures included 24 degrees at Rapid City, 19 degrees at Camp Crook and Porcupine, and 31 degrees at Pierre. The 24 degrees low at Rapid City broke the old record for the date by 10 degrees and was the earliest in the season it has ever been that cold. The air mass had moderated some by the time it hit eastern South Dakota early on the 15th. Some low temperatures on the 15th included 28 degrees at Brookings, 30 degrees at Watertown, and 32 at Sioux Falls.

1928: A violent, estimated F4 tornado, with winds of 200 mph, tore across Rockford, Illinois. The tornado first touched down 8 miles south-southwest of Rockford and moved across the southeast part of the city. The tornado was on the ground for 25 miles with a width varying from 200 to 500 feet. A total of 14 people were killed, with around 100 injuries reported in Rockford alone. Two hundred buildings were damaged or destroyed.

1977: Severe thunderstorms produced several tornadoes in eastern Arkansas, killing one.

2005: Hurricane Ophelia caused some damage and beach erosion along the United States coastline from Florida to North Carolina. The closest approach occurred on September 14 and 15 with its western eyewall crossing land and the eye remaining just offshore in the Carolinas.

2008: Hurricane Ike became extratropical on this day. The St. Louis Metropolitan Area experienced hurricane conditions, with Ike's remnants inflicting severe damage to homes. Several areas in Illinois and Indiana, already flooded by the frontal boundary to the north, saw significant additional rainfall. Due to flooding in Chicago, a state of emergency was declared for Cook County due to flooding of the Des Plaines River. Hurricane-force wind gusts were reported to the east of the center across parts of Kentucky, Indiana, Ohio, and Pennsylvania with significant wind damage including structural damage to buildings and trees.

1937 - The mercury soared to 92 degrees at Seattle, WA, a record for September. (The Weather Channel)

1944 - A very destructive hurricane swept across Cape Hatteras and Chesapeake Bay, side swiped New Jersey and Long Island, and crossed southeastern Massachusetts. The hurricane killed more than four hundred persons, mainly at sea. The hurricane destroyed the Atlantic City NJ boardwalk. (David Ludlum) (The Weather Channel)

1970 - The temperature at Fremont, OR, dipped to 2 above zero to equal the state record for September set on the 24th in 1926. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - Barrow, AK, received 5.1 inches of snow, a record for September. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1987 - Thunderstorms developing along a cold front produced severe weather from Minnesota to Texas. Thunderstorms in Iowa produced baseball size hail at Laporte City, and 80 mph winds at Laurens. Hail caused more than ten million dollars damage to crops in Iowa. Thunderstorms in Missouri produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Missouri City and Kansas City. A thunderstorm in Texas deluged the town of Fairlie with two inches of rain in just two hours. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Hurricane Gilbert made the first of its two landfalls on Mexico, producing 170 mph winds at Cozumel. (The Weather Channel)

1988 - Thunderstorms produced severe weather over the Texas panhandle during the evening hours. One thunderstorm spawned a strong (F-2) tornado in the southwest part of Amarillo, and deluged the area with five inches of rain. The heavy rain left roads under as much as five feet of water, and left Lawrence Lake a mile out of its banks. Hurricane Gilbert lost some of its punch crossing the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico. Its maximum winds diminished to 120 mph. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Unseasonably cool weather prevailed across the south central U.S. Eight cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Raton NM with a reading of 30 degrees. The afternoon high of 59 degrees at Topeka KS marked their third straight record cool maximum temperature. Unseasonably warm weather continued in the Pacific Northwest. Seattle WA reported a record eight days in a row of 80 degree weather in September. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)



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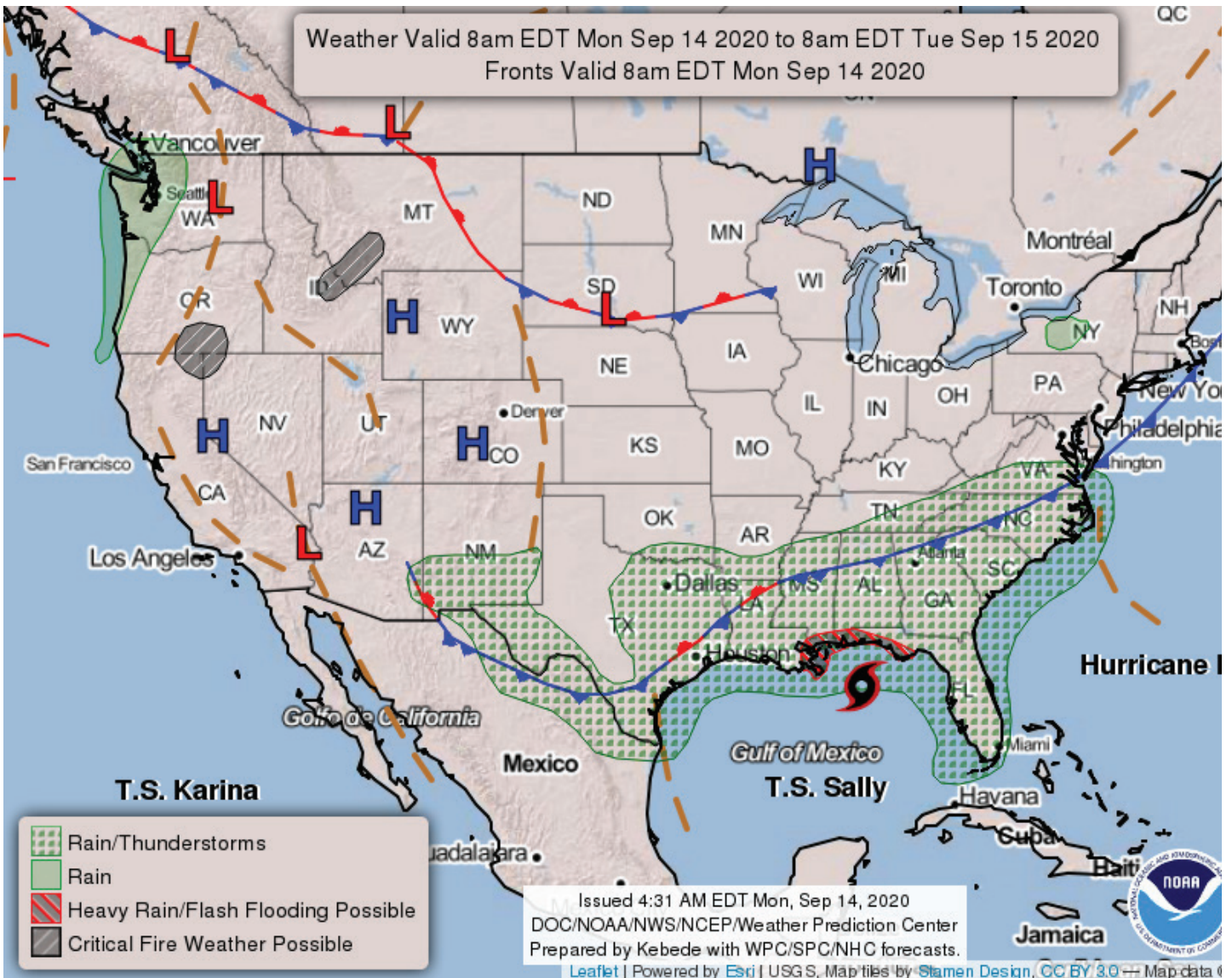
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## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 65.5 °F at 3:45 PM**  
**Low Temp: 49.9 °F at 7:00 PM**  
**Wind: 22 mph at 4:30 PM**  
**Precip: .01**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 102° in 1948**  
**Record Low: 28° in 1949**  
**Average High: 73°F**  
**Average Low: 47°F**  
**Average Precip in Sept...: 0.98**  
**Precip to date in Sept.: 1.52**  
**Average Precip to date: 17.27**  
**Precip Year to Date: 14.87**  
**Sunset Tonight: 7:46 p.m.**  
**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:13 a.m.**



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## CHRIST PREEMINENT

Leonardo da Vinci had just completed his masterpiece, *The Last Supper*. Pleased with his work, he invited another artist to come to his studio and view his painting.

Gazing with great admiration, the guest artist was overwhelmed and speechless. Finally, he exclaimed to da Vinci, "You have painted the chalice with exquisite beauty. It is the most beautiful thing in the whole picture."

When he heard the comments of the other artist, he immediately took his brush and painted over the chalice. He said to his guest: "I do not want anything to take away from my Lord. I painted the picture for Him, not for the chalice."

Christ is present in the life of every Christian. But, His presence is no assurance of His prominence. Writing to the church at Colossae, Paul said, "Christ...must be first in everything."

Because of His death, resurrection, and ascension into heaven, God exalted Christ and elevated Him to His rightful place in creation. And, if God honored Him as being supreme over all things, how ought we to honor Him in, and through, and with, and by, the way we live?

Simply accepting Him as our Savior is not enough. We must exalt Him and elevate Him as our Lord, and make Him visible in every aspect of our lives.

Prayer: We thank You, Father, for what You have done for us and what You can do through us. May we make You the centerpiece of our lives and always put You first. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything. Colossians 1:18

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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

### **Lack of lids cause canning conundrum for produce preservers**

By DEB HOLLAND Black Hills Pioneer

STURGIS, S.D. (AP) — Linda Burnham has been on a scavenger hunt of sorts for the past couple of weeks. And, she's not alone.

This is canning season and lids for glass canning jars are nowhere to be found.

Lids, or "flats" as they are often called, have an inner seal essential to preserving the food stored inside the glass jar. Both jars and screw bands can be reused, but flats can only be used once.

"Three weeks ago I started looking. I went to Lynn's, Ace, Grocery Mart, and Runnings here in Sturgis. Nobody had any lids. Then, while we were over in Spearfish we went to Knechts, Bomgaars, Lueders and Safeway. Nothing," Burnham said.

So, she put out a plea on Facebook. Her tomatoes were ripening. It would soon be time for canning and lids were nowhere in sight.

Her friend, Rhonda Sigman, replied to the request and said she had two boxes of lids she would be willing to give to Burnham.

Justin Lisko, manager at Runnings in Sturgis, said it's all about supply and demand. They had received some lids and other canning supplies about three weeks ago, but everything was gone quickly, the Black Hills Pioneer reported.

"We get a few of everything, but it pretty much disappears off the shelves as soon as we put it out," he said.

This week there were a variety of jars, pickling spices and other canning spice mixes, but no flats at Runnings.

The same was true at Sturgis Ace Hardware, Lynn's and Grocery Mart.

Grocery Mart Manager and co-owner Ryan Meyer said he received a letter a couple weeks ago saying lids or flats would not be available for a few months.

"When no one needs them then they will be around again," Meyer said. "People ask about lids most every day. I wish I could do something for them."

Meyer believes the demand for lids is being fueled by the shortage of aluminum and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lisko agreed saying that people are trying to be as self-sufficient as possible. That means growing their own produce and canning it.

"This year people are kicking it up a notch," he said.

Some worry that novice canners may be putting themselves or others in danger. Michelle Grosek, co-owner of Bear Butte Gardens near Sturgis, is currently enrolled in a Master Food Preserver course through South Dakota State University Extension.

She said there have been a lot of advancements in food safety in the last 20 years, so those just starting out in canning should seek out a good website with tested recipes.

"We don't want to be spreading botulism," she said.

Her suggestions for some helpful websites include the National Center for Home Food Preservation at [nchfp.uga.edu](http://nchfp.uga.edu). Or closer to home on the SDSU Extension website at [extension.sdstate.edu/food/preservation](http://extension.sdstate.edu/food/preservation).

### **With 2 new schools coming, Sioux Falls eyes open enrollment**

By SHELLY CONLON Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — The Sioux Falls school board next month will look at changing the district's open enrollment policy.

The possible changes come as the district prepares to open two new schools in fall of 2021. They also

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come amid allegations of favoritism among high schools and bias in existing policies, which residents noted during community meetings when boundary changes were discussed earlier this year.

Any changes could impact parents' options in where their kids attend school. The board is expected read its first possible policy changes in October and then open it up for the public to weigh in, before a final vote, said Brett Arenz, the district's in-house legal counsel.

Open enrollment applications can be accepted starting Dec. 1 for the next school year, the Argus Leader reported.

The big pieces the district is evaluating are controlling growth and where the district wants students to land now that the new boundaries have been set, Superintendent Jane Stavem said.

The other component? Looking at how specialized schools or programs have been viewed in terms of students feeding from one school to the next as they move up in grade levels, she said.

More:Racial diversity, perceived Lincoln bias concerns as school boundary decisions made

"We need to balance those things of wanting to make sure we get populations of kids in the right places so we maximize our facilities," Stavem said. "And that we also do some things that contribute to making sure we have equitable experiences."

When a student applies for open enrollment, they don't have to apply again each year after, Arenz said. That means the district needs to have a place for students to move to once they move up in grade level, he said.

In years past, those enrollments have been assigned, and calculated based on capacity at a school prior to open enrollment, he said.

"We want to talk through that, and how you see that with specialized schools," he said.

The district also must look at how it handles sibling preferences for out-of-district open enrollments, he said. Typically, if there were two siblings, the district would take both or neither, he said. For in-district, sometimes the students would be split up.

Officials will have to weigh where it might be possible to offer the same standards for both, he said.

More:Only seniors will be grandfathered in as Sioux Falls school board votes on new high school boundaries

The district will also have to determine open enrollment capacities, which can be based on things like building size, grade size, program size and class size under law, he said. That number for the district will be dictated by the number of rooms available in a school and how they're used, Assistant Superintendent Jamie Nold said.

It'll also be driven by overall enrollment numbers and how many incoming seniors opt to be grandfathered into their current schools their graduating year instead of the new school they may attend because of the recent boundary changes, he said.

The district will know those numbers before December, Nold said. And any fluctuation to a specialized program or room would necessitate a change to the policy each time, Arenz said.

The board is hoping to have those numbers posted somewhere for families to easily find and understand annually, and possibly include some sort of disclaimer language for buildings to have what they need to turn students away if necessary, board members said.

"We want to make sure three years down the road we don't have a junior or senior class that's 200-300 students because we put a plan in place that didn't allow kids to balance out," Nold said.

Right now, every student has the option of attending their home attendance school or applying for open enrollment, Arenz said. But the district assigns a school for fifth and eighth grade students so that as they move to middle or high school, they have the option to continue the specialized program, he said.

And for things like the middle school honors program, there's no designated honors program for high school, he said. Meanwhile, the Spanish immersion program continues on into high school.

"I feel like it was giving a false narrative to our other high schools that maybe they didn't have the same program ability that Lincoln (High School) does, and they do," board President Cynthia Mickelson said. "That has left a bad taste in the other high schools' mouths for several years, because of maybe the loss of students who maybe would have gone to their home attendance center."

She wants to end the issue with the honors program and the stigma, she said. Board member Kate

Parker mentioned similar concerns about All-City Elementary, while others questioned which programs should be cut off at eighth grade.

As for Spanish immersion, Mickelson said the district needs to come up with a better long-term plan for how the program will grow and not overwhelm a single campus.

"This will hopefully push toward that long-term plan," Mickelson said. "You know, will this go to two buildings in middle schools to allow more students?"

Stavem said some of those conversations may be better for strategic planning purposes, though.

Part of this process is separating things again the way they should be, meaning that there's an open enrollment process and a specialized program, Arenz said.

"We have a lot of things wrapped up in this one policy," Stavem said.

Stavem said she'd like to see some form of a simple table about how enrollment progression happens within the district. Board members have also asked for more information and data before possible policy changes are presented in October for the first time.

## Miguel Angel Jimenez wins Champions event in South Dakota

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Miguel Angel Jimenez completed a wire-to-wire victory Sunday in the Sanford International, the PGA Tour Champions' first event with fans since returning from a break for the coronavirus pandemic.

Jimenez closed with a 5-under 65 at Minehaha Country Club to beat Steve Flesch by a stroke. The 56-year-old Spanish star won for the second time this season and 10th on the 50-and-over tour.

"How am I going to celebrate?" Jimenez said. "We start already. We have some wine here, it's my favorite drink. Nice cigar, Arturo Fuentes. ... The short period you're going to be here in this world, enjoy yourself."

Tied for the second-round lead with Steve Stricker, Jimenez eagled the par-5 12th for the second time in three days and played the four par-5 holes in 4 under with birdies on Nos. 4 and 16.

"That hole is beautiful," Jimenez said about the 12th. "Five-under par in three days, eagle-birdie-eagle, and especially today after hitting a beautiful drive into the wind, I have 208 meters, 230 yards, to the hole and it's perfect for my 5-wood into the wind. Is becoming like a 245 yards and that's a distance perfect for my 5-wood. I hit a beautiful shot right to the flag and 5-foot putt for eagle. Knock it in."

He parred the final two holes to finish at 14-under 196.

Flesch eagled the 16th in a 63. He had shoulder surgery in May.

"It's just progressively getting better," Flesch said. "It's about at 90%, but nice warm days like this help and I just think I'm getting healthier and finally I'm getting more rhythm where I'm just playing golf instead of worrying about how I feel."

Stricker shot a 67 to tie for third with Bernhard Langer (65) at 12 under. Stricker won the inaugural event in 2018, then skipped his title defense last year. The only player at Minehaha set to play next week in the U.S. Open at Winged Foot, he bogeyed the par-3 17th and finished with a par.

"A little disappointing for me today, the finish in particular," Stricker said. "Had some opportunities. Hit a horrible shot at 17. I've been fighting the lefts kind of all week with my irons. Just not very good feel or comfortable with the irons at all. Just crept in there again there at 17, hit a bad shot. But I hung tough, hung tough every day and putted pretty well, but disappointing finish."

Scott Parel was 11 under after a 62. Jerry Kelly (66) and David Toms (67) followed at 10 under.

Fred Couples, a stroke back entering the round, followed a second-round 64 with a 72 to fall into a tie for 25th at 6 under.

Country singer Colt Ford was last in the 81-man field in PGA Tour Champions debut. Playing on a sponsor exemption, he shot 74-78-72 to finish at 14 over — a stroke better than fellow sponsor exemption Gary Nicklaus.

## South Dakota's attorney general involved in fatal crash

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg was involved in a traffic

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accident that led to a fatality, Gov. Kristi Noem said Sunday.

The accident happened about 10:30 p.m. Saturday in Hyde County, authorities said. Noem announced that Secretary of Public Safety Craig Price will oversee the Highway Patrol's investigation into the accident.

Price did not release any further details on the crash.

Ravnsborg said in a statement, "I am shocked and filled with sorrow following the events of last night."

He said he was cooperating with the investigation.

## South Dakota confirms 201 new cases of the coronavirus

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — South Dakota health officials on Sunday confirmed 201 positive tests for the coronavirus, raising the state's total to 16,639 cases,

The update showed a 15% percent positivity rate on 1,347 tests. South Dakota ranks second in the country in the number of cases per capita in the last two weeks, according to the COVID Tracking Project.

The number of active cases are down 54 from Saturday, for a total of 2,461. The report shows 110 people hospitalized across the state, an increase of one from Saturday.

Minnehaha County reported 35 new cases, raising the county's total to 5,874.

For most people, the new coronavirus causes mild or moderate symptoms, such as fever and cough that clear up in two to three weeks. For some, especially older adults and people with existing health problems, it can cause more severe illness, including pneumonia and death.

## Authorities looking for inmate who walked away from prison

RAPID CITY, S.D. (AP) — Authorities are searching for an inmate who escaped from a minimum-security prison in Rapid City.

Prison officials say Clarence Ferris, 30, left the Rapid City Community Work Center without authorization Sept. 12. He is serving sentences for possession of a controlled substance and unauthorized ingestion of a controlled substance. All of the convictions are from Pennington County.

Authorities say walking away from a non-secure correctional facility without authorization could warrant a charge of second-degree escape, punishable by up to five years in prison.

## Democrats try to streamline mail balloting for their voters

By NICHOLAS RICCARDI Associated Press

DENVER (AP) — Democrats are rolling out an expanded online portal that allows people to register to vote and request a mail ballot in their state and even helps digitize their signature on their paperwork.

The updates to the Democratic National Committee's IWillVote.com are an example of the latest way both parties have tried to adapt the mechanics of modern campaigning to the realities of voting during the pandemic.

"The stakes for our country have never been higher, and we're making sure Americans have all the information they need in order to make their plan to vote and send Joe Biden and Kamala Harris to the White House," Democratic National Committee chairman Tom Perez said in a statement released Monday.

Both major parties have rejiggered their get-out-the-vote playbooks during the pandemic. Democrats' adjustment has been most dramatic as they've largely suspended the door knocking that is a staple of election years. Instead, they've taken their field program digital, texting and calling potential voters and talking them through the newly complex logistics of voting, either in person or via mail ballot.

Republicans are also urging their voters to cast ballots by mail, touting the method to new registrants and promoting it in mailings, some of which include applications for absentee ballots. But their task has been complicated by President Donald Trump baseless claim that mail voting will lead to massive fraud, which has led far fewer GOP voters to request mail ballots than Democratic ones.

Republicans have a potential advantage over Democrats, though — they've restarted face-to-face get-out-the-vote programs. "We are rolling out one of the largest, most aggressive and battle-tested Get Out

The Vote programs focused on Early Voting and voting on Election Day,” Republican National Committee spokeswoman Mandi Merritt said.

The party has its own online portal, Vote.GOP, to register voters and help them find ways to vote, and Merritt said it received 1.1 million visitors during last month’s party convention.

But Democrats are hitching more of their hopes to digital organizing. Their redesigned website provides different methods of registering to vote and requesting absentee ballots tailored to voters’ home states. It allows voters to either register online, request ballots online or have the materials sent through the mail, with a postage-paid return envelope included to submit the ballot to the local elections office.

The site even allows voters in certain states to provide signatures on their online ballot applications. These signatures will often go on file with elections offices to be checked against voters’ signatures on the actual absentee ballot to verify their identity.

Democrats have already adjusted their phone banking strategy, with volunteers and staffers now spending time talking voters through how to request a ballot in their local jurisdiction in a model that some have compared to tech support. Those conversations will now direct voters to the IWillVote.com site, which is also available in Spanish.

Still, the party stresses that it isn’t trying to force voters to cast ballots by mail, and the website provides instructions on in-person early and Election Day voting tailored to the user, too.

Other Democratic-aligned groups have also invested in new ways to get out the mail vote. Priorities USA, a major Democratic group, launched a \$7.5 million digital ad campaign last month promoting mail voting to voters of color who have never voted by mail before. The ads will pop up alongside searches for mail voting and information about the election.

Both Priorities and other Democratic groups can then follow up with voters who request ballots and encourage them to send in their vote, an operation known as “ballot chase.”

The ballot chase is why campaigns usually want their supporters voting by mail — because they can confirm that those backers have cast ballots and dedicate resources to nagging those who haven’t voted to turn out on Election Day.

AP’s Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

## Italy’s initial virus hotspot back to school after 7 months

By COLLEEN BARRY and LUCA BRUNO Associated Press

CODOGNO, Italy (AP) — The morning bell Monday marked the first entrance to the classroom for the children of Codogno since Feb. 21, when panicked parents were sent to pick up their children after the northern Italian town gained notoriety as the first in the West to record local transmission of the coronavirus.

While all of Italy’s 8 million school students endured Italy’s strict 2½-month lockdown, few suffered the trauma of the children of Codogno, whose days were punctuated by the sirens of passing ambulances.

“Many lost grandparents,” said Cecilia Cugini, the principal of Codogno’s nursery, elementary and middle schools.

So while the reopening of Italian schools marks an important step in a return to pre-lockdown routine, the step bears more symbolic weight in the 11 towns in Lombardy and Veneto that were the first to be sealed off as coronavirus red zones.

Codogno Mayor Francesco Passerini said the town of 17,000 has had virtually no new cases for months now, but authorities are not being complacent. He said they have spared no effort in working with school administrators to provide maximum protection to the city’s 3,500 students.

“We hope it goes well, so that all we lived can be relegated to memory,” Passerini said.

In Codogno, nursery school children must have their temperatures taken at drop-off but are not required to wear masks. In elementary school and middle school, parents are asked to monitor temperatures at home and masks are required, though they may be lowered during lessons. In schools where distance



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cannot be maintained, older students will have to keep masks on all day.

Schools throughout the country struggled to identify new classroom spaces, for instance in church oratory buildings, and construct outside learning spaces. In a country where years of spending cuts have left many school buildings run down, administrators have jumped at the chance to take care of long-overdue repairs, in some places delaying school openings while work is finished.

School and local officials in Codogno worked tirelessly to ensure the smoothest return possible for students.

On Monday, masked elementary students waited in spaces designated by red tape to be called to class. Two classes were shifted from the more crowded of Codogno's two elementary schools to ensure proper distancing. "Parents were not happy but we have dedicated a shuttle bus to bring the children back and forth, to address some of the discomfort," Cugini said.

The middle school, meanwhile, receive 230 new desks commissioned by the government. Cugini said they will replace older, oversized desks to allow students to maintain enough distance to remove masks. Art and technology classes requiring more working room will rotate through the middle school's auditorium.

The city also repaired the middle school roof and upgraded the bathrooms as part of preparations — both projects welcome and overdue.

"It is an emblematic moment for us," Cugini said. "It is important to create an atmosphere so the students can experience the emotions of finding themselves back in school, with classmates and teachers, without being distracted by other things."

For Maria Cristina Baggi's daughters, ages 4 and 10, there was no back-to-school shopping for new backpacks: the old ones were fine as they had lain unused for the four months of distance learning last winter and spring. But there was the usual sense of anticipation to be reunited with classmates, the renewal that comes with every school year — tinged now by a not-so-distant concern that the COVID-19 back-to-school project will bring an uptick in contagion even here.

While there are many rules governing classroom behavior, some uncertainty remains.

"We have doubts about how to react to a cold or a coughing attack — that is an unknown for everyone," Baggi said.

Barry reported from Milan.

## Q&A: What does a deal between TikTok and Oracle mean?

By ZEN SOO AP Technology Writer

HONG KONG (AP) — TikTok's parent company ByteDance has chosen Oracle over Microsoft as a new American technology partner to help keep the popular video-sharing app operating in the U.S., according to a person familiar with the deal.

Microsoft, which had been vying for a deal, said in a statement Sunday that its bid to acquire TikTok's U.S. operations was rejected. That came a week before the Sept. 20 deadline for ByteDance to sell TikTok to an American company or risk being banned in the U.S. over national security concerns.

Q. What is TikTok?

A. The app is a home for fun, goofy videos that are easy to make and to watch. That's made it immensely popular, particularly with young people, and U.S. tech giants like Facebook and Snapchat see it as a competitive threat. TikTok says it has 100 million U.S. users and hundreds of millions globally. It has its own influencer culture, enabling people to make a living from posting videos on the service, and hosts ads from major U.S. companies.

ByteDance Ltd., a Chinese company, launched TikTok in 2017, then bought Musical.ly, a video service popular with teens in the U.S. and Europe, and combined the two. A twin service, Douyin, is available for Chinese users.

Q. What concerns U.S. officials about the app?

A. TikTok, like most other social networks, collects user data and moderates what's posted. It grabs

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people's locations and messages they send one another, for example, and tracks what people watch to discern what kinds of videos they like and how best to target ads to them.

Similar concerns apply to American social networks, but Chinese ownership adds an extra wrinkle because the Chinese government could order companies to help it gather intelligence. In TikTok's case, that's a hypothetical threat, Samm Sacks, a researcher at Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center has said.

TikTok says it does not store U.S. user data in China and that it would not give user data to the government. But experts say if the Chinese government wants information, it will get it.

There are also concerns about TikTok censoring videos critical of China, which TikTok denies, or pushing propaganda. Some critics say the company is violating children's privacy laws.

The U.S. has given parent company ByteDance a Sept. 20 deadline to complete a sale of TikTok's U.S. assets to an American company, or risk being banned in the country.

Q: Is Oracle buying TikTok, and what assets are involved?

Oracle was among the pool of bidders, including Microsoft and Walmart, to buy TikTok's American operations. Microsoft on Sunday said that ByteDance will not be selling TikTok's U.S. operations to the company. The person familiar with the deal, who was not authorized to speak publicly, said Oracle will emerge the winner but an outright sale of TikTok U.S. is unlikely.

However, it's unclear at this point what assets Oracle would buy.

TikTok has found popularity around the world thanks in part to its content-recommendation algorithm, which suggests videos to users based on their viewing history. But the Hong Kong newspaper South China Morning Post reported Sunday, citing an unnamed person, said ByteDance will not sell the algorithm. China has tightened its controls and requires companies to get permission to export such technologies.

"The Chinese government has implied it may block export of TikTok's AI systems, so that might complicate a direct sale," said Tiffany Li, a visiting professor at the Boston University School of Law. "One of TikTok's competitive advantages is its AI-backed video recommendation system."

Q: What is Oracle's relationship to TikTok likely to be?

Oracle is known for providing enterprise software including cloud computing services. So it could provide cloud services such as storing TikTok's data in the U.S., or computing services for the app.

"Oracle could be a technology partner, but a sale or divestiture of the US operations for TikTok remains the focus," Wedbush Securities analysts Daniel Ives, Strecker Backe and Ahmad Khalil said in an analyst note.

Q: Will the Trump administration go for the arrangement, based on what we know so far?

A: A TikTok-Oracle deal must be approved by the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS), which vets deals that may have national security implications.

CFIUS earlier greenlighted Chinese PC maker Lenovo's purchase of IBM's computer server business in 2014, after concluding the deal did not pose significant security risks. It also cleared SoftBank's acquisition of Sprint in 2013, but only after SoftBank agreed not to use Huawei Technologies and ZTE equipment in the U.S.

If Oracle and TikTok can show they can safeguard user data in the U.S., CFIUS and the Trump administration might accept the arrangement.

A Chinese Foreign Ministry official said Monday that it had no comment on Oracle, but described the situation as a "typical government-coerced transaction."

Q: How much does Oracle's closeness with the administration matter in this deal?

A: Trump did not say if he preferred Oracle or Microsoft but he describe Oracle as "a great company" that could handle the sale.

Oracle co-founder Larry Ellison is unusual among tech executives for his public support of President Donald Trump.

"Oracle's connections with the Trump administration are interesting. It's possible they may be able to negotiate an outcome that allows TikTok to continue operating in the U.S. without a full sale, with ByteDance still retaining something," said Boston University's Li.

Q: What might this deal mean for users?

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If it is finalized and approved by CFIUS, TikTok would be allowed to continue operating in the U.S. "Trump's executive order that effectively banned TikTok's U.S. business would likely no longer apply, as TikTok would no longer be owned by Bytedance," said Li.

"Executive orders can be revoked or modified at any time," she said.

However, Oracle's plans remain unclear.

"I doubt we'll see the creativity and consumer-friendliness that we might expect with a different owner," Li said.

Paul Haswell, partner at law firm Pinsent Masons, expects Oracle to strive to keep TikTok's users.

"If the app changes or the user experience changes then the users might abandon the platform which completely undermines the value of TikTok and Oracle's acquisition," he said.

## Gulf Coast residents brace for possible new hurricane

By STACEY PLAISANCE and TAMARA LUSH Associated Press

WAVELAND, Miss. (AP) — Storm-weary Gulf Coast residents prepared for a new weather onslaught Monday as Tropical Storm Sally churned northward.

Jeffrey Gagnard of Chalmette, Louisiana, was spending Sunday in Mississippi helping his parents prepare their home for Sally — and making sure they safely evacuated ahead of the storm.

"I mean, after Katrina, anything around here and anything on the water, you're going to take serious," he said, as he loaded the back of his SUV with cases of bottled water in a grocery store parking lot in Waveland, Mississippi. "You can't take anything lightly."

Gagnard said he planned to head back across the state line to prepare his own home for winds and rain Sally was expected to bring to the New Orleans area.

Forecasters from the National Hurricane Center in Miami said Sally is expected to become a hurricane on Monday and reach shore by early Tuesday, bringing dangerous weather conditions, including risk of flooding, to a region stretching from the western Florida Panhandle to southeast Louisiana.

"I know for a lot of people this storm seemed to come out of nowhere," said Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards. "We need everybody to pay attention to this storm. Let's take this one seriously."

Edwards urged people to prepare for the storm immediately. He also said there are still many from southwestern Louisiana who evacuated from Hurricane Laura into New Orleans — exactly the area that could be hit by Sally, which is a slow-moving storm.

In Mandeville, a city about 35 miles (56 kilometers) north of New Orleans, resident Chris Yandle has purchased a week's worth of groceries and moved all his patio furniture into his family's house and shed in preparation for the storm.

"I'm mostly trying to stay calm — especially with a family of four and a dog to worry about," Yandle said. "I've lived through many hurricanes growing up in Louisiana, but I haven't felt this anxious about a hurricane in my life."

Mississippi officials warned that the storm was expected to coincide with high tide, leading to significant storm surge.

"It needs to be understood by all of our friends in the coastal region and in south Mississippi that if you live in low-lying areas, the time to get out is early tomorrow morning," Gov. Tate Reeves said late Sunday.

In Waveland, Mississippi, Joey Chauvin used rope to tie down a tall wooden post topped with a statue of a pelican serving as a marker at the driveway leading to his weekend camp. He said a matching pelican marker on the opposite side of the driveway was washed away in Tropical Storm Cristobal earlier this summer. That storm pushed more than 3 feet (1 meter) of water into the area.

"If this one hits the coast as a Cat 2, I'm thinking we're gonna have at least six to seven feet of water where we're standing at," Chauvin said. "So, yeah, we're definitely not going to stay."

The system was moving west-northwest at 9 mph (15 kph) Monday morning. It was centered 120 miles (195 kilometers) east-southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River, and 175 miles (280 kilometers) southeast of Biloxi, Mississippi. On Sunday, Florida's Gulf Coast was battered with windy, wet weather.

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Pensacola, on Florida's Panhandle, was bracing for 10 to 15 inches (25 to 38 centimeters) of rain.

Sally could produce rain totals up to 24 inches (61 centimeters) by the middle of the week, forecasters said. Its maximum sustained winds Monday morning were 60 mph (95 kph).

"That system is forecast to bring not only damaging winds but a dangerous storm surge," said Daniel Brown of the Hurricane Center. "Because it's slowing down it could produce a tremendous amount of rainfall over the coming days."

This isn't the only storm in the Atlantic basin. Paulette gained hurricane status late Saturday and was expected to bring storm surge, coastal flooding and high winds to Bermuda, according to a U.S. National Hurricane Center advisory. Once a tropical storm, Rene was forecast to become a remnant low Monday. Tropical Depression Twenty strengthened into Tropical Storm Teddy on Monday morning, and was expected to become a hurricane later in the week, forecasters said. And, Tropical Depression Twenty-One formed Monday in the eastern portion of the Atlantic Ocean.

A mandatory evacuation has already been issued in Grand Isle, Louisiana, ahead of the storm. On Saturday, New Orleans Mayor LaToya Cantrell issued a mandatory evacuation order for Orleans Parish residents living outside of the parish's levee protection system.

All northern Gulf Coast states are urging residents to prepare.

"It is likely that this storm system will be impacting Alabama's Gulf Coast. While it is currently not being predicted as a direct hit to our coastal areas, we know well that we should not take the threat lightly," said Alabama Gov. Kay Ivey. She urged residents to prepare and stay informed of the storm's path in the coming days.

Lush reported from St. Petersburg, Florida. AP journalists Julie Walker in New York, Haleluya Hadero in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and Sudhin Thanawala in Roswell, Georgia, contributed to this report.

## 5 things to know today

By The Associated Press undefined

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

1. FIGHT OVER CLIMATE AHEAD OF PRESIDENT'S VISIT Leaders in the Democratic-led West Coast states and President Donald Trump have clashed over the role of climate change as wildfires race through the region.

2. MIDEAST DEAL TOUTS 'PEACE' WITHOUT WAR President Donald Trump is hailing Tuesday's signing ceremony between Israel and the United Arab Emirates as a "historic breakthrough." But the latest deal is between already friendly countries that have never gone to war with Israel.

3. TIKTOK CHOOSES ORACLE IN TRUMP URGED BILL The owner of TikTok has chosen Oracle over Microsoft as the American tech partner that could help keep the popular video-sharing app running in the U.S., according to a source.

4. YOSHIHIDE SUGA ELECTED AS HEAD OF JAPAN'S RULING PARTY Suga received 377 votes in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party election to pick a successor to Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, who is resigning due to health problems.

5. GULF COAST PREPARES FOR POSSIBLE HURRICANE Storm-weary residents prepare for a new weather onslaught Monday as Tropical Storm Sally churns northward.

## Ex-sailor's film shows Mayflower II's colorful 1957 voyage

By TARYN SIEGEL Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — The sea voyage that changed Peter Padfield's life more than six decades ago started with an act of chance. In 1956, Padfield was third officer aboard a British cruise liner in Sri Lanka when he stumbled across a magazine in a ship wardrobe.

A story inside introduced Padfield to a new sailing ship dubbed the Mayflower II, a replica of the square-

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rigged English merchant vessel that carried a group of dissatisfied Protestants across the Atlantic Ocean in 1620. The reproduction soon would make the same trip the Pilgrims did when they sailed west to start a colony.

Padfield, then a sailor for shipping company P&O in his 20s, already had a obsession with square-riggers, the ships with great, billowing sails popularized in pirate stories. He immediately wrote to the Mayflower II's captain to plead for a place on board in the spring when the ship embarked toward its planned home at a Plymouth, Massachusetts, museum.

To Padfield's surprise, the captain, Alan Villiers, wrote back and asked the young sailor to come to Oxford for an interview.

"He said he wasn't going to have any people with double-barreled (hyphenated) surnames, he wasn't going to have any sea-lawyers, and he wasn't going to have any women," Padfield, now 88, told The Associated Press from his home in Suffolk, eastern England. "I didn't come into any of those categories, so he adopted me."

In April the following year, the 25-year-old joined a crew of about 30 that included the editor of Life magazine, an architect, an Irish rigger who spent his shifts dancing and singing at the top of his voice, as well as some seasoned deck hands who actually knew what they were doing.

While he was a self-described "square-rig nut," Padfield had never stepped foot on one of the big wooden beauties before, so his job essentially entailed following orders and staying out of trouble. But he assigned himself another role: voyage filmmaker.

Armed with a sketch pad and an amateur movie camera, he captured the Mayflower II's Atlantic crossing in color film. Padfield shared the 1957 footage with The Associated Press.

In one of the early scenes, a group of boisterous young men grab hold of a pale, disheveled-looking man, tie him to a door at the side of the ship, and put a coat over his head. Even though Padfield's camera didn't record sound, it's clear the hazing has them laughing their heads off.

Padfield recalled the incident as he flipped through a photo album and saw a newspaper clipping with the headline, "I Say The Mayflower Has An Even Chance of Getting There." The journalist who wrote it was the pale man in the film footage.

"The Daily Mail reporter said that we had an 'even chance' of getting to America. So we tied him to the fo'c'sle (crew quarters) door post, put a sack over his head and poured dishwater over that," Padfield said. "He gave us a very good report next day."

The captain tried to impress upon his crew the significance of being a Mayflower replica. Every Sunday, Villiers ordered his men to dress up in Pilgrim outfits and attend a short church service. After the service, he "would try and tell us why we were doing this," reading from the journal of Plymouth Colony's first governor and talking about the challenges the early English settlers encountered.

The Mayflower II did have a deeper significance beyond 17th century history and the camaraderie of her crew. The ship replica was built to honor the friendship between British and American troops as they fought side-by-side during World War II. While Padfield disclaims thinking of anything so lofty at the time, he reflects now on the the important symbolism of the voyage.

"The meaning is that we must stick together, the two Anglo-American countries," he said. "We must stick together as the bastions of democracy and the rule of law."

Padfield also has come to reflect on why the trip to America was life-changing for him personally. His answer would resonate well with many 25-year-olds today.

"I think the voyage changed my life because the crew was so varied. I met so many different people who did different things," he said. "I realized after that that I didn't have to continue in P&O, up the ladder, to wherever I got to. That I could do what I wanted. It sort of turned me from someone who was going on a certain path to someone who thought he could do anything."

## Fires raise fight over climate change before Trump's visit

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and SARA CLINE Associated Press/Report for America

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BEAVERCREEK, Ore. (AP) — With crews battling wildfires that have killed at least 35 people, destroyed neighborhoods and enveloped the West Coast in smoke, another fight has emerged: leaders in the Democratic-led states and President Donald Trump have clashed over the role of climate change ahead of his visit Monday to California.

California, Oregon and Washington state have seen historic wildfires that have burned faster and farther than ever before. Numerous studies in recent years have linked bigger wildfires in the U.S. to global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas.

The Democratic governors say the fires are a consequence of climate change, while the Trump administration has blamed poor forest management for the flames that have raced through the region and made the air in places like Portland, Oregon, Seattle and San Francisco some of the worst in the world.

Trump is headed to McClellan Park, a former air base just outside Sacramento, California, White House spokesman Judd Deere said. California Gov. Gavin Newsom's office said he would be meeting with Trump.

The governors have been blunt: Washington Gov. Jay Inslee on Sunday called climate change "a blowtorch over our states in the West."

"It is maddening right now that when we have this cosmic challenge to our communities, with the entire West Coast of the United States on fire, to have a president to deny that these are not just wildfires, these are climate fires," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

As Newsom toured a ghostlike landscape destroyed by flames Friday, he called out the "ideological BS" of those who deny the danger.

"The debate is over around climate change. Just come to the state of California, observe it with your own eyes," he said.

He noted that just in the last month, California had its hottest August, with world-record-setting heat in Death Valley. It had 14,000 dry lightning strikes that set off hundreds of fires, some that combined into creating five of the 10 largest fires in the state's recorded history. And it had back-to-back heat waves.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown said about 500,000 acres typically burn each year, but just in the past week, flames have swallowed over a million acres, pointing to long-term drought and recent wild weather swings in the state.

"This is truly the bellwether for climate change on the West Coast," she said Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation." "And this is a wake-up call for all of us that we have got to do everything in our power to tackle climate change."

At a rally in Nevada, Trump blamed the way states have run the land, saying "it is about forest management." White House adviser Peter Navarro echoed that Sunday on CNN's "State of the Union," saying that for many years in California, "particularly because of budget cutbacks, there was no inclination to manage our forests."

Forest management, which includes tree thinning and brush clearing, is costly, labor-intensive work that is effective in reducing fuel for wildfires. Millions of dollars are spent on such reduction efforts every year in Western states though many argue more needs to be done. The efforts can also be undercut when homeowners in rural areas don't undertake similar efforts on their own properties.

Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti accused Trump of perpetuating a lie that only forest management can curtail the massive fires seen in recent years. He pointed to drought and the need to reduce carbon emissions.

"Talk to a firefighter, if you think that climate change isn't real," the Democratic mayor said on CNN's "State of the Union."

It isn't clear if global warming caused the dry, windy conditions that have fed the fires in the Pacific Northwest, but a warmer world can increase the likelihood of extreme events and contribute to their severity, said Greg Jones, a professor and research climatologist at Linfield University in McMinnville, Oregon.

Warnings of low moisture and strong winds could fan the flames in hard-hit southern Oregon to Northern California and last through Tuesday. Tens of thousands of people have fled their homes as the fast-moving flames turned neighborhoods to nothing but charred rubble and burned-out cars.

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At least 10 people have been killed in Oregon. Officials have said more people are missing, and the number of fatalities is likely to rise, though they have not said how high the toll could go as they search. In California, 24 people have died, and one person was killed in Washington state.

Firefighter Steve McAdoo, who has run from one blaze to another in Oregon for six days, said his neighbors in rural areas outside Portland should clear trees near their homes because a week like they just survived could happen again.

"I would think the way the climate is changing, this may not be the last time," he said.

In the small southern Oregon town of Talent, Dave Monroe came back to his burned home, partly hoping he'd find his three cats.

"We thought we'd get out of this summer with no fires," he said. "There is something going on, that's for sure, man. Every summer we're burning up."

Cline reported from Salem. Associated Press journalist Manuel Valdes in Talent contributed.

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

## In defiance of Nevada governor, Trump holds indoor rally

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — In open defiance of state regulations and his own administration's pandemic health guidelines, President Donald Trump hosted his first indoor rally since June, telling a packed, nearly maskless Nevada crowd that the nation was "making the last turn" in defeating the virus.

Eager to project a sense of normalcy in imagery, Trump soaked up the raucous cheers inside a warehouse Sunday night. Relatively few in the crowd wore masks, with a clear exception: Those in the stands directly behind Trump, whose images would end up on TV, were mandated to wear face coverings.

Not since a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that was blamed for a surge of coronavirus infections has he gathered supporters indoors. The pandemic had killed nearly 200,000 Americans and was still claiming 1,000 lives a day.

"We are not shutting the country again. A shutdown would destroy the lives and dreams of millions of Americans," said Trump, before using his inflammatory moniker for the coronavirus. "We will very easily defeat the China virus."

The rally in Tulsa, which was his first in three months after the coronavirus reached American shores, was a disaster for the campaign, a debacle that featured a sea of empty seats and a rise in COVID-19 cases, including on his own staff. One prominent Trump supporter at the rally, businessman and former presidential candidate Herman Cain, died of COVID-19 weeks later, though it was not clear if he contracted the virus in Tulsa.

Recognizing that many supporters were uncomfortable to gather in a large group indoors, where the virus spreads more easily, the Trump campaign shifted to holding smaller, outdoor rallies, usually at airplane hangars. But those rallies have grown in size in recent weeks, with little social distancing and few masks.

And on Sunday, they returned indoors, in part as a nod to the Las Vegas-area heat. Temperature checks were given to all upon entrance at the industrial site in Henderson and while masks were encouraged, few wore them.

Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, has limited in-person gatherings indoors and outdoors to 50 people since May, a recommendation based on White House reopening guidelines. In a statement released just before the rally began, Sisolak said Trump was "taking reckless and selfish actions that are putting countless lives in danger here in Nevada."

"To put it bluntly: he didn't have the guts to make tough choices," Sisolak said of Trump's handling of the virus. "He left that to governors and the states. Now he's decided he doesn't have to respect our State's

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laws. As usual, he doesn't believe the rules apply to him."

The city of Henderson informed Xtreme Manufacturing on Sunday that the event as planned was in direct violation of the governor's COVID-19 emergency directives and that penalties would follow. The Trump campaign pushed back against the restrictions with the president saying he would support those in attendance "if the governor came after you."

"If you can join tens of thousands of people protesting in the streets, gamble in a casino, or burn down small businesses in riots, you can gather peacefully under the 1st Amendment to hear from the President of the United States," campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh said.

To this point, the campaign has not been played out as a choice election between Trump and his Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, but rather a referendum on the president's handling of the coronavirus. By wide margins, Americans have disapproved of Trump's leadership, as the United States has suffered more deaths than any other nation.

Therefore, the president's campaign believes it needs to change the subject and project the sense, despite evidence otherwise, that the pandemic was winding down and that a vaccine was on the horizon. Part of the plan: create images of normalcy, like the packed White House lawn for Trump's convention speech, though it was unclear if viewers were reassured or frightened.

In a rambling, hourlong speech, Trump mused on mandatory prison sentences for flag burning, praised various UFC fighters in attendance and appeared to endorse extrajudicial killings for those who target police officers. And Trump unleashed a series of attacks on Biden, labeling him a tired career politician and declaring him "unfit to be president."

But, Trump ruminated, while complaining about the media's coverage: "Maybe he'll win because they don't like me, they don't like my personality."

The crowd answered with a deafening "We love you" chant.

The rally came the night before Trump was to travel to California to receive a briefing on the devastating wildfires racing through the region. He has largely been silent on the blazes that have claimed dozens of lives in Oregon and California.

Earlier Sunday, Trump aimed for further inroads with Latinos who could prove vital in closely contested states that could determine the White House race, promoting economic gains they made before the coronavirus pandemic.

Though Trump has made scores of inflammatory and derogatory comments about Latinos, his campaign is growing confident that he has won some support that could help in Florida, Arizona and Nevada, his target this weekend,

Winning support from Latinos has been an uphill climb for Trump, whose hard-line immigration policies and sometimes virulent depiction of immigrants have alienated many Hispanics.

In the first moments of his 2016 campaign, he declared that many Mexican immigrants were "rapists." He has drawn criticism for his tepid response to a hurricane that ravaged Puerto Rico, his policies to separate children from their families at the U.S.-Mexico border and his efforts to dismantle an Obama-era program that allows young immigrants living in the country illegally who were brought here as children to remain in the U.S.

Trump tailored his pitch to Latinos on Sunday, noting their low unemployment rate before COVID-19 reached American shores and affirming his anti-abortion stance. He again hammered home his recent push on law and order, saying that recent violence in American cities endangered Latinos. He was set to hold a similar event in Arizona on Monday.

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AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>



## To door knock or not? Campaigning for Congress in COVID era

By LISA MASCARO AP Congressional Correspondent

WASHINGTON (AP) — Democratic Rep. Madeleine Dean calls herself a “big hugger,” but there’s none of that in-person campaigning in the Philadelphia suburbs as the House freshman runs for reelection largely online to protect against the health risks of COVID-19.

Traveling the heartland, Iowa Republican Sen. Joni Ernst is taking the opposite approach. She just completed an annual 99-county tour of her state, mostly masked, but sometimes not, talking to modest-size groups — and, at one point, gathering close for a photo.

The two lawmakers show the different tactics underway in a pandemic election year unlike any other as candidates try to win over voters beyond the White House in down-ballot races that will determine control of Congress.

President Donald Trump is setting the tone for his party, with big rallies and few masks. Democrats, led by presidential nominee Joe Biden, are keeping events small and mostly virtual, confident that voters will reward them for adhering to public health protocols.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., calls the campaign decisions “a matter of life and death.” The GOP leader in the House, Kevin McCarthy of California, a Trump ally, says the president’s party is showing up.

By November, voters will decide who had the right approach — a high-stakes gamble as the coronavirus pandemic rewrites the rules of political campaigning.

“It’s a different world,” Dean said during a recent Zoom call with reporters.

“I can’t wait for the day when I can go back to knocking on doors and being at train stations to speak to people directly,” she said. “But we’re making the most of it.”

The House and Senate campaigns are courting voters as attitudes shift about COVID-19. In July, an AP-NORC poll showed 85% of Americans said they were staying away from large groups, including 95% of Democrats and 75% of Republicans. By August, about three-quarters of Americans said they were at least somewhat concerned about themselves or a family member being infected, according to the AP-NORC poll.

Public health experts warn that even as the number of cases levels nationwide, Americans’ behavior will determine whether there’s another spike this fall with colder weather and the flu season.

The Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee told lawmakers it’s up to them to set an example.

Campaigns are looked to “as leaders in the community,” said a DCCC memo obtained by The Associated Press, “and their health and safety precautions should reflect that.”

Virtual town halls, phone banks, texting and Zoom-style meet-ups are replacing the traditional campaign events and door-knocking operations, which in years past have been seen as crucial to coax voters to the polls.

One party strategist said Democrats believe voters will appreciate candidates who take COVID-19 risks seriously, attempting to draw a contrast to Trump and Republicans. The strategist and others were granted anonymity to discuss tactics the parties are employing.

In Georgia, Senate candidate Jon Ossoff’s campaign is drawing thousands of people to online forums, more than strategists said could be reached by traditional canvassing. He is running against first-term GOP Sen. David Perdue.

Republicans appear more willing to venture out.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell held public events in some 20 Kentucky communities during August, showing up mostly masked. He faces Democratic former fighter pilot Amy McGrath this fall.

Republicans are defending a narrow three-seat Senate majority as Democratic candidates gain traction in more than a half-dozen states, including Iowa, Colorado, Maine, North Carolina. That’s twice as many that Democrats would need to flip to tip party control.

“Even in these challenging times, it’s my job to show up and hear directly from all Iowans,” Ernst said in a video message after finishing her all-county tour.

Typically outside groups provide much of the legwork knocking doors to reach voters. This year, they, too, are taking divergent approaches.

The Congressional Leadership Fund announced it’s unleashing \$3.5 million to start put boots on the

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ground — with personal protective gear — in 12 House districts as Republicans stage a longshot fight to wrest control from Pelosi and Democrats. Republicans would need to win some 19 seats.

A Republican strategist said the GOP reckons that with so many Americans home because of the coronavirus crisis there's a "captive audience" of voters to reach.

Tim Phillips of the Koch-backed Americans for Prosperity Action said his group started testing door knocking on June 1 to see what worked, what didn't.

Standing 8 to 10 feet away seemed better than 6, he said, and visitors followed local rules about mask wearing — sometimes on, sometimes just in hand.

By July, the group expanded door-knocking nationwide and found people are very willing to open up, he said.

"I can't tell you how many times now I've had people say, 'You're the first human interaction I've had for months now,'" said Phillips, who has knocked doors himself in several states, including North Carolina, where AFP Action is investing \$11 million in the Senate race. He said the rate at which people answer the door is up at least 18% compared with pre-pandemic numbers.

Elsewhere, the powerful American Federation of State County and Municipal Employees is launching its "big green machine" -- thousands of union workers and retirees — to virtual field offices to help elect Biden and "candidates up and down the ballot," the union said.

Volunteers can call voters, send texts and take other actions. A union official, granted anonymity to discuss the organizing effort, said they find that people want to "do something."

Pelosi noted that in some places it may be safe to go door to door.

In Maine, where the number of virus cases has been low, both campaigns are stepping out.

Democratic Senate candidate Sarah Gideon has resumed town-hall "Suppers with Sara" but with a socially distant, outdoor version of the state's traditional dinners.

Incumbent Republican Sen. Susan Collins recently launched a bus tour to meet with voters.

Dean, in Philadelphia, acknowledged there's nothing to replace personal interaction. But she said she's confident the virtual campaigns will meet the moment of these rocky times.

"The energy is high," said Dean. "Sadly, it is so laced with anxiety."

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Associated Press writers Sara Burnett in Chicago and Hannah Fingerhut in Washington contributed to this report.

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AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

## Trump's Mideast deals tout 'peace' where there was never war

By JOSEPH KRAUSS Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — For the first time in more than a quarter-century, a U.S. president will host a signing ceremony between Israelis and Arabs at the White House, billing it as an "historic breakthrough" in a region long known for its stubborn conflicts.

But while the optics of Tuesday's event will evoke the groundbreaking agreements that ended decades of war between Israel and neighboring Egypt and Jordan, and that launched the peace process with the Palestinians, the reality is quite different.

The United Arab Emirates will establish diplomatic relations with Israel, a fellow U.S. ally it has never gone to war with, formalizing ties that go back several years. The agreement cements an informal alliance against Iran and could pave the way for the UAE to acquire advanced U.S. weapons, while leaving the far more contentious Israeli-Palestinian conflict as intractable as ever.

That hasn't stopped President Donald Trump from referring to the UAE deal, which was announced last month, as heralding a "previously unthinkable regional transformation."

A similar agreement announced Friday with Bahrain, which welcomed a visiting Israeli Cabinet minister

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as early as 1994, also formalizes longstanding ties.

The agreement with Bahrain has raised the possibility that Saudi Arabia — the ultimate prize in Israel's normalization drive — could follow suit. Bahrain's Sunni monarchy is closely allied with Saudi Arabia, which helped quash a popular uprising among the island nation's Shiite majority in 2011. Saudi Arabia has quietly acquiesced to the UAE deal, opening its airspace to commercial flights between Israel and the Emirates.

But it's debatable whether agreements like these, among already friendly countries, do much to advance regional peace.

The region's main conflict pits Israel and the Gulf Arab countries against Iran and its proxies. In the long term, many believe the biggest threat to Israel's survival as a Jewish-majority and democratic state is the conflict with the Palestinians, who may soon outnumber Jews in the territory between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River.

The Trump administration hopes that as more Arab countries normalize ties with Israel, it will pressure the Palestinians to return to peace negotiations, which ground to a halt more than a decade ago.

Over the last three years, Trump has cut off aid to the Palestinians, recognized contested Jerusalem as Israel's capital, dropped the longstanding U.S. opposition to Israeli settlements and released a Mideast plan that overwhelmingly favors Israel.

The breakdown of the longstanding Arab consensus that recognition only be granted in return for territorial concessions has meanwhile left the Palestinians arguably more weak, isolated and demoralized than at any point in their history.

But rather than cowing Palestinian leaders into submission, those moves have only made them more defiant. President Mahmoud Abbas officially cut all ties to Israel and the U.S. in May and said the Palestinians would no longer be bound by any past agreements. The Palestinians have rejected the UAE and Bahrain deals as a betrayal of their cause and insist no other country has the right to negotiate on their behalf.

"Normalization of states in the region with Israel will not change the essence of this conflict, which is the systemic denial of the Palestinian people's inalienable right to freedom and sovereignty," said Hanan Ashrawi, a senior Palestinian official.

Daniel Shapiro, who served as U.S. ambassador to Israel during the Obama administration, said normalization is a positive step that could potentially improve the prospects for peace.

"If it's used effectively it can be a basis for a renewed effort to generate momentum for two states," said Shapiro, who is now a visiting fellow at Israel's Institute for National Security Studies. "But it has to be led by a U.S. administration that is committed to a two-state solution, and that's very different from the Trump plan."

Aaron David Miller, a veteran American peace negotiator, said anyone hoping to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict "would not have behaved the way this administration has behaved for the last four years."

"I don't think this is going to make it any easier or in real time bring us any closer to serious negotiations, but I would have argued that before the UAE-Israel deal," said Miller, who is now at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

While Trump's approach has pushed the Palestinians into a corner, it has also vindicated Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's longstanding belief that his country can secure its future and avoid international isolation without making any concessions to the Palestinians.

For more than three decades, the Palestinians have sought an independent state in east Jerusalem, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, territories seized by Israel in the 1967 war with Arab states. Israel withdrew from Gaza in 2005 but imposed a blockade after the militant group Hamas seized power two years later.

The Trump plan would allow Israel to annex up to 30% of the occupied West Bank, including all of its far-flung Jewish settlements. The Palestinians would be left with scattered enclaves surrounded by Israel, which would have overall security control. Netanyahu pointedly refers to it as an entity "that President Trump defines as a state."

The UAE said its agreement with Israel took annexation off the table, but Netanyahu has said the pause is temporary and that Israel remains committed to the Trump plan.

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The plan "does not describe a Palestinian state with even a modicum of sovereignty," Shapiro said. "Fortunately the UAE deal resulted in annexation being taken off the table. Now it's time to shelve other aspects of the Trump plan."

Former Vice President Joe Biden has promised a more even-handed approach if he is elected in November. He is opposed to annexation and would almost certainly scrap the Trump plan.

Trump's reelection would bring even more pressure to bear on the Palestinians, potentially leading them to abandon the two-state solution altogether and demand equal rights in a single binational state.

The current Palestinian leadership is opposed to such an outcome, as are the vast majority of Israelis and Palestinians, but that could change if Trump and Netanyahu succeed in extinguishing Palestinian hopes for statehood.

"The assumption is that the Palestinians have no choice but to accept it," said Hugh Lovatt, a policy fellow at the European Council on Foreign Relations.

"But actually, the Palestinians do have another choice, which is actually to pivot toward calling for equal rights within one state" he said. "That's the fundamental weakness and flaw in the Trump vision, is that it misunderstands a lot of these long-term dynamics."

## Search continues for gunman who shot California deputies

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Authorities were continuing to search Monday for a gunman who walked up to a parked sheriff's squad car and opened fire, critically wounding two Los Angeles County deputies in an ambush recorded on surveillance video.

Officials asked for the public's help in identifying the gunman in a weekend ambush after officials offered a \$100,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

The 31-year-old female deputy and 24-year-old male deputy underwent surgery after the shooting Saturday evening and were expected to recover, Los Angeles County Sheriff Alex Villanueva said Sunday.

"They performed in an admirable fashion in spite of grave adversity," Villanueva said during a conversation with local religious leaders. "God bless them."

The deputies, who graduated together from the sheriff's academy 14 months ago, were shot while sitting in their patrol car at a Metro rail station and were able to radio for help, the sheriff said.

The department has faced criticism during recent protests over racial unrest but it's unclear if that was a factor in the shooting. Officers have only a "very, very generic description" of the shooter to go on, officials said.

Surveillance video shows a person approach the parked patrol car on foot and shoot with a handgun through the passenger-side window.

"The gunman walked up on the deputies and opened fire without warning or provocation," the department stated.

An extended version of the video reviewed by the Los Angeles Times shows the shooter running away in the direction from which he came. He turns a corner out of the frame, past a second figure lingering on the sidewalk, according to the Times. It's unclear if the second person was involved in the attack. A Sheriff's Department spokeswoman declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

Moments after the shooting, the passenger door opens and a deputy stumbles out, hand on head, according to the newspaper. The driver's-side door opens soon after.

The video sparked reaction from President Trump who responded on Twitter: "Animals that must be hit hard!"

"This cold-blooded shooting is unconscionable and the perpetrator must be brought to justice," Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden tweeted. "Violence of any kind is wrong; those who commit it should be caught and punished."

A handful of protesters gathered outside the hospital where the injured deputies were being treated. The protesters tried to provoke deputies stationed outside and at one point were prevented from entering the

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emergency room, Bishop Juan Carlos Mendez with the Churches in Action group told the TV station KABC. "Unacceptable behavior. The hospital should be a sanctuary, we should leave hospitals alone," he said. Mendez and members of his group gathered nearby in prayer for the wounded deputies.

Videos from the scene recorded at least one person in the crowd yelling, "I hope they ... die."

A radio reporter who was near the protest scene was taken into custody. The sheriff's department later tweeted that the reporter interfered with the arrest of a male protester.

"The female adult, who was later identified as a member of the press, did not identify herself as press and later admitted she did not have proper press credentials on her person," the department stated.

After being released, Josie Huang, a reporter for public radio station KPCC, a National Public Radio affiliate, said on Twitter that she had been covering the sheriff's news conference when she returned to the hospital after hearing protesters shouting. She was wearing her press pass, she said.

One of several videos Huang said she shot moments before her arrest showed two men carrying red, black and green flags and yelling at deputies outside the hospital while a few other people stood by recording on their cellphones.

Huang tweeted that she began walking behind deputies who were following the small group of protesters.

"I was filming an arrest when suddenly deputies shout 'back up.' Within seconds, I was getting shoved around. There was nowhere to back up," Huang said on Twitter. In another video, Huang can be heard shouting, "I'm a reporter... I'm with KPCC" as she falls to the ground.

The executive editor of the station, Megan Garvey, expressed outrage over the arrest and said her reporter appeared to be wearing her credentials and had shouted her KPCC affiliation. NPR's Editorial Director Nancy Barnes said the network was "appalled" by the arrest of a reporter doing her job.

The office of the Los Angeles County Inspector General, which oversees investigations and actions of the sheriff's department, has opened an investigation into the reporter's arrest.

Protesters have railed against the LA Sheriff's Department for weeks over recent shootings by deputies, including the killing of a man on a bicycle last month. There was no known connection between the recent shootings and Saturday's ambush and investigators are "chasing all leads," Villanueva told the Times.

"Of course, there's an important conversation going on about policing in this country, but these are folks who put their lives on the line for us, and we will find justice for them," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said on CNN Sunday.

## **AP FACT CHECK: Trump's torrent of falsehoods, Biden missteps**

By HOPE YEN and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Playing defense on his handling of the coronavirus, President Donald Trump is letting the falsehoods fly.

Over the weekend, he railed against cases of voting fraud that didn't exist, asserted that COVID-19 was "rounding a corner" despite what his top health advisers say and blasted Joe Biden for supposed positions on energy and health care that his Democratic rival doesn't hold.

As the rhetoric flew during the past week, both Trump and Biden exaggerated accomplishments — Trump about himself and Biden about his son, Beau — as well as their own influence in reviving the auto industry.

A recent sampling:

VIRUS

TRUMP: "We are rounding the corner." — remarks Sunday at a Latino roundtable event in Las Vegas.

TRUMP: The coronavirus "is rounding the turn, rounding the corner." — remarks Saturday to reporters in Reno, Nevada.

THE FACTS: To be clear, that's not what his top health advisers say.

"I'm sorry but I have to disagree with that," Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious diseases expert, told MSNBC on Friday, calling the current coronavirus levels seven months into the pandemic "disturbing."

He expressed concern about a potential spike in cases following the Labor Day holiday beyond a present

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rate of 40,000 cases a day and 1,000 deaths.

"What we don't want to see is going into the fall season, when people will be spending more time indoors — and that's not good for a respiratory-borne virus — you don't want to start off already with a baseline that's so high," Fauci said.

Fauci this past week also cautioned that people should not "underestimate" the pandemic and they will "need to hunker down and get through this fall and winter because it's not going to be easy." He and other health experts such as Dr. Robert Redfield, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, have warned of a potentially bad fall because of dual threats of the coronavirus and the flu season.

## AWARDS and HONORS

TRUMP: "Remember, Miami Cubans gave me the highly honored Bay of Pigs Award for all I have done for our great Cuban Population!" — tweet Sunday.

THE FACTS: No such award exists.

Trump got an endorsement in 2016 from the Bay of Pigs Veterans Association, the first ever from the group of Florida-based veterans who fought in the United States' failed attempt to overthrow the Cuban government in the 1961 invasion. But no award comes with it.

BIDEN, on a report in The Atlantic that Trump referred to service members killed in war as "losers" or "suckers": "My son volunteered to go — as the assistant U.S. attorney in Philadelphia — to go into Kosovo. He was there six months. They erected a monument to him thanking him for his service, I think the only American that they did that for. And was he a sucker?" — interview Thursday on CNN.

THE FACTS: Beau Biden isn't the only American to receive such honors from Kosovo.

It's true that there is a road named after Biden's late son and a monument in his honor in Kosovo, where he served as a legal adviser as the region recovered from war in 2001. But former presidents George W. Bush and Bill Clinton also have roadways named after them, and there are statues in Kosovo of Clinton and former Sen. Bob Dole.

Trump has denied that he ever called military members losers or suckers.

## VACCINE

TRUMP: "We're developing a vaccine in record time. It will be ready before the end of the year and maybe much sooner than that." — rally Saturday in Minden, Nevada.

TRUMP: "You'll have this incredible vaccine, and ... in speed like nobody has ever seen before. This could've taken two or three years, and instead it's going to be — it's going to be done in a very short of period of time. Could even have it during the month of October." — news conference on Sept. 7.

THE FACTS: He's almost certainly raising unrealistic hopes as the November election approaches.

The Food and Drug Administration already has told manufacturers it won't consider any vaccine that's less than 50% effective. Getting the right math before November, as Trump has promised, is "incredibly unlikely," said Dr. Larry Corey of the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Institute, who is overseeing the U.S. government's vaccine studies.

Public health experts are worried that Trump will press the FDA to approve a vaccine before it is proven to be safe and effective.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the government's top infectious diseases expert, has said he is "cautiously optimistic" that a coronavirus vaccine will be ready by early next year. Even then, Fauci made clear that the vaccine would not be widely available right away.

"Ultimately, within a reasonable period of time, the plans now allow for any American who needs a vaccine to get it within the year 2021," Fauci told Congress last month.

Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the National Institutes of Health, also expressed "cautious optimism" this past week that one of the vaccines being tested will pan out by year's end. But he warned: "Certainly to try to predict whether it happens on a particular week before or after a particular date in early Novem-

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ber is well beyond anything that any scientist right now could tell you.”

The “particular date” is Nov. 3, Election Day.

ON BIDEN

TRUMP, on Biden: “He wants to do a complete shutdown.” — Nevada rally on Saturday.

TRUMP: “The approach to the virus is a very unscientific blanket lockdown by the Democrats.” — news conference Thursday.

TRUMP: “Biden’s plan for the China virus is to shut down the entire U.S. economy.” — news conference on Sept. 7.

THE FACTS: That’s not Biden’s plan at all. Biden has said he would shut down the economy only if scientists and public health advisers recommended he do so to stem the COVID-19 threat. He said he would follow the science, not disregard it.

Biden told ABC last month he “will be prepared to do whatever it takes to save lives” when he was asked if he would even be willing to shut the country again.

“I would listen to the scientists,” he said. If they said to shut it down, “I would shut it down.”

TRUMP: Biden will “destroy protections for preexisting conditions.” — Nevada rally on Saturday.

THE FACTS: This is baseless. Biden proposes building on “Obamacare” and does not seek to strip that law’s insurance protections for people with preexisting illness.

The Trump administration has asked the Supreme Court for full repeal of the health law, including provisions that protect people with preexisting conditions from health insurance discrimination. Republicans say they’d put new protections in place, but they haven’t spelled them out.

Trump has frequently claimed he will always protect preexisting conditions despite evidence to the contrary and has even asserted falsely that he was the one who “saved” such protections.

With the Obama-era law still in place, preexisting conditions continue to be covered by regular individual health insurance plans.

Insurers must take all applicants, regardless of medical history, and charge the same standard premiums to healthy people and those who are in poor health, or have a history of medical problems.

TRUMP: “He wants to ban fracking.” — Nevada rally on Saturday.

THE FACTS: That’s not Biden’s position at all.

In a March 15 primary debate, Biden misstated his fracking policy but his campaign quickly corrected the record. Biden has otherwise been consistent on his middle-of-the-road position, going so far as to tell an anti-fracking activist that he “ought to vote for somebody else” if he wanted an immediate fracking ban.

Trump continually ignores the correction.

Fracking, or hydraulic fracturing, opened up a yearslong oil and gas boom in parts of the Southwest, Northeast and High Plains when the technique went into widespread use under the Obama administration, although the coronavirus pandemic and a global petroleum glut have now driven down prices and demand.

Biden floundered in the March primary debate when Sen. Bernie Sanders spoke of his own proposal, saying he was intending to wind down fracking entirely. “So am I,” Biden replied. “No more — no new — fracking.”

Biden’s campaign contacted reporters to say he misspoke, and the candidate and his campaign have been consistent in public statements of Biden’s position since.

Biden supports banning only new oil and gas permits, fracking included, on federal land. But most U.S. production is on private land — the U.S. Bureau of Land Management says production on federal land accounted for less than 10% of oil and gas in 2018. That amounts to a far more limited restriction than a full “ban” as Trump asserts.

TRUMP: “When Joe Biden was vice president, his failed approach to the swine flu was disastrous. ...

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And 60 million Americans got H1N1 in that period of time. ...We did everything wrong, it was a disaster.” — news conference Thursday.

**THE FACTS:** This is a distorted history of a pandemic in 2009 that killed far fewer people in the United States than the coronavirus is killing now. For starters, Biden as vice president wasn't running the federal response. And that response was faster out of the gate than when COVID-19 came to the U.S.

Then, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's flu surveillance network sounded the alarm after two children in California became the first people diagnosed with the new flu strain in this country.

About two weeks later, the Obama administration declared a public health emergency against H1N1, also known as the swine flu, and the CDC began releasing anti-flu drugs from the national stockpile to help hospitals get ready. In contrast, Trump declared a state of emergency in early March, seven weeks after the first U.S. case of COVID-19 was announced, and the country's health system struggled for months with shortages of critical supplies and testing.

More than 190,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S. The CDC puts the U.S. death toll from the 2009-2010 H1N1 pandemic at about 12,500.

## FBI INVESTIGATION

**TRUMP:** “Was Andy McCabe ever forced to pay back the \$700,000 illegally given to him and his wife, for his wife's political campaign, by Crooked Hillary Clinton while Hillary was under FBI investigation, and McCabe was the head of the FBI??? Just askin'?” — tweet Saturday.

**THE FACTS:** Trump is distorting facts. This tweet refers to a campaign contribution received by the wife of former FBI Deputy Director Andrew McCabe during her unsuccessful bid for the Virginia state Senate. Almost everything Trump says about it is wrong.

The contribution to the campaign was not from Hillary Clinton but rather from a political action committee of her ally, former Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe, and there was nothing illegal about it.

McCabe did not become involved in the FBI investigation into Clinton's email practices until after his wife's campaign had ended, and at no point during the probe — which concluded in 2016 — was he ever head of the FBI. That did not happen until May 2017, when Trump fired James Comey as FBI director, making McCabe the acting director for several months.

## AUTOS

**BIDEN:** “President Obama and I rescued the auto industry and helped Michigan's economy come roaring back.” — tweet Wednesday.

**THE FACTS:** Biden is assigning too much credit to Barack Obama and himself for saving the auto industry. As an initial matter, what the Obama administration did was an expansion of pivotal steps taken by Obama's predecessor, President George W. Bush.

In December 2008, General Motors and Chrysler were on the brink of financial collapse. The U.S. was in a deep recession and U.S. auto sales were falling sharply. GM, Chrysler and Ford requested government aid, but Congress voted it down.

With barely a month left in office, Bush authorized \$25 billion in loans to GM and Chrysler from the \$700 billion bailout fund that was initially intended to save the largest U.S. banks. Ford decided against taking any money. Once in office, Obama appointed a task force to oversee GM and Chrysler, both of which eventually declared bankruptcy, took an additional roughly \$55 billion in aid, and were forced to close many factories and overhaul their operations.

All three companies recovered and eventually started adding jobs again.

**TRUMP:** “We brought you a lot of car plants, you know that right? ... I saved the U.S. auto industry.” — Michigan rally Thursday.

**BIDEN,** on Michigan's economy: “Donald Trump squandered it — and hardworking Michiganders are paying the price every day.” —tweet Wednesday.

**THE FACTS:** Both Trump and Biden are overstating it. Trump did not wreck Michigan's economy, but he



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certainly didn't bring an auto industry boom, either.

In fact, the number of auto and parts manufacturing jobs in the state fell slightly between Trump's inauguration and February of this year, before the coronavirus took hold.

When Trump took office there were 174,200 such jobs, and that dropped to 171,800 in February, according to Labor Department statistics. While most plants shuttered for about eight weeks after the pandemic hit, many are back running near capacity again, at least for now. In July, the most recent figures available, Michigan had 154,400 auto and parts manufacturing jobs.

Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, recently said the state's economy was operating now at 87% of pre-pandemic levels, citing figures from Moody's Analytics and CNN.

## ENVIRONMENT

TRUMP: "Instead of focusing on radical ideology, my administration is focused on delivering real results. And that's what we have. Right now we have the cleanest air ever we've ever had in this country — let's say over the last 40 years." — remarks Tuesday in Jupiter, Florida.

FACTS: He's not responsible for all of the progress — far from it.

All six air pollution measurements monitored by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency showed that in 2019 the U.S. air was the cleanest on record. But the most important pollutant, tiny particles, was essentially about the same as 2016, only down 1%, according to Carnegie Mellon University environmental engineering professor Neil Donahue. The same figures also showed that air pollution rose in the first two years of the Trump administration before falling greatly in 2019.

Donahue and three other outside experts in air pollution said the president was wrongly taking credit for what years, even decades, of ever-increasing emissions restrictions caused.

H. Christopher Frey, an engineering professor at North Carolina State University and former chief of the EPA's air quality scientific advisory board, said that "current trends in air quality are for reasons irrespective of, or despite, policies of the Trump administration." Instead he and Donahue attributed it to a shift from use of dirtier coal — a shift the Trump administration has fought against — and to newer, cleaner cars replacing older vehicles.

## TROOPS

BIDEN: "Troops died in Iraq and Afghanistan: 6,922. ... Military COVID deaths: 6,114. Folks, every one of these lives mattered." — remarks Wednesday in Warren, Michigan.

THE FACTS: He's way off on the number of coronavirus deaths in the U.S. military.

According to the Defense Department, just seven members of the military have died from COVID-19, including reservists and those in the National Guard.

The Biden campaign acknowledged he had misspoken, citing overall coronavirus deaths in Michigan instead of U.S. military deaths in a mix-up.

TRUMP: "We're pretty much out of Syria." — news conference Thursday.

THE FACTS: Not so much.

Last year close to 30 U.S. troops moved out of two outposts near the border area where a Turkish attack on the country was initially centered. But the U.S. currently has about 700 troops deployed to Syria, a number that hasn't changed a lot lately.

## NOVEMBER ELECTION

TRUMP, on mail-in voting: "Who's sending it back? Who's signing? They don't even have to have an authorized signature in Nevada." — Nevada rally on Saturday.

THE FACTS: Not true. Nevada's existing law requires signature checks on mail ballots. A new law also spells out a process by which election officials are to check a signature against the one in government records.

In Nevada's June primary, nearly 7,000 ballots were thrown out due to mismatched or missing signatures.

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TRUMP, on Democrats: "They're trying to rig this election ... Tiny amounts, a congressional race in New York, a small number of votes. If you go to New Jersey, if you go to Virginia, if you go to Pennsylvania, if you go to California, look at some of these races, every one of these races was a fraud, missing ballots." — Nevada rally on Saturday.

TRUMP, retweeting an Associated Press analysis projecting the number of ballots that get rejected will soar this fall because of increased mail-in voting: "Rigged Election!" — tweet Tuesday.

THE FACTS: No, defective ballots do not equate to fraud. The overwhelming majority aren't.

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, the vast majority of ballots are disqualified because they arrive late — what Trump describes as going "missing" — a particular worry this year because of recent U.S. Postal Service delays and an expected surge in mail-in voting during the coronavirus pandemic.

Ballots also are deemed defective if there is a missing signature — common with newer voters unfamiliar with the process — or it doesn't match what's on file. In addition, some states require absentee voters to get a witness or notary to sign their ballots.

"None of those are fraud," said Wendy Weiser, director of Brennan's democracy program at NYU School of Law. When suspected cases are investigated for potential fraud, studies have borne out the main reason for defects is voter mistake.

The AP analysis published on Sept. 7 found that rejections of absentee ballots could triple compared with 2016 in some battleground states, potentially tipping the election outcome.

It said voters "could be disenfranchised in key battleground states" and that nullified votes could be "even more pronounced in some urban areas where Democratic votes are concentrated and ballot rejection rates trended higher during this year's primaries." That's far from an election "rigged" against Trump.

Associated Press writers Jonathan Lemire in Las Vegas, Eric Tucker, Lauran Neergaard, Seth Borenstein, Josh Boak, Christopher Rugaber, Robert Burns and James LaPorta in Washington, Tom Krisher in Detroit, and Alexandra Jaffe in Warren, Michigan, contributed to this report.

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

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## Trump, DeVos raise school choice in appeal to vexed parents

By COLLIN BINKLEY AP Education Writer

As millions of American children start the school year online, the Trump administration is hoping to convert their parents' frustration and anger into newfound support for school choice policies that Education Secretary Betsy DeVos has long championed but struggled to advance nationally.

DeVos and President Donald Trump have repeatedly invoked school choice as the solution to parents' woes. If public schools fail to open, they say, parents should get a cut of the district's federal funding to send their children to private schools or for home schooling, learning pods or other options that have arisen during the coronavirus pandemic.

For Trump, it's seen as a potential lifeline to Black and Hispanic voters, who are more likely to support vouchers and other school choice options, polls have found. Speaking at the White House in July, Trump declared that "there is nothing that the African American community wants more than school choice." He has also used the issue as a political weapon against Democratic opponent Joe Biden, who supports stricter accountability measures for charter schools.

For DeVos, however, the pandemic offers a new chance to win support for policies she has spent her career promoting. Before taking office, she spent decades as an advocate for charter schools and voucher programs in Michigan and elsewhere. As secretary, she has been credited with helping states expand

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programs but has struggled to make headway on federal legislation.

Since last year, she has been calling for a \$5 billion federal tax credit to support scholarships that help students attend private schools or other education alternatives. The idea was included in Senate Republicans' latest relief bill, which was voted down Thursday.

DeVos' critics accuse her of exploiting a public health crisis to pursue her political agenda. But she says she's fighting to give families access to a wider array of options as many districts remain online.

"Parents are increasingly demanding it," DeVos said in an interview. "It's becoming ever more evident that parents and students need to have more choices. I would argue that it is the ideal time to be talking about this more widely. And in fact, we are."

In nearly every public appearance she has made during the pandemic, DeVos has used the spotlight to draw attention to school choice. On Twitter, she has highlighted stories of families calling for options beyond their local public schools. And even as schools of all type suffer financially as a result of the pandemic, DeVos has emphasized the struggles of private, religious schools.

Her focus on school choice has drawn sharp opposition from Democrats and public school leaders. In July, DeVos issued a rule that sought to shift millions of dollars in federal virus relief from public schools to private schools. Democrats and some Republicans in Congress said the rule conflicted with the intent of the funding bill, and several states vowed to ignore it. This month a federal judge appointed by Trump struck down the rule, saying DeVos overstepped her powers.

DeVos also drew criticism for using \$180 million in relief aid to create new "microgrants" that families could use to send students to private schools, among other purposes. At the same time, she has publicly assailed some public schools that decided to start the school year primarily or entirely online. In-person instruction should be available to any family that wants it, DeVos has said, and anything short of that fails students and taxpayers.

Rep. Bobby Scott, D-Va., chairman of the House Committee on Education and Labor, said DeVos has shown an "overwhelming" preference for private schools amid the pandemic, while doing little to help public schools reopen safely. "She has at every opportunity used all of her discretion to divert money from the public schools, particularly low-income students in public schools, to help fund private schools," Scott said.

DeVos, however, said she's working closely with governors and state education chiefs and has yet to hear a complaint from them. Some public school districts have called on DeVos to provide clearer guidance and to push for more funding. She calls claims that she hasn't done enough "hand wringing" and "excuse making."

"There's a notion that we had to have some dictate from the federal level about what schools have to do," DeVos said. "It's just a fallacy. And I'm afraid in many cases, it is an excuse for inaction."

Her response has frustrated some superintendents who say DeVos told schools to reopen but left them to figure out how. She won praise for granting schools flexibility with federal rules, but many school chiefs take issue with her public admonishments and her renewed calls for school choice.

"Choice is important, but so is safety," said Kristi Wilson, president of AASA, a national superintendent's association. "We appreciate the flexibility, but what we don't want is more divisiveness and more rhetoric."

DeVos' allies say she's being unfairly maligned. Florida school chief Richard Corcoran said DeVos has granted every request for flexibility the state has submitted. He said DeVos is "dead right" to criticize schools that kept classes online.

And supporters of school choice say DeVos is right to press for the issue now. Once an abstract debate for many families, choice has suddenly become a personal issue for parents across the country considering options to local schools remaining online, backers say.

Jeanne Allen, founder and CEO of the Center for Education Reform, said private schools and charter schools have been quicker to adapt to the pandemic and to reopen.

"Education right now is under a microscope like never before, and the problem is that districts don't work for most people," Allen said. "Secretary DeVos is really fortunate to be in a position where the most important worldwide concern right now is at her feet to handle as she might see fit."

Whether the pandemic will boost demand for private or charter schools is still to be seen. Despite fami-

lies' frustrations with online schooling, Americans generally support a cautious return to school. In July, nearly half of Americans reported that schools needed to make major adjustments to reopen, and 31% opposed any return to the classroom this fall, according to a poll from The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs.

Even some choice supporters are skeptical that this is the moment advocates have dreamed of. Michael Petrilli, head of the Thomas B. Fordham Institute, a conservative think tank, said DeVos and Trump are so unpopular — especially among people of color — that their advocacy could do more harm than good for the movement. He argues that DeVos should have focused on uniting schools of all types to face the challenges of the pandemic.

"Instead she's just been an armchair quarterback, criticizing schools for what they're not doing," he said. "She has been very clear in her messaging and her advocacy that she doesn't have a whole lot of respect for traditional public schools."

DeVos denies that she's favoring one type of school over another.

"I'm focused on students, not on school buildings, school systems or any word that comes before school," DeVos said. "I don't accept the notion that we're focused on one type of school versus another. It's really on students."

## Biden faces worries that Latino support slipping in Florida

By STEVE PEOPLES and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — Sen. Kamala Harris' motorcade raced past Colombian neighborhoods and made a quick stop for takeout in Doral — or "Doral-zuela" as it's known locally because of its large Venezuelan population — before speeding through the Cuban stronghold of Hialeah.

But during her first trip to Florida as Joe Biden's running mate last week, Harris did little to court this region's booming — and politically influential — Latino population. She instead focused on African American leaders waiting at a historically Black university in Miami Gardens.

"You truly are the future of our country," Harris said into a megaphone after the motorcade pulled up to Florida Memorial University, where a marching band serenaded her ahead of an hourlong discussion with local Black leaders. "You are the ones who are going to inspire us and fight for the ideals of our country."

In America's leading presidential battleground, there's mounting anxiety among Democrats that the Biden campaign's standing among Latinos is slipping, potentially giving President Donald Trump an opening in his reelection bid. That's fueling an urgent effort by Biden, Harris and their allies to shore up older voters, suburbanites and African Americans to make up for potential shortcomings elsewhere.

New York billionaire Mike Bloomberg committed over the weekend to spend at least \$100 million in Florida to help the Democratic ticket. Biden is scheduled to make his first visit to the state as the Democratic nominee on Tuesday, where he will hold a roundtable with veterans in Tampa before attending a Hispanic Heritage Month event in Kissimmee.

If Biden reclaims the upper Midwest for Democrats, he won't need Florida to capture the presidency. But Trump has virtually no path to reelection without it, which is why the state remains a top priority for Democrats.

Concerns about Biden's strength in Florida were driven in part by an NBC-Marist poll released last week, which found Latinos in the state about evenly divided between Biden and Trump. Hillary Clinton led Trump by a 59% to 36% margin among Latinos in the same poll in 2016.

Trump ultimately beat Clinton in Florida by just over 1 percentage point.

Hispanic voters in Florida tend to be somewhat more Republican-leaning than Hispanic voters nationwide because of the state's Cuban American population. Nationally, little public polling is available to measure the opinions of Latino voters this year and whether they differ from four years ago.

But allies closest to the Latino community said there are reasons to worry.

"Right now, I think the Biden campaign has work to do," says Javier Fernandez, a Democrat running for the state Senate in Miami-Dade County, where 7 in 10 residents identify as Latino or Hispanic. "I don't know that they're super excited about Joe Biden."

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Sen. Bernie Sanders, who led among Latinos during the early stages of the Democratic primary, warned on Sunday that Biden should be "reaching out more aggressively to grassroots Latino voters."

That would require a targeted — and expensive — effort that acknowledges the complexities of the Latino vote in Florida. A winning campaign likely requires varied outreach to Cuban Americans, Dominicans and Venezuelans in Miami along with first- and second-generation Central American immigrants around the state and displaced Puerto Ricans who settled in central Florida after Hurricane Maria.

The campaign has responded in part with ads featuring narrators with different accents to appeal to various backgrounds.

Some on Biden's team privately acknowledge he may not win over Latinos by the same margins as Clinton, although they are not conceding defeat. Senior strategist Cristobal Alex said the campaign has been pounding airwaves with Spanish-language advertising for months in addition to launching "Latino leadership councils" across the country.

"As we get closer to November you're going to see an even greater amount of activity to turn out Latino voters," Alex said.

Ashley Allison, who leads Biden's constituency engagement, said the campaign has already assembled more than 20 coalitions that include seniors, progressives, veterans and Native Americans, among others. Biden's team has aggressively courted Black men and Black women in recent days as well, featuring virtual events with Harris and celebrities like actor Don Cheadle.

"We don't have to focus on just one pathway, just one set of specific voters. We have the ability to expand the map and the coalition," said Becca Siegel, Biden's chief analytics officer.

Still, Trump is sensing a potential vulnerability. During a campaign swing through the west, he held a roundtable discussion with Latinos in Las Vegas on Sunday and has another scheduled Monday in Phoenix.

"They understand the situation at the southern border. They want people to come in, and so do I, but they want them to do it legally," Trump told a small group of supporters in Las Vegas. "While Joe Biden has failed, I have delivered for Latinos."

Biden's uncertain status with Latinos confounds many Democrats who point to Trump's repeated anti-immigrant rhetoric, his struggle to contain the pandemic and his slow response to the hurricane that devastated Puerto Rico. Trump's most egregious move, critics say, was his decision to execute a zero-tolerance policy at the U.S.-Mexico border to separate immigrant children from their parents.

Two years after images of family separations shocked Americans, the anger is still fresh for some residents of 89th Avenue in Miami's Westchester neighborhood, a collection of single-story stucco homes just a few blocks from Harris' recent motorcade route.

Ernesto Palacios, a 70-year-old U.S. citizen of Cuban descent, said he voted for Trump in 2016, but won't do so again.

"He lost my vote when he separated the families, treated the children like animals," Palacios said during an interview in Spanish as conservative activists canvassed his neighborhood.

But Palacios said his opposition to Trump does not mean he will vote for Biden. He described Biden as "soft" and raised concerns about some the push from some liberals to defund the police, which Biden does not support.

One of Palacios' neighbors, Juan Guzman, fled Fidel Castro's rule in Cuba at 15. He called Biden "a socialist" and said voting for him was out of the question.

Carlos Odio, a co-founder of the Democratic polling firm Equis Labs, said Biden will comfortably win the Latino vote, but that his backing in the community has remained soft enough that he may lose support by people simply not going to the polls — a trend that could be decisive in states like Florida.

"This is in so many ways a mobilization question for Joe Biden," Odio said. "Folks aren't necessarily deciding between Donald Trump and Joe Biden but deciding between voting and not voting."

Biden allies in the Latino community are candid about his challenges.

Domingo Garcia, the president of the League of United Latin American Citizens, said Latino voters have responded to Trump's embrace of religious conservative positions, and his warnings of protest-related

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violence and socialism.

"You need a message that hyper-excites the Latino community such as health care for all or dealing with immigration in first 100 days. Biden has been really lukewarm on those issues," Garcia said.

Some skepticism of Biden among Latinos stems from the policies of the Obama administration. Under pressure from pro-immigration protesters during the Democratic primary, Biden apologized for the high rate of deportations when President Barack Obama was in the White House.

But on several specific policies, Biden has refused to adopt the most liberal positions in his party.

He argues, for example, that crossing the U.S. border illegally should be prosecuted criminally rather than as a civil offense. He's also not seeking free college or free health care for people in the county illegally — despite Trump's suggestion that he is.

During her swing through Florida last week, Harris did not ignore the Latino community altogether.

She made an unscheduled stop at a local Venezuelan restaurant for about 20 minutes to pick up lunch. She sprinkled a few Spanish words during brief conversations with the lunch crowd, introducing her husband as "mi esposo" and saying "gracias" to one man who welcomed her to "Doral-zuela."

"There are so many important issues," Harris told him without being specific. "There's so much at stake."

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Weissert reported from Washington. Associated Press writers Alexandra Jaffe and Emily Swanson in Washington and Jonathan Lemire in Las Vegas contributed to this report.

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AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

## In defiance of Nevada governor, Trump holds indoor rally

By JONATHAN LEMIRE and KEN RITTER Associated Press

LAS VEGAS (AP) — In open defiance of state regulations and his own administration's pandemic health guidelines, President Donald Trump on Sunday hosted his first indoor rally since June, telling a packed, nearly mask-less Nevada crowd that the nation was "making the last turn" in defeating the virus.

Eager to project a sense of normalcy in imagery, Trump soaked up the raucous cheers inside a warehouse. Relatively few in the crowd wore masks, with one clear exception: Those in the stands directly behind Trump, whose images would end up on TV, were mandated to wear face coverings.

Not since a rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, that was blamed for a surge of coronavirus infections has he gathered supporters indoors. There was no early mention from the president that the pandemic had killed nearly 200,000 Americans and was still claiming 1,000 lives a day.

"We are not shutting the country again. A shutdown would destroy the lives and dreams of millions of Americans," said Trump, before using his inflammatory moniker for the coronavirus. "We will very easily defeat the China virus."

The rally in Tulsa, which was his first in three months after the coronavirus reached American shores, was a disaster for the campaign, a debacle that featured a sea of empty seats and a rise in COVID-19 cases, including on his own staff. One prominent Trump supporter at the rally, businessman and former presidential candidate Herman Cain, died of COVID-19 weeks later, though it was not clear if he contracted the virus in Tulsa.

Recognizing that many supporters were uncomfortable to gather in a large group indoors, where the virus spreads more easily, the Trump campaign shifted to holding smaller, outdoor rallies, usually at airplane hangers. But those rallies have grown in size in recent weeks, with little social distancing and few masks.

And on Sunday, they returned indoors, in part as a nod to the Las Vegas-area heat. Temperature checks were given to all upon entrance at the industrial site in Henderson and while masks were encouraged, few wore them.

Nevada Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat, has limited in-person gatherings indoors and outdoors to 50 people since May, a recommendation based on White House reopening guidelines. In a statement released

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just before the rally began, Sisolak said Trump was "taking reckless and selfish actions that are putting countless lives in danger here in Nevada."

"To put it bluntly: he didn't have the guts to make tough choices," Sisolak said of Trump's handling of the virus. "He left that to governors and the states. Now he's decided he doesn't have to respect our State's laws. As usual, he doesn't believe the rules apply to him."

The city of Henderson informed Xtreme Manufacturing on Sunday that the event as planned was in direct violation of the governor's COVID-19 emergency directives and that penalties would follow. The Trump campaign pushed back against the restrictions with the president saying he would support those in attendance "if the governor came after you."

"If you can join tens of thousands of people protesting in the streets, gamble in a casino, or burn down small businesses in riots, you can gather peacefully under the 1st Amendment to hear from the President of the United States," campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh said.

To this point, the campaign has not been played out as a choice election between Trump and his Democratic opponent, Joe Biden, but rather a referendum on the president's handling of the coronavirus. By wide margins, Americans have disapproved of Trump's leadership, as the United States has suffered more deaths than any other nation.

Therefore, the president's campaign believes it needs to change the subject and project the sense, despite evidence otherwise, that the pandemic was winding down and that a vaccine was on the horizon. Part of the plan: create images of normalcy, like the packed White House lawn for Trump's convention speech, though it was unclear if viewers were reassured or frightened.

In a rambling, hourlong speech, Trump mused on mandatory prison sentences for flag burning, praised various UFC fighters in attendance and appeared to endorse extrajudicial killings for those who target police officers. And Trump unleashed a series of attacks on Biden, labeling him a tired career politician and declaring him "unfit to be president."

But, Trump ruminated, while complaining about the media's coverage: "Maybe he'll win because they don't like me, they don't like my personality."

The crowd answered with a deafening "We love you" chant.

The rally came the night before Trump was to travel to California to receive a briefing on the devastating wildfires racing through the region. He has largely been silent on the blazes that have claimed dozens of lives in Oregon and California.

Earlier Sunday, Trump aimed for further inroads with Latinos who could prove vital in closely contested states that could determine the White House race, promoting economic gains they made before the coronavirus pandemic.

Though Trump has made scores of inflammatory and derogatory comments about Latinos, his campaign is growing confident that he has won some support that could help in Florida, Arizona and Nevada, his target this weekend,

Winning support from Latinos has been an uphill climb for Trump, whose hard-line immigration policies and sometimes virulent depiction of immigrants have alienated many Hispanics.

In the first moments of his 2016 campaign, he declared that many Mexican immigrants were "rapists." He has drawn criticism for his tepid response to a hurricane that ravaged Puerto Rico, his policies to separate children from their families at the U.S.-Mexico border and his efforts to dismantle an Obama-era program that allows young immigrants living in the country illegally who were brought here as children to remain in the U.S.

"They understand the situation at the southern border. They want people to come in, and so do I, but they want them to do it legally," Trump told a small group of supporters in Las Vegas. "While Joe Biden has failed, I have delivered for Latinos."

There is increasing concern about Democrats that their nominee, the former vice president, has not done enough to court Latino voters. His running mate, California Sen. Kamala Harris, did little to sway Florida's booming and politically influential Latino population during a stop there this past week. Biden has not set

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foot in Arizona or Nevada during the general election campaign, which he has mainly conducted virtually because of the coronavirus.

Trump tailored his pitch to Latinos on Sunday, noting their low unemployment rate before COVID-19 reached American shores and affirming his anti-abortion stance. He again hammered home his recent push on law and order, saying that recent violence in American cities endangered Latinos. He was set to hold a similar event in Arizona on Monday.

Follow Lemire on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/@JonLemire>

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## Thiem 1st since 1949 to win US Open after ceding 1st 2 sets

By HOWARD FENDRICH AP Tennis Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — A U.S. Open unlike any other finished unlike any other — with an unprecedented fifth-set tiebreaker as Dominic Thiem became the first man in 71 years to win the final after dropping the opening two sets.

So close to defeat in a nearly empty Arthur Ashe Stadium — fans were banned because of the coronavirus pandemic — Thiem slowly but surely turned things around against a faltering Alexander Zverev and pulled out a 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (6) victory at Flushing Meadows for his first Grand Slam title.

The match ended with both men fighting leg cramps and, clearly, nerves.

"Somehow," said Thiem, a 27-year-old from Austria, "the belief today was stronger than the body, and I'm super happy about that."

When a backhand from Zverev landed wide on the third championship point, a weary Thiem dropped to his back way behind the baseline and covered his face with his hands. When he arose, he was met by Zverev, who walked around the net to clasp hands, then embrace his friend and foe, two sights rarely seen in this era of social distancing.

Thiem then rested his head on the shoulder of the taller Zverev, who himself came within two points of what would have been his first major triumph.

"I wish we could have two winners today," Thiem said. "I think we both deserved it."

He is the first man to win the American Grand Slam tournament after trailing 2-0 in sets in the final since Pancho Gonzalez did it against Ted Schroeder in 1949 at an event then known as the U.S. Championships and held in Forest Hills.

The event never had been settled by a fifth-set tiebreaker; no major tournament ever had until Novak Djokovic edged Roger Federer that way at Wimbledon in 2019.

"I was a few games away, a few points away," said Zverev, who was trying to give Germany its first male Grand Slam champion since Boris Becker in the 1990s. "I'm 23 years old. I don't think it's my last chance."

Zverev choked up when he mentioned that his parents hadn't been able to travel to New York because they tested positive for COVID-19, although he said they are now healthy.

As Thiem stepped forward to pose for pictures with his shiny new bit of hardware, Zverev remained a few feet behind, one hand clutching his less-impressive silver tray, the other hand on a hip.

The proceedings took 4 hours, 2 minutes. And to think: After just 1 1/2 hours, Zverev was up by two sets and a break in the third at 2-1.

"The match turned when he broke me for the first time in the third set," Zverev said. "He started playing much better, and I started playing much worse."

Zverev, of all people, should have known what might have seemed like an impossible hill to climb for Thiem was, indeed, achievable. After all, in Thursday's semifinals, it was Zverev who trailed 2-0 in sets against Pablo Carreño Busta before coming back to win.

Thiem began the day 0-3 in Grand Slam finals, but always faced a member of the Big Three of men's



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tennis in those others. This time, he was the favorite and came out jittery, but eventually worked his way out of that, while Zverev went from cool and confident to passive and pushed around.

The fifth set was just as back-and-forth as the other four, the mistakes rising with the tension and the history in the offing.

Thiem broke in the opening game when Zverev shanked a pair of forehands. Zverev broke right back — and pierced the silence with a rare cry of “Come on!” — when Thiem double-faulted.

Then it was Zverev’s turn to nose ahead, breaking for a 5-3 lead when Thiem sent a down-the-line backhand wide and leaned over, gasping for air.

But with a chance to serve out the biggest win of his nascent career, Zverev faltered, getting broken right back when he pushed a volley into the net.

That began a three-game run for Thiem, who broke to lead 6-5, earning his own chance to serve for it when Zverev netted a backhand, followed by a long forehand.

After having a trainer check on his right leg during the ensuing changeover, Thiem couldn’t seal the deal, either, and on they went to the tiebreaker. Zverev double-faulted twice and offered up one second serve at 68 mph, about half the speed he’s capable of.

While this was the No. 7-ranked Zverev’s first Slam final, this was the first one the No. 3-ranked Thiem was supposed to win, following losses to 12-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal at Roland Garros in 2018 and 2019, then to eight-time Australian Open champion Djokovic at Melbourne Park this February — back before the pandemic upended the world and put tennis on a five-month hiatus.

Instead of wild applause and loud shouts greeting great exchanges, the soundtrack Sunday mainly came from outside the largest court in tennis, courtesy of roaring airplanes, rumbling trains, revving car engines, honking horns and wailing sirens. There was the occasional polite applause from the dozens of tournament workers allowed in the stands — and, deep into the match, yells from the players’ entourages.

But the louder crowd noise heard by TV viewers was fake, added by the broadcaster.

Unable to draw from support in what’s always been an electric environment, on an evening that felt more like a glorified practice session than a match with so much at stake, both men were sluggish at times, listless, even. The play was hardly perfect: They combined for 120 unforced errors to only 95 winners. In a curious parallel, Zverev balanced his 15 aces with 15 double-faults, and Thiem had eight in each category.

Normally, the U.S. Open closes each Grand Slam season, but what about 2020 has been normal?

Wimbledon was canceled for the first time since World War II, while the French Open was postponed from its originally scheduled May start and now will begin in two weeks.

Another way in which this whole event was different: Federer, Nadal and Djokovic had won the preceding 13 major trophies. But Federer and Nadal didn’t enter the U.S. Open, while Djokovic was defaulted in the fourth round for accidentally hitting a line judge with a ball he smacked in anger after dropping a game.

Thiem — barely, just barely — was the one who took advantage of the chance to sneak into the club of champions.

“Such a big relief. I mean, obviously it was huge pressure in the match, huge emotions,” Thiem said. “It tough to stay there and to still believe. But I did.”

More AP tennis: <https://apnews.com/apf-Tennis> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## The Latest: S. Korea eases restrictions as virus cases drop

By The Associated Press undefined

SEOUL, South Korea — South Korea has reported its lowest daily virus tally in about a month as it began easing its tough social distancing rules in the greater Seoul area.

The Korea Disease Control and Prevention Agency said on Monday that the 109 new cases added in the past 24 hours took the country’s total to 22,285 with 363 deaths.

It’s the 12th consecutive day for South Korea’s daily jump to stay in the 100s. The 109 additional cases are also the lowest daily tally since mid-August.

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The government on Sunday relaxed its physical distancing guidelines in the Seoul metropolitan area, citing a downward trend in new infections and worries about public livelihoods.

Under new distancing rules that are formally effective from Monday for two-weeks, franchise cafes and bakeries are allowed to have customers drink and eat inside their shops while indoor gyms and after-school academics can reopen. A ban on dining at restaurants after 9 p.m. was also lifted.

These facilities are still required to impose some distancing rules like having visitors sit at least one seat apart from each other or wear masks.

—  
WELLINGTON, New Zealand — New Zealand will keep its virus restrictions in place for at least another week as the country continues to battle a small outbreak that began in Auckland last month. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said Monday the country had taken a cautious approach to the virus from the beginning, which had helped save lives and allowed the economy to reopen in a sustained way. Ardern said New Zealand will continue its strategy of trying to eliminate the virus. Under the restrictions, everybody must wear masks on public transport and planes, and the sizes of most gatherings are limited to 10 in Auckland and 100 elsewhere. Health authorities announced one more case of the virus on Monday, bringing the number of active cases to 96.

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

- Virus America, six months in: Disarray, dismay, disconnect
- Trump's virus debate: Project strength or level with public
- Coronavirus complicates wildfire evacuations on West Coast.
- With many teachers opting out of returning to the classroom because of the coronavirus, schools around the U.S. are scrambling to find replacements and in some places lowering certification requirements to help get substitutes in the door.
- Central Americans who've been cleared to reunite with their families in the U.S. are facing a major obstacle: the coronavirus pandemic. Only about 338 of 2,700 people approved to come to the U.S. through a small refugee program have arrived since a court settlement more than a year ago.

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

## HERE'S WHAT ELSE IS HAPPENING:

AUSTIN, Texas — Texas health officials on Sunday reported 1,840 new cases of the coronavirus and 47 additional deaths. The Texas Department of State Health Services said the total number of COVID-19 cases so far in the state is now at 659,434, while the death toll is now at 14,190. Health officials estimate that about 67,000 cases in the state are currently active. There were about 3,300 people with COVID-19 hospitalized in Texas on Sunday, health officials said. The number of hospitalizations has been decreasing since peaking July 22 at 10,893.

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Arkansas health officials on Sunday reported 508 newly confirmed cases of the coronavirus and 12 additional deaths. The Arkansas Department of Health said the number of confirmed cases in the state is now at 69,050 and that there have been 976 deaths among those cases. As of Sunday there were about 370 people hospitalized with COVID-19 in the state, health officials said. And more than 62,000 people have recovered.

JERUSALEM — Israel will reinstate a strict new countrywide lockdown this week amid a stubborn surge in coronavirus cases.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made the announcement in a televised speech Sunday.

Beginning Friday, the eve of the Jewish New Year, schools, restaurants, malls and hotels among other

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businesses will shut down and restrictions on movement will be imposed. The lockdown is expected to last at least three weeks, when measures may be eased depending on morbidity.

Israel has seen a spike in cases over recent weeks that more tempered measures failed to bring down. It now has one of the world's worst outbreaks, adjusted for population.

Israel earned praise earlier this year for its initial handling of the coronavirus domestically, moving quickly to seal the country's borders and appearing to bring the outbreak under control. It has since been criticized for opening businesses and schools too quickly and allowing the virus to spread once again.

**LONDON** -- The U.K., which has suffered Europe's deadliest coronavirus outbreak, has recorded more than 3,000 new cases of COVID-19 for the third day running for the first time since May.

The Department for Health and Social Services reported a further 3,330 cases on Sunday, taking the three-day tally above 10,000.

Though a ramp up in testing accounts for some of the increase, it's clear that the U.K. has seen the virus spread in recent weeks. Daily cases are more than double those reported a couple of weeks ago, a change that has stoked concerns of a second wave of the virus.

To get on top of the flare-up, authorities have tightened a number restrictions to everyday life. For example, the British government said social gatherings in England will be limited to six people from Monday, both indoors and outdoors, and that rule-breakers will face fines.

Daily deaths remain very low but the worry is that the rise in cases, even if confined to younger people, will lead to a rise in hospitalizations in coming weeks and potentially of more people dying.

The U.K. has an official virus-related toll of over 41,600 people who died within 28 days of testing positive.

**OKLAHOMA CITY** — Oklahoma health officials reported six additional deaths from the coronavirus on Sunday as the state's death toll surpassed 900.

The Oklahoma State Department of Health said the state's death toll is now at 905. Health officials also reported 695 new cases of COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus. The total number of reported cases so far is now at 69,354. Health officials say more than 58,000 people have recovered from COVID-19 in Oklahoma. There are currently almost 10,000 active cases in the state.

**CHICAGO** — Chicago schools reported roughly 84% citywide attendance for the first day of remote classes, but some schools had fewer than half of the students log in. The Chicago Tribune reported that attendance went up citywide at more than 500 schools for the first three days of remote classes, including 90.2% on Thursday.

Some schools reported 100%, but others lagged behind. Teachers say students who didn't show didn't have devices or reliable internet access. Chicago school officials say they're still trying to close the digital divide by offering 100,000 devices for students.

**ROME** — Italy added another 1,458 coronavirus infections to its official tally on the eve of the return to school for most Italian students for the first time since March.

Another seven people died over the past 24 hours, bringing Italy's official COVID-19 toll to 35,610, the highest number in Europe after Britain.

The Health Ministry issued its daily update Sunday as Premier Giuseppe Conte urged Italian students to embrace the new school year with enthusiasm but responsibility. Italian schools closed nationwide on March 5 and never reopened as Italy became the epicenter of the pandemic in Europe.

Most of Italy's recent infections during its six-week spike in cases have been among young Italians returning from vacation. The average age of those infected, which had dropped to the low 30s in recent weeks, is beginning to rise again, presumably as young people infect more vulnerable older relatives.

**ATHENS**, Greece — Greek health authorities announced 207 new coronavirus cases Sunday, including

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29 international arrivals. There were also three deaths.

Total confirmed cases now stand at 13,240, about two-thirds of them since the beginning of August. Deaths are 305. The median age of those falling sick is 39, while that of those dying is 78.

Monday marks an important step towards a return to a kind of normal, with the opening of schools. Teachers and students will be wearing masks. In the face of some parents protesting against masks and a few rallies against their use, Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis said he would not hesitate to go after conspiracy theorists.

**DES MOINES, Iowa** — Iowa officials said the number of coronavirus cases in the state increased by 814 Sunday and two additional deaths were reported.

Health officials said that as of 10 a.m. Sunday 74,361 confirmed cases of coronavirus have been reported since the pandemic began. Of that total, 1,218 people have died and 53,120 have recovered, according to the state's online virus tracker.

The state said Iowa had an 8.9% positivity rate over the past 14 days, but six Iowa counties reported positivity rates over 15% over the past 14 days. The high rate means that public schools in Sioux, Lyon, Bremer, Plymouth, Carroll and Chickasaw counties may be able to apply for a state waiver to provide instruction entirely online.

State officials said 274 people were hospitalized with COVID-19 Sunday, down from 290 on Saturday. The number of patients battling COVID-19 in intensive care also decreased to 79 on Sunday from Saturday's 90 patients.

**BEIRUT** — More than 3 million Syrian students started school in government-held areas Sunday, marking the first school day amid strict measures to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, state media reported.

Syria, which had a population of 23 million before its conflict began in March 2011, has registered 3,506 confirmed coronavirus cases as well as 152 deaths in government-held areas. The actual number of cases is believed to be much higher, as the number of tests being done in the country is very low and many people in rural areas are unaware they are carrying the virus.

Coronavirus tests at private clinics cost around \$60, far too expensive for most Syrians, whose average salary is less than \$100 a month. The government conducts about 300 free tests each day for people showing symptoms.

Among the precautionary measures taken by the Ministry of Education were the sanitizing of all classrooms, walls, floors, stairs and bathrooms of schools, state news agency SANA said. Students' temperatures will be checked as well.

**SEOUL, South Korea** — South Korea says it will ease social distancing rules in the densely populated Seoul metropolitan area following a declining number of new coronavirus cases.

Health Minister Park Neung-hoo told an online briefing Sunday that the greater Seoul area recorded about 80-110 new virus cases each day last week, down from 110-180 in the previous week.

Under eased rules that are effective from Monday for two weeks, Park says authorities will lift a ban on dining at restaurants after 9 p.m. in the Seoul area. They've been allowed to provide only takeouts and deliveries after 9 p.m. since late August.

**BEIRUT** — The U.N. peacekeeping force in southern Lebanon along the border with Israel said Sunday that 90 of its troops have tested positive for COVID-19.

The force, known as UNIFIL, said in a statement that 88 of the troops are from the same contingent and two others are from another country. Only four presented symptoms. It said the 90 troops are in complete isolation and it is carrying out contact tracing.

It said the coronavirus cases did not affect activities of the force.

UNIFIL, which has some 10,300 peacekeepers, said last month that 22 soldiers had tested positive for

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the coronavirus.

PARIS — France's health agency says that the country crossed the threshold of 10,000 new cases of COVID-19 in 24 hours — the most since widespread testing began in May.

Public Health France reported 10,561 new cases Saturday, compared to 9,406 fresh cases the day before. France is one of European countries that has been the hardest hit by the virus, with a total of 30,910 people having died.

Prime Minister Jean Castex pledged on Friday that there would be a reduction in waiting times for tests, faced with what he described as a "manifest deterioration" of the situation. Around 10 millions tests have so far been carried out.

BERLIN — Austria's leader says his country is seeing the start of a "second wave" of coronavirus infections. He is appealing to his compatriots to comply with newly reinforced rules to keep down infections.

Chancellor Sebastian Kurz announced Friday that the government would reimpose measures such as an obligation to wear masks in shops to curb a rise in new infections. Austria recorded 859 new infections on Friday, the highest daily figure since late March.

Kurz stepped up his rhetoric on Sunday. He told the Austria Press Agency in a written statement that "what we are experiencing at the moment is the beginning of a second wave." He added that developments in the capital, Vienna, are "particularly dramatic," with the city accounting for around half of new cases.

Kurz said that Austria will soon hit the 1,000 per day mark. He called on Austrians to reduce social contacts, wear masks and keep their distance "as well as possible."

He predicted "a tough autumn and winter," though he stuck to his assessment that things should be largely normal by next summer.

PRAGUE — Coronavirus infections continue to grow in the Czech Republic, reaching a record level for the fourth day this week.

The Health Ministry says the day-to-day increase in new cases reached 1,541 on Saturday, a record high for the country.

Health Minister Adam Vojtech said "nobody expected" such a spike.

The Czech Republic has had 35,401 cases overall, including 453 deaths.

NEW DELHI — India has registered a single-day spike of 94,372 new confirmed coronavirus cases, driving the country's overall tally to 4.75 million.

The Health Ministry on Sunday also reported 1,114 deaths in the past 24 hours, taking total fatalities up to 78,586.

Even as infections are growing faster in India than anywhere else in the world, the number of people recovering from the virus has also risen sharply. The country's recovery rate stands at 77.77% and nearly 70,000 recoveries have been reported every day in the month of September, according to the Health Ministry.

The ministry attributed India's COVID-19 recovery pace to aggressive testing and prompt surveillance, but experts say India needs to test more due to its huge population. It's climbed to the second worst-hit country behind the United States, and is now testing more than 1 million people every day.

India's Parliament is expected to resume work on Monday with strict physical distancing. Parliament adjourned in March just before a nationwide lockdown was announced to contain the pandemic.

The harsh lockdown caused a severe economic crisis, with India's economy contracting nearly 24% in the second quarter, the worst among the world's top economies.

## First US spring flight to Antarctica aims to keep out virus

By NICK PERRY Associated Press

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WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP) — The first U.S. flight into Antarctica following months of winter darkness arrived Monday with crews taking extra precautions to keep out the coronavirus.

Antarctica is the only continent without the virus, and there is a global effort to make sure incoming scientists and workers don't bring it with them.

The U.S. Air Force flight left Monday from the gateway city of Christchurch carrying 106 passengers and crew, said Tony German, the U.S. Antarctic program's representative in New Zealand.

He said the new arrivals will start getting ready for the summer and swap out with skeleton crews who have spent the Southern Hemisphere winter in Antarctica.

The flight was delayed for three weeks by big storms, resulting in an extended six-week quarantine for those aboard.

German said the crews were first isolated in San Francisco for four days and then spent another five weeks isolated in New Zealand, undergoing several virus tests along the way. Upon their arrival at McMurdo Station, the facility entered Code Yellow, meaning everybody will wear masks for two weeks.

"We are being meticulous to ensure nothing happens," German said.

If the virus was to break out at the station, he said, they have protocols in place to test and isolate anybody who is infected.

Still, the flight delays over recent weeks underscore how difficult it can be to quickly evacuate people from Antarctica who are suffering severe medical problems.

German said it took more than a week for winter crews at McMurdo, the main U.S. station on Antarctica, to dig out from the storms and clear the runway in order for the flight to proceed.

The Boeing C-17 Globemaster that landed Monday afternoon was the first U.S. flight to arrive on the continent since early May.

Officials say unusual teamwork among the United States, China, Russia and other countries took place this year to ensure they keep the virus out.

All are planning reduced numbers at their stations. The number of people at McMurdo is set to peak at 450 this summer, about one-third the usual.

Some planned research and construction will be delayed. German said the main goals are to keep the facilities running and prepare for next year's winter-over, while trying to do some science along the way.

"The show must go on," he said.

## **Sheriff: Deputy on video punching Black man in Georgia fired**

By SUDHIN THANAWALA Associated Press

A sheriff's deputy in Georgia has been fired after being captured on video repeatedly punching a Black man during a traffic stop, authorities said Sunday.

The deputy was being let go for "excessive use of force," the Clayton County Sheriff's Office said in a statement. It did not identify the deputy, but said a criminal investigation has been turned over to the district attorney's office.

Roderick Walker, 26, was arrested and beaten after Clayton County sheriff's deputies pulled over the vehicle he was riding in Friday with his girlfriend, their 5-month-old child and his stepson for an alleged broken taillight, his attorney, Shean Williams of The Cochran Firm in Atlanta said Sunday. The deputies asked for Walker's identification and got upset and demanded he get out of the vehicle when he questioned why they needed it since he wasn't driving, Williams said.

The subsequent arrest, captured on video by a bystander and shared widely, shows two deputies on top of Walker, one of whom repeatedly punches him. Walker's girlfriend screams and tells the deputies Walker said he can't breathe. A child in the vehicle yells, "Daddy."

As Walker is handcuffed, the deputy who punched him tells the bystander that Walker bit him.

Williams said his client denies biting the deputy. Walker was trying to survive and lost consciousness at least twice during the beating, Williams said. A photo of Walker taken later in jail shows a welt under his left eye.

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"My reaction to the video is that it just shows unfortunately another incident where an African American male's civil rights have been violated by people and officers and law enforcement who have the duty first to protect and serve," he said.

Walker later wobbles and appears to try to jerk free as deputies get him on his feet. He was arrested on suspicion of obstructing officers and battery, according to jail records. Williams demanded his release on bond and said he has asked the Georgia Bureau of Investigation to review the case. He also accused investigators of improperly talking to his client without an attorney at the jail.

A person who answered a call to the sheriff's office said he could not comment further, citing an ongoing investigation. He declined to provide his full name.

The sheriff's office said in its statement a court denied bond for Walker because of outstanding warrants, including a felony probation warrant out of Fulton County for cruelty to children and possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

It said Walker had received medical attention and was being monitored by a doctor at the jail hospital.

Walker, his girlfriend and the children had dropped off a rental car and found a driver willing to take them home for \$10, Williams said. The driver was also Black. Williams said he was released without a citation, though he, too, did not have identification.

## Winds a worry as death toll reaches 35 from West Coast fires

By LINDSAY WHITEHURST and SARA CLINE Associated Press

BEAVERCREEK, Ore. (AP) — Nearly all the dozens of people reported missing after a devastating blaze in southern Oregon have been accounted for, authorities said over the weekend as crews battled wildfires that have killed at least 35 from California to Washington state.

The flames up and down the West Coast have destroyed neighborhoods, leaving nothing but charred rubble and burned-out cars, forced tens of thousands to flee and cast a shroud of smoke that has given Seattle, San Francisco and Portland, Oregon, some of the worst air quality in the world.

The smoke filled the air with an acrid metallic smell like pennies and spread to nearby states. While making it difficult to breathe, it helped firefighters by blocking the sun and turning the weather cooler as they tried to get a handle on the blazes, which were slowing in some places.

But warnings of low moisture and strong winds that could fan the flames added urgency to the battle. The so-called red flag warnings stretched from hard-hit southern Oregon to Northern California and extended through Monday evening.

Lexi Soulios, her husband and son were afraid they would have to evacuate for a second time because of the weather. They left their small southern Oregon town of Talent last week when they saw a "big, huge flow of dark smoke coming up," then went past roadblocks Friday to pick through the charred ruins of their home.

While they are staying farther south in Ashland, known for the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, she said by text message that the forecast may mean they could be on the move again.

"So this isn't over yet but we just had the car checked so we feel prepared," Lexi Soulios wrote.

Authorities last week reported as many as 50 people could be missing after a wildfire in the Ashland area. But the Jackson County sheriff's office said late Saturday that four people had died in the blaze and that the number of missing was down to one.

At least 10 people have been killed in the past week throughout Oregon. Officials have said more people are missing from other fires, and the number of fatalities is likely to rise, though they have not said how high the toll could go as they search. In California, 24 people have died, and one in Washington state. Thousands of homes and other buildings have burned.

Barbara Rose Bettison, 25, left her farm among the trees and fields of Eagle Creek, outside Portland, when a sheriff's deputy knocked on her door Tuesday. They drove away on a road that became an ominous dividing line, with blue skies on one side and the other filled with black and brown smoke.

She took shelter at an Elks Lodge near Portland, where evacuees wrapped themselves in blankets and

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set up tents out back.

"It's terrifying. We've never had any form of natural disaster," she said.

Bettison, a UPS driver, was able to get out with her chickens, rabbits and cats. She hasn't been back, but neighbors said it is so smoky they can't see their hands in front of their faces.

"I'm hoping there has not been too much damage because it would break my heart," she said.

Farther south in the town of Talent, Dave Monroe came to his burned home, partially hoping he'd find his three cats.

"We thought we'd get out of this summer with no fires," he said. "There is something going on, that's for sure, man. Every summer we're burning up."

Numerous studies in recent years have linked bigger wildfires in the U.S. to global warming from the burning of coal, oil and gas.

The Democratic governors of all three states say the fires are a consequence of climate change, taking aim at President Donald Trump ahead of his visit Monday to California for a fire briefing.

"It is maddening right now that when we have this cosmic challenge to our communities, with the entire West Coast of the United States on fire, to have a president to deny that these are not just wildfires, these are climate fires," Washington Gov. Jay Inslee said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

At a rally in Nevada, Trump blamed inadequate forest management, which White House adviser Peter Navarro echoed on CNN's "State of the Union," saying that for many years in California, "particularly because of budget cutbacks, there was no inclination to manage our forests."

Firefighter Steve McAdoo has run from one blaze to another in Oregon for six days, seeing buildings burn and trees light up like candles.

"We lost track of time because you can't see the sun and you've been up for so many days," he said. "Forty-eight to 72 hours nonstop, you feel like you're in a dream."

As he and his team battled the blazes, McAdoo worried about his wife and daughter at home just miles away. They evacuated safely, but at times he could communicate with them only in one-word text messages: "busy."

McAdoo and other firefighters got their first real break Sunday to take showers, shave and check their equipment. And though it's a faint shadow of its usual self, he can finally see the sun.

"It's nice today to at least see the dot in the sky," he said.

Meanwhile, Oregon's fire marshal, who resigned after being placed on leave amid a personnel investigation, says he was trying to help a colleague and "didn't do anything wrong."

Jim Walker told TV news station KOIN in Portland that state police leaders put him on leave after he tried to help a co-worker whose family was missing in a fire zone, saying his superiors decided he had overstepped his authority.

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Whitehurst reported from Beavercreek, and Cline from Salem. Associated Press journalist Manuel Valdes in Talent contributed.

## Gunman sought after California deputies shot in patrol car

By CHRISTOPHER WEBER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — Authorities searched Sunday for a gunman who shot and critically wounded two Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies who were sitting in their squad car — an apparent ambush that drew a reward for information and an angry response from the president.

The 31-year-old female deputy and 24-year-old male deputy underwent surgery Saturday evening, Sheriff Alex Villanueva said in a late-night news conference. Both graduated from the academy 14 months ago, he said.

"They performed in an admirable fashion in spite of grave adversity," Villanueva said Sunday during a conversation with local religious leaders. "God bless them, it looks like they're going to be able to recover."

He said the wounded female deputy was able to get help for the male deputy by calling in on the police radio despite having been shot.



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"They've survived the worst," he added.

The deputies were shot while sitting in their patrol car at a Metro rail station, the sheriff said. Villanueva, whose department has been criticized during recent protests over racial unrest, expressed frustration during his Saturday night briefing over anti-police sentiment as he urged people to pray for the deputies.

"It pisses me off. It dismays me at the same time," he said.

The department tweeted video of the shooting that shows a person approach the parked patrol car on foot and shoot through the passenger-side window.

"The gunman walked up on the deputies and opened fire without warning or provocation," the department stated.

An extended version of the video reviewed by the Los Angeles Times shows the shooter running away in the direction he came. He turns a corner out of the frame, past a second figure lingering on the sidewalk, according to the Times. It's unclear if the second person was involved in the attack. A sheriff's department spokeswoman declined to comment, citing the ongoing investigation.

Moments after the shooting, the passenger door opens and a deputy stumbles out, hand on head, according to the newspaper. The driver's-side door opens soon after.

The video sparked a reaction from President Trump who responded on Twitter, "Animals that must be hit hard!"

"This cold-blooded shooting is unconscionable and the perpetrator must be brought to justice," Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden tweeted. "Violence of any kind is wrong; those who commit it should be caught and punished."

A handful of protesters gathered outside the hospital where the injured deputies were being treated. The protesters tried to provoke deputies stationed outside and at one point were prevented from entering the emergency room, Bishop Juan Carlos Mendez with the Churches in Action group told the TV station KABC.

"Unacceptable behavior. The hospital should be a sanctuary, we should leave hospitals alone," he said. Mendez and members of his group gathered nearby in prayer for the wounded deputies.

Although the sheriff's department tweeted that the protesters were blocking emergency entrances and exits to the hospital, video showed only a handful of men outside, some taking video on their phones.

A radio reporter who was near the protest scene was taken into custody. The sheriff's department later tweeted that the reporter interfered with the arrest of a male protester.

"The female adult, who was later identified as a member of the press, did not identify herself as press and later admitted she did not have proper press credentials on her person," the department stated.

After being released, Josie Huang, a reporter for public radio station KPCC, a National Public Radio affiliate, said on Twitter Sunday that she had been covering the sheriff's news conference when she returned to the hospital after hearing protesters shouting. She was wearing her press pass and called out to deputies that she was press, she said.

One of several videos Huang said she shot moments before her arrest showed two men carrying red, black and green flags and yelling at deputies outside the hospital while a few other people stood by recording on their cellphones.

Huang tweeted that she began walking behind deputies who were following the small group of protesters. "I was filming an arrest when suddenly deputies shout 'back up.' Within seconds, I was getting shoved around. There was nowhere to back up," Huang said on Twitter. In another video, Huang can be heard shouting "I'm a reporter... I'm with KPCC" as she falls to the ground.

The executive editor of the station, Megan Garvey, expressed outrage over the arrest and said her reporter appeared to be wearing her credentials and had shouted her KPCC affiliation. NPR's Editorial Director Nancy Barnes said the network was "appalled" by the arrest of a reporter doing her job.

The office of the Los Angeles County Inspector General, which oversees investigations and actions of the Sheriff's Department, has opened an investigation into the reporter's arrest.

Meanwhile, the search for the gunman continued. Sheriff's officials announced a \$100,000 reward for information leading to an arrest.

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Capt. Kent Wegener said Saturday that officers were blanketing the area in search of the suspect seen on the video opening fire with a pistol.

"We have a very, very generic description," he said.

The incident happened around 7 p.m. a short distance from the Compton sheriff's station south of downtown Los Angeles.

The U.S. Justice Department would assist sheriff's investigators with "all federal tools available," spokeswoman Kerri Kupec said on Twitter.

Protesters have railed against the LA Sheriff's Department for weeks over recent shootings by deputies, including the killing of a man on a bicycle last month. There was no known connections between the recent shootings and Saturday's ambush and investigators are "chasing all leads," Villanueva told the Times.

"Of course, there's an important conversation going on about policing in this country, but these are folks who put their lives on the line for us, and we will find justice for them," Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti said on CNN Sunday.

## Racial injustice themes fill empty NFL stadiums

By JIMMY GOLEN AP Sports Writer

Jason Myers kicked off to start the Seahawks' season-opener against the Falcons, and the ball sailed through the end zone for a touchback. No one moved a step.

Instead, the players all dropped to one knee.

After years of pleading with the NFL to act against systemic racism, they were willing to wait another 10 seconds to make their point.

Teams opening the year in empty stadiums knelt, locked arms, raised fists in protest or stayed off the field entirely for the "Star-Spangled Banner" and the Black anthem "Lift Every Voice and Sing" on Sunday as the once-reluctant league brought racial injustice to the forefront on the NFL's first full slate of games.

In Atlanta, the teams wore armbands honoring civil rights leader John Lewis and staged the most striking of the day's gestures: They barely flinched as the opening kickoff landed beyond the end line, took a knee, and remained there for about 10 seconds before trotting off the field to resume the game.

"It's a start," Falcons running back Todd Gurley said after the game. "Are we going to keep doing this? ... You don't want to make it a one-time thing — just like having a good game, and then the rest of the season you do nothing."

Lewis, the Georgia Congressman who died in July, was an honorary captain for the game. The Falcons also wore shirts with his quote: "The Vote is the most powerful, nonviolent change agent you have in a democratic society."

And that's just what the Falcons and Seahawks did before the game.

"Everybody voted and said we're going to come together as a unit," Atlanta receiver Julio Jones said. "Collectively, we can move mountains."

While fans were absent everywhere except Jacksonville because of the coronavirus pandemic, the Minnesota Vikings hosted the family of George Floyd, who died in May in a videotaped killing that sparked national protests over police brutality against Black people.

Vikings players locked arms in the end zone about a half-hour before their game against Green Bay for "Lift Every Voice," which was played before each game in Week 1 along with the national anthem as part of the NFL's social awakening. At least six Vikings knelt during the "Star-Spangled Banner," something coach Mike Zimmer had opposed previously.

"A couple years back, kneeling was the worst thing you could do. And now if you stand, people have something to say about that," Minnesota linebacker Anthony Barr said. "There's always going to be people trying to divide from inside. But, however you feel about it, you should express it your way."

About 10 of Floyd's relatives were then shown on the stadium video board from their perch in the upper concourse near the Gjallarhorn. The symbol from Norse mythology, which gave the Vikings their name, had been sounded before every game since 2007.

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On Sunday, the team said, it remained silent "to call attention to these silenced voices and collectively work toward a better, more just society."

The Packers remained in their locker room for the two songs, following the lead of the Miami Dolphins, who released a video last week saying they would stay off the field for the national anthem rather than participate in "another publicity parade."

"This attempt to unify only creates more divide," the Miami players said in the video. "So we will skip the song and dance and as a team we'll stay inside."

The Jacksonville Jaguars, Buffalo Bills, New York Jets and Arizona Cardinals also remained in their locker rooms for both songs. Before Thursday night's season opener in Kansas City, the teams were booed when they locked arms in a pregame sign of unity; there was no sign of vitriol in Jacksonville, where the Jaguars distributed 14,000 tickets for the only NFL game with fans in attendance on Sunday.

A few dozen players knelt during the anthem, a silent echo of the 2016 protest by 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick that forced the NFL to confront racial injustice in a way that Commissioner Roger Goodell and many of the league's most powerful owners wanted to avoid.

Colts coach Frank Reich also dropped to one knee, and his players noticed.

"Frank is the leader of this team ... and he's the one who says 'You know it starts with me,'" Indianapolis linebacker Darius Leonard said. "That definitely means a lot and that's why we stand behind coach Frank, he stands behind us, and we all stand together."

The Colts were among the teams denying that their protest was unpatriotic, a point Kaepernick also made, but which has often been drowned out by those — including President Donald Trump — latching onto the issue. "To be clear — we were not protesting the flag, the anthem, or the men and women who wear the uniform," the Colts said in a statement.

Patriots owner Robert Kraft lined up with his team when the Black anthem was played before New England's game against Miami. Quarterback Cam Newton, who made his Patriots debut, appeared to be singing along.

The Dolphins remained in their locker room.

"It's inspiration," Miami safety Bobby McCain said afterward. "We have a platform and we ... will keep using it."

When the anthem began in Detroit, a slew of Lions walked off the field and headed toward their locker room; some remained on the field and knelt. On the other sideline, several Bears players knelt while 20 others waited for the anthem to end before jogging onto the field.

The NFL had been at the center of social justice protests in American sports ever since Kaepernick began kneeling during the national anthem in 2016 to call attention to the systematic oppression of Black Americans. Kaepernick, who led San Francisco to the Super Bowl in 2012 and the NFC title game the next year, was unable to get a job in the league in 2017 — or since.

But the football league was in its offseason when Breonna Taylor was shot in her own apartment by Louisville police in March; when a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee on Floyd's neck for nearly eight minutes in May, killing him; when Jacob Blake was shot and paralyzed by Kenosha, Wisconsin, police in August; and when protests over those and other acts of violence against Black Americans erupted across the nation.

Goodell posted a video in June conceding that the league had been late in acknowledging the problem. Since then, the league has taken largely symbolic steps like allowing racial justice messages in end zones and on helmets and T-shirts.

Some team owners have pledged money toward social justice causes or offered their stadiums as polling places for the November election.

"For me, it's about change," Chicago Bears tight end Jimmy Graham said. "Obviously, it's a hot topic. And it needs to stay a hot topic until some legislation's passed to hold people accountable and for total reform. That's all we're asking. I don't think anything's gonna stop until it happens."

AP Sports Writers Steve Reed in Charlotte, North Carolina; Larry Lage in Detroit; Mark Long in Jackson-

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ville, Florida; Kyle Hightower in Foxborough, Massachusetts; Dave Campbell in Minneapolis; Paul Newberry in Atlanta; Josh Dubow Santa Clara, California; Brett Martel in New Orleans; Joe Kay in Cincinnati; Dave Ginsburg in Baltimore; John Wawrow in Buffalo, New York; Mike Marot in Indianapolis; and Andrew Seligman in Chicago contributed.

More AP NFL: <https://apnews.com/NFL> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_NFL](https://twitter.com/AP_NFL)

## Cubs' Mills throws MLB's 2nd no-hitter in 12-0 win over MIL

By RICH ROVITO Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) — From college walk-on to major league starter, Chicago Cubs right-hander Alec Mills had to earn most every break he got.

On the brink of big league history, he was happy to welcome this bit of luck: expecting to see two-time batting champion Christian Yelich in the on-deck circle, Mills looked over and saw his backup instead.

"That kind of surprised me," he said.

This one surprised just about everyone.

Mills cruised through baseball's second no-hitter this season in just the 15th start of his career, completing the gem in a 12-0 romp over the Milwaukee Brewers on Sunday.

Mills got Jace Peterson — who replaced Yelich, the 2018 NL MVP, on defense late in the blowout — to hit a routine grounder to shortstop Javier Baez with two outs in the ninth. Baez completed the play, and the Cubs swarmed around Mills, tearing off his cap and pulling at the smiling right-hander's uniform after his first career complete game.

"It just hasn't really hit me yet," the 28-year-old said. "It's kind of crazy, I didn't even know how to celebrate. Just something that all came together today. Obviously a memory I'll have forever."

Mills (5-3) threw 114 pitches and hardly had any close calls in Chicago's 16th no-hitter. Avisail Garcia almost got to him twice, hitting a line drive to right in the first and nearly legging out an infield hit to shortstop in the sixth. Garcia crossed first and immediately called to the Brewers dugout for a review, but after a very brief stoppage, the Brewers opted not to challenge.

Mills would have faced Garcia again in the ninth, but Milwaukee manager Craig Counsell pulled the 2017 All-Star along with Yelich in the eighth with his team trailing big. Mills struck out Garcia's replacement, Tyrone Taylor, for the second out in the ninth.

"Taylor hitting there and then Peterson, I had no idea they were in the game," Mills said.

Mills struck out five and walked three. His five strikeouts are the fewest in a Cubs no-hitter since Ken Holtzman in 1969. He only induced five swings and misses, tied with Oakland's Dallas Braden during his perfect game in 2010 for fewest in a no-hitter since at least 1988, per Stats Inc.

"I can promise you it was not a slow heartbeat," Mills said. "I had to kind of take a seat and calm myself down. It was tough. I had to take a lot of deep breaths and get into a good mindset."

Chicago White Sox ace Lucas Giolito threw baseball's other no-hitter this season against the Pittsburgh Pirates on Aug. 15.

Mills was a 22nd-round draft pick by Kansas City in 2012 and had Tommy John surgery in 2013. He had started just six major league games prior to this season but cracked Chicago's rotation because of an injury to Jose Quintana.

He went 2-0 with a 1.38 ERA in his first two starts, struggled in his next five but pitched solidly Tuesday against the Reds with six shutout innings. The no-hitter dropped his ERA to 3.93.

Not bad for a player who didn't get a college scholarship. Mills was a walk-on at Tennessee-Martin.

"Never give up," Mills said. "You know, some people are going to tell you you can't do it or you're not good enough. That's just one person. So just keep working. Just persevere."

Mills happily took high-fives as teammates got close during the celebration — a no-no no-no amid the coronavirus pandemic that didn't concern players in the moment.

Their yells of congratulations echoed around the empty stadium, which has yet to have Brewers fans

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in attendance for a no-hitter. Cubs pitcher Carlos Zambrano had thrown the only no-hitter at Miller Park, against the Houston Astros on Sept. 14, 2008. The Cubs played the Astros in Milwaukee because of damage in the Houston area from Hurricane Ike.

Baez was anxious to be part of history as the ground ball for the final out came his way.

"I just wanted the ball hit to me," Baez said. "Then I was making sure the ball was in my glove."

Mills completed the Cubs' first no-hitter since Jake Arrieta did it twice in eight months: at the Los Angeles Dodgers on Aug. 30, 2015, and at Cincinnati on April 21, 2016.

Milwaukee had not been held hitless since Detroit's Justin Verlander pitched the first of his three no-hitters on June 12, 2007. It's the fourth time the Brewers have been no-hit.

Held without a hit through three innings, the Cubs broke through against Milwaukee in the fourth against starter Adrian Houser (1-5) due in large part to shoddy fielding by the Brewers. Kyle Schwarber drew a one-out walk, Baez reached on an error and Jason Heyward followed with a bloop double to left to drive in a run.

With the infield in, Jason Kipnis hit a ball directly to Brewers second baseman Keston Hiura, who had it slip out of his hand as he tried to rush a throw to the plate, allowing a run to score.

Victor Caratini followed with a run-scoring bloop single and Ian Happ connected for a two-run single as the Cubs scored five runs in the inning, all unearned.

"Nothing went right today. We didn't play a good game," Counsell said. "We played a poor game and we lost. We have to turn the page and know that there's still a lot of important baseball left in front of us."

David Bote's two-run homer later in the fifth extended the lead to 9-0. Caratini's run-scoring double in the seventh put the Cubs up 10-0. Chicago added a pair of runs in the ninth off Orlando Arcia, the Brewers shortstop who came on to pitch the final inning.

## TRAINER'S ROOM

Cubs: 3B Kris Bryant, who continues to get treatment for a sore wrist, got the day off. ... OF Cameron Maybin, who was scratched from Saturday's game due to a stomach illness, remained out of the starting lineup but was available off the bench.

Brewers: LHP Brett Anderson, who was scratched from his scheduled start on Saturday with a tight right hip, is scheduled to take the mound on Tuesday against St. Louis.

## UP NEXT

Cubs: After a day off Monday, Chicago opens a two-game interleague series at home against Cleveland. Yu Darvish (7-2, 1.77 ERA) will start for the Cubs. Darvish is 1-3 with a 3.52 ERA in six career starts against the Indians.

Brewers: Open a five-game series at home against St. Louis. RHP Josh Lindblom (1-3, 6.06) gets the start in game one. RHP Corbin Burnes (3-0, 1.99) will take the mound in the second game.

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## Perfume brand says cutting Black actor from ad was misstep

NEW YORK (AP) — British perfume brand Jo Malone has apologized to Black actor John Boyega of "Star Wars" fame after cutting him out of the Chinese version of a cologne commercial he helped create.

Jo Malone London said in a statement to The Hollywood Reporter that the ad designed for Chinese audiences was a misstep and has been removed. The recreated ad replaced Boyega with Chinese star Liu Haoran.

"The concept for the film was based on John's personal experiences and should not have been replicated," it said.

Jo Malone and its parent company, Estée Lauder, didn't respond to emailed requests for comment Sunday. Boyega and his representatives also couldn't be reached for comment.

The original ad starring Boyega aired last year and was called "The London Gent." It features the London-born actor walking around the neighborhood where he grew up and riding a horse in a park, and it makes

reference to his Nigerian heritage in a scene featuring West African attire.

It's not the first time Boyega has been deleted from a China-based ad. He played a leading role as Finn in 2015's "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," but he and other nonwhite characters were removed or diminished from a Chinese poster for the movie.

Boyega has spoken out about Hollywood racism, recently telling GQ that Black characters have been "pushed to the side" in Disney's "Star Wars" franchise.

## Whistleblower's claims on Russian interference fit pattern

By ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — A whistleblower's allegation that he was pressured to suppress intelligence about Russian election interference is the latest in a series of similar accounts involving former Trump administration officials, raising concerns the White House risks undercutting efforts to stop such intrusions if it plays down the seriousness of the problem.

There is no question the administration has taken actions to counter Russian interference, including sanctions and criminal charges on Thursday designed to call out foreign influence campaigns aimed at American voters. But Trump's resistance to embracing the gravity of the threat could leave the administration without a consistent and powerful voice of deterrence at the top of the government heading into an election that U.S. officials say is again being targeted by Russia.

Russian President Vladimir Putin "is not deterred," said Connecticut Rep. Jim Himes, a Democratic member of the House Intelligence Committee. Himes said Putin feels "empowered, probably inoculated in the U.S. because of the president's behavior."

Brian Murphy, the former top intelligence official at the Department of Homeland Security, alleges in the complaint made public Wednesday that he was instructed to hold back intelligence on Russian interference because it "made the president look bad." That follows reports that Trump berated his then-intelligence director after a congressional briefing about Moscow's interference, and that the president sought the firing of another official who told Congress he supported intelligence agencies' assessment that Russia had interfered in 2016 with a preference for Trump.

The department denied Murphy's allegation, and the White House issued a statement describing instances in which it said the president had it taken action against Russia.

"This president has been resolute that any foreign adversary seeking to disrupt our elections will face tremendous consequences," White House spokeswoman Sarah Matthews said.

Senior Trump administration officials have been eager to focus more on China in discussing election interference, asserting that Beijing is the more potent danger. Though career intelligence officials do say China is a major espionage concern, there is also bipartisan consensus, including in a Republican-led Senate intelligence committee report, that Russia directly interfered in 2016 with the goal of helping Trump defeat Democrat Hillary Clinton. This year, intelligence officials say, Russia is working to denigrate Democratic nominee Joe Biden.

Murphy is not alone in alleging that he felt stymied from raising the Russia threat head-on.

Miles Taylor, as chief of staff to former Homeland Security Secretary Kirstjen Nielsen, participated in high-level administration meetings and has in recent weeks publicly conveyed his concerns about Trump's leadership. In an interview, Taylor said Nielsen had to create a "shadow" National Security Council to deal with the issue because she felt the president's own team had not convened enough meetings to coordinate a response.

Once when Nielsen tried to communicate the seriousness of the threat heading into the 2018 election, Trump responded that the whole issue was "all (expletive)," Taylor said.

In addition, Taylor said Trump president once tried to have the Homeland Security Department's then-intelligence chief fired after hearing that the official had told lawmakers that he agreed with the assessment of Russian interference during the 2016 election.

"The president himself has threatened to fire multiple individuals in the administration for even publicly

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supporting the intelligence community assessment on Russia, and that had a direct and chilling effect on the ability of key Cabinet secretaries to get out and do what they needed to do to thwart foreign interference in our democracy," Taylor said.

Trump's stance on Russian interference, including publicly questioning intelligence agencies' assessment at a Helsinki news conference with Putin, has colored his relationship with spy chiefs.

Last February, Trump erupted after learning of a congressional briefing involving Russian interference, a senior administration official has said, and berated the then-acting director of national intelligence, Joseph Maguire.

In arguing that Trump has been tough on Russia, the White House pointed to actions including the closure of Russian consulates on the West Coast, the expulsion of dozens of Russian agents from the U.S., sanctions on hundreds of targets, the U.S. suspension of a decades-old nuclear arms treaty and millions of dollars in election-related funding.

The administration has also issued public statements acknowledging ongoing efforts by Russia and its proxies to interfere in the election, including one last month that said Russia was denigrating Biden. The Treasury Department on Thursday sanctioned a Ukraine lawmaker who has leaked recordings of Biden's calls that Trump has promoted on Twitter but that his own administration has said rely on a false narrative. Also Thursday, the Trump administration Justice Department announced charges against a Russian national in a plot to sow discord in the U.S.

But Taylor said that when he was in the administration, far tougher options that were contemplated were not always pursued when it came to Russia.

"We felt like it was mission critical that the president firmly come down on the Russians and punish Moscow for their interference and punish them hard enough that they would be dissuaded from engaging in foreign meddling again," Taylor said. "The president didn't want to do that."

Some administration officials contend that China, which has been aggressive in efforts to steal American intellectual property, is the more assertive adversary. Intelligence officials say China prefers that Trump lose because it views him as unpredictable and has been expanding its influence operations and weighing risks and benefits of more aggressive action.

But a statement from intelligence officials that accused Russia of actively trying to undermine Biden suggested that China's actions against Trump were less direct. Microsoft, in identifying both countries as well as Iran as being involved in election-related hacking, has said that people associated with the Biden campaign were among those targeted by Chinese state-backed hackers.

Himes, the House Intelligence Committee member, said he was concerned heading into the Nov. 3 election about intelligence being twisted for political reasons.

"I'm not sure people naturally understand the destruction," he said, "that can be caused by the politicization of intelligence."

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Associated Press writer Mary Clare Jalonick contributed to this report.

## Battle on to save Brazil's tropical wetlands from flames

By DÉBORA ALVARES Associated Press

BRASILIA, Brazil (AP) — A vast swath of a vital wetlands is burning in Brazil, sweeping across several national parks and obscuring the sun behind dense smoke.

Preliminary figures from the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, based on satellite images, indicate that nearly 5,800 square miles (1.5 million hectares) have burned in the Pantanal region since the start of August — an expanse comparable to the area consumed by the historic blazes now afflicting California. It's also well beyond the previous fire season record from 2005.

Brazil's National Institute for Space Research, whose satellites monitor the fires, said the number of Panantal fires in the first 12 days of September was nearly triple the figure for the same period last year. From January through August, the number of fires more than tripled, topping 10,000.

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Fernando Tortato, who has been working and living near the Encontro Das Aguas reserve since 2008, said he's never seen the fires as bad as this year.

"It is an immense area that has been burned and consumed by the fire. And we still have another two, three or four weeks without rain" ahead, he said.

Firefighters, troops and volunteers have been scrambling to find and rescue jaguars and other animals before they are overtaken by the flames, which have been exacerbated by the worst drought in 47 years, strong winds and temperatures exceeding 40 degrees centigrade (104 fahrenheit).

While illegal logging, mining and fanning operations have been blamed for most of the fires in the Amazon region to the north, a spokesman for Mato Grosso state's firefighters, Lt. Col. Sheila Sebalhos, said one of the causes of this year's Pantanal fires is the practice of burning roots to smoke wild bees from their hives to extract honey.

The Pantanal holds thousands of plant and animal species, including 159 mammals, and it abounds with jaguars, according to the World Wildlife Fund. During the rainy season, rivers overflow their banks flood the land, making most of it accessible only by boat and plane. In the dry season, wildlife enthusiasts flock to see the normally furtive jaguars lounging on riverbanks, along with macaws, caimans and capybaras.

About 200 jaguars in the area already have been injured, killed or forced from their territories by the fires, according to Panthera, an international wild cat conservation organization.

Firefighters and the Mato Grosso environment ministry have created a center for rescued animals.

"We feel a little discouraged, but we try to have hope to rescue the few animals we can," said veterinarian Karen Ribeiro, 26, who was treating an injured bird on Friday.

The same day, Brazil's navy used a helicopter to rescue a burned jaguar cub and take it to a veterinary hospital.

## Groups turn to hotels to shelter fire evacuees amid virus

By REBECCA BOONE and SARA CLINE Associated Press

SALEM, Ore. (AP) — Fearing one disaster will feed another, relief groups are putting some people who fled their homes during West Coast wildfires into hotels to reduce the spread of the coronavirus, stringing up shower curtains to separate people in group shelters and delivering box lunches instead of setting up buffets.

Large disaster response organizations like the American Red Cross are still operating some traditional shelters in gyms and churches, where they require masks, clean and disinfect often and try to keep evacuees at least 6 feet (2 meters) apart. The groups say they can reduce the risk of COVID-19 in a shelter but can't keep people safe if they don't evacuate from the flames.

"The last thing we want to have happen is people to remain in the path of a wildfire or hurricane because they think it's safer to do that than risk a shelter," said Brad Kieserman, vice president of disaster operations and logistics for the American Red Cross.

Kathy Gee, 68, has diabetes and other conditions that make her vulnerable to the virus, but that didn't keep her from fleeing her farm in Molalla, Oregon, where wildfires made the hillside glow red, for a shelter in Portland.

"If it's going to happen, it's going to happen. I'm tough," she said of COVID-19. "I've survived lots of things. I can survive that."

It can be difficult, however, for people already reeling from a disaster to consistently follow rules on the virus.

At the Oregon State Fairgrounds in the capital of Salem, groups of maskless evacuees gathered in a parking lot and a barn Friday, talking about the unprecedented wildfires that have destroyed an area bigger than Rhode Island. Volunteers wearing disposable masks walked from group to group, taking down their information and asking what they need for the days ahead.

Signs plastered the doors of the exposition center, where cots were set up, with safety guidelines for both wildfires and the pandemic. Inside, nearly everyone wore masks after volunteers manning the door reminded them to do so.



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The fires in California, Oregon and Washington state have killed several people and sent 6,300 to emergency Red Cross shelters and hotels. As many as 50,000 more could need shelters before the blazes are under control, Kieserman said.

Normally, they'd be gathering in school gymnasiums and meeting halls, sleeping on cots and eating at buffet lines provided by the Red Cross, Salvation Army and other faith and community groups. But because COVID-19 is easily spread in close quarters, gathering places are potential hotbeds of transmission. That's got disaster assistance groups taking a different approach.

The Red Cross screens evacuees and those who are sick or have symptoms are sent to special isolation shelters and kept away from one another. When possible, displaced residents are sent to hotels instead of group shelters. Instead of buffet lines, box lunches are delivered.

"We're not using a gym, we're renting a hotel room at 120 dollars a night. And hotels charge for parking — it's all those things you never think about during a disaster," Kieserman said.

In central California, where thousands of residents had to flee the Creek Fire, more than 1,200 evacuees are staying at 30 hotels, said Tony Briggs with the Red Cross in Fresno. In group shelters, staffers are using plastic pipes strung with clear shower curtains to separate evacuees but allow them to see out from their own socially distanced areas.

Mass evacuations of this scale are incredibly difficult, said Karl Kim, executive director of the National Disaster Preparedness Training Center, which trains first responders.

Generally, he said evacuees either leave early and quickly or aren't as mobile and require some help getting out. The latter group may be people with health challenges, are elderly or have animals may also have lots of disincentives to want to evacuate.

They might decide to wait it out longer and also are more likely to need shelters, said Kim, who's also director of the Disaster Management and Humanitarian Assistance Program at the University of Hawaii. Some of them could be at greater risk of COVID-19 complications.

In Oregon, group shelters are set up at churches, colleges and community buildings, while malls, golf courses and other businesses opened parking for evacuees who can stay in recreational vehicles.

It will likely be weeks before officials know if the evacuations contributed to the virus spreading, and even then, it may be difficult to tell as families scatter to new locations.

"Contract tracing is really critical during a pandemic, and just because there's a wildfire, all of the needs associated with contract tracing don't just go away," Kim said. "I think it's more complicated because of the urgent nature of the evacuation. We don't have good systems for this; nonetheless, we need to do that tracking. That's the ongoing public health challenge."

Some lessons may be learned from Louisiana and Texas. Both had high rates of COVID-19 when hurricanes hit in late August.

Louisiana used its "Megashelter," a facility spanning more than 200,000 square feet (18,580 square meters) that's designed to hold nearly 4,000 evacuees, for those with special medical needs during Hurricane Laura. Others got help finding hotel rooms and vouchers to cover the cost. Louisiana health officials are now offering evacuees mobile COVID-19 testing.

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Boone reported from Boise, Idaho, and Associated Press writers Lindsay Whitehurst in Portland and Suman Naishadham in Phoenix contributed.

## Israel to set new nationwide lockdown as virus cases surge

By TIA GOLDENBERG and ARON HELLER Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday announced a new country-wide lockdown will be imposed amid a stubborn surge in coronavirus cases, with schools and parts of the economy expected to shut down in a bid to bring down infection rates.

Beginning Friday, the start of the Jewish High Holiday season, schools, restaurants, malls and hotels will shut down, among other businesses, and Israelis will face restrictions on movement and on gatherings.

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"Our goal is to stop the increase (in cases) and lower morbidity," Netanyahu said in a nationally broadcast statement. "I know that these steps come at a difficult price for all of us. This is not the holiday we are used to."

The tightening of measures marks the second time Israel is being plunged into a lockdown, after a lengthy shutdown in the spring. That lockdown is credited with having brought down what were much lower infection numbers, but it wreaked havoc on the country's economy, sending unemployment skyrocketing.

The lockdown will remain in place for at least three weeks, at which point officials may relax measures if numbers are seen declining. Israelis typically hold large family gatherings and pack synagogues during the important fast of Yom Kippur later this month, settings that officials feared could trigger new outbreaks.

A sticking point in government deliberations over the lockdown was what prayers would look like during the holidays. While the details on prayer during the lockdown were not nailed down in the government decision, what were expected to be strict limits on the faithful. That prompted Israeli Housing Minister Yaakov Litzman, who represents ultra-Orthodox Jews, to resign from the government earlier Sunday.

Israel has had more than 150,000 confirmed cases of the coronavirus and more than 1,100 deaths. Given its population of 9 million, the country now has one of the world's worst outbreaks. It is now seeing more than 4,000 daily cases of the virus.

Israel earned praise for its initial handling of the coronavirus outbreak, moving quickly to seal the country's borders and appearing to bring infections under control. It has since been criticized for opening businesses and schools too quickly and allowing the virus to spread unchecked.

Much of that criticism has been aimed at Netanyahu, who has faced a public outcry over his handling of the crisis and has seen thousands of protesters descend on his Jerusalem residence every week. While lauded for his decisive response following the spring outbreak, Netanyahu appeared distracted by politics and personal matters, including his trial for corruption allegations, as infections rose over the summer.

Netanyahu has also been lambasted for seeming to cave to pressure from various interest groups, including most recently his ultra-Orthodox governing partners, who appeared to have convinced him to relax a pinpointed, city-based lockdown plan that would have mostly affected ultra-Orthodox and Arab communities.

At the press conference Sunday announcing the lockdown, Netanyahu defended his response, saying Israel's economy had emerged from the first lockdown in a better state than many other developed nations and that while cases were high, the country's coronavirus mortality numbers were lower than other countries with similar outbreaks.

The country's power-sharing government, made up of two rival parties who joined forces in a stated aim to combat the virus, has also been chided for the new outbreak. The government has been accused of mismanagement, failing to properly address both the health and economic crises wrought by the virus and leading the country to its second lockdown.

Some government ministers meanwhile have pointed fingers at what they've called an undisciplined public, who they have accused of violating restrictions against public gatherings and mask wearing.

## **Bernie Sanders: Biden win in November is no 'slam dunk'**

By ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Bernie Sanders is warning that if onetime rival Joe Biden doesn't do more to promote his policies and reach out to Latino voters, the Democratic presidential nominee is at risk of falling short to President Donald Trump this November.

Sanders, a self-described democratic socialist who left the primary race in the spring and has worked to shift Biden to the left on key issues, has made the warnings in public and private in recent days. Most recently, he went on MSNBC on Sunday to express concerns that Biden wasn't speaking up enough about his economic proposals.

"I think Biden's in an excellent position to win this election, but I think we have got to do more as a campaign than just go after Trump," he said. "We also have to give people a reason to vote for Joe Biden. And Joe has some pretty strong positions on the economy, and I think we should be talking about that

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more than we have.”

In a Friday interview with PBS, Sanders was more blunt: “Am I here to tell you absolutely, this is a slam dunk, no chance that he will lose? That is not what I’m saying,” the Vermont senator said.

His comments follow a week when Biden campaigned with union workers in Michigan and released a tax plan focused on boosting U.S. manufacturing by punishing businesses that take jobs overseas. Biden also emphasized his economic agenda and attacked Trump for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic while the former vice president spent Labor Day with union workers in Pennsylvania.

Sanders used his MSNBC appearance to urge Biden to speak more about some of his kitchen-table economic policies: raising the minimum wage to \$15 an hour, lowering prescription drug costs and expanding health insurance coverage.

Sanders said Biden’s policies are “a compromise” but that they were “pretty strong, progressive policies.”

He also encouraged Biden to focus more on Latino and young voters, groups that broadly supported Sanders during the primary. Biden has struggled to build enthusiasm among young voters, and some Democrats have expressed concerns about what they see as the campaign’s lack of outreach to Latino voters, which Sanders echoed on MSNBC.

“We got to reach out to the Latino community. You know, a lot of young people, you’ve got a lot of Latinos, African Americans who may not vote. They’re not gonna for Donald Trump, that’s for sure, but they may not vote at all,” Sanders said. “How do we bring them into the political process? How do we get them to vote?”

A Biden campaign adviser, Symone Sanders, was asked Sunday on ABC’s “This Week” whether the campaign would take Sanders’ advice.

“We know that we have work to do. And we have said from the beginning, and Vice President Biden has been very clear about this ... that we are really working to earn every single vote in this country. And we want to earn the votes of the Latino and Hispanic community,” she said.

Sanders has campaigned for Biden, holding virtual rallies in seven states, including one this weekend in Michigan. It’s one of three states where Sanders warned Democrats should be “nervous” about their chances, along with Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

“The enthusiasm is with Trump, not with Biden,” Sanders said.

In 2016, Trump’s unexpected victories in those three Rust Belt states, bolstered in part by his support among white working class voters, helped deliver him the White House. The Biden campaign has focused much of its early efforts on those three states, with Biden and running mate Kamala Harris visiting all three in recent weeks.

While Sanders made his concerns public in recent interviews, he also has expressed them in private to the Biden campaign, according to Faiz Shakir, Sanders’ former presidential campaign manager.

“He has been in direct contact with the Biden team and has urged them to put more emphasis on how they will raise wages, create millions of good paying jobs, lower the cost of prescription drugs and expand health care coverage,” Shakir said.

Shakir said Sanders “also thinks that a stronger outreach to young people, the Latino community and the progressive movement will be of real help to the campaign.”

Biden has adopted some of Sanders’ more liberal proposals, but the Democratic nominee has been careful to avoid some of progressives’ more contentious policy priorities, such as defunding the police and adopting a fully government-run healthcare system. His commitment to a more centrist campaign has frustrated some progressives, who warn that Biden’s careful campaign could turn off young and minority voters.

But Sanders expressed confidence that those in the progressive movement who may be disappointed by Biden’s policies would still be motivated by a desire to win the White House.

“I would hope that, while people will have strong disagreements with Biden — I do — for the moment, put that aside,” Sanders said on PBS. “That’s what, in a sense, coalition politics is about: You come together for a common goal. The goal is to defeat Trump.”

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AP’s Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state:

<https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020>

## Grandson of Harding and lover wants president's body exhumed

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — The grandson of U.S. President Warren G. Harding and his lover, Nan Britton, went to court in an effort to get the Republican's remains exhumed from the presidential memorial where they have lain since 1927.

James Blaesing told an Ohio court that he is seeking Harding's disinterment as a way "to establish with scientific certainty" that he is the 29th president's blood relation.

The dispute looms as benefactors prepare to mark the centennial of Harding's 1920 election with site upgrades and a new presidential center in Marion, the Ohio city near which he was born in 1865. Blaesing says he deserves to "have his story, his mother's story and his grandmother's story included within the hallowed halls and museums in this town."

A branch of the Harding family has pushed back against the suit filed in May — not because they dispute Blaesing's ancestry, but because they don't.

They argue they already have accepted as fact DNA evidence that Blaesing's mother, Elizabeth Ann Blaesing, was the daughter of Harding and Britton and that she is set to be acknowledged in the museum. Harding had no other children.

"Sadly, widespread, public recognition and acceptance by the descendants, historians, and biographers (and Mr. Blaesing himself) that Mr. Blaesing is President Harding's grandson is not enough for him," relatives said in a court filing. They called the lawsuit a ploy for attention.

In 2015, a match between James Blaesing's DNA and that of two Harding descendants prompted AncestryDNA, a DNA-testing division of Ancestry.com, to declare his link to the president official.

At the time, Blaesing told The Associated Press he was delighted. Five years later, he tells the AP his mother's legacy as the daughter of a U.S. president is shaping up to be little more than a footnote in the new museum. He has not been approached to provide details of her life or even a photograph for the coming display, he said.

"I did the test and we brought it to the public in 2015. It's now 2020 and no one has asked me one thing," he said in a telephone interview. "I'm not a part of anything. Nothing. My brothers, myself, no one. We're invisible. They're treating us just like they treated my grandmother."

Blaesing said he is hopeful that a match directly to the president's own DNA would change that.

Ironically, it was a pair of Harding's known relatives — grandnephew Peter Harding and grandniece Abigail Harding — who first reached out to the Blaesing family in 2011 to end speculation about Harding having a child out of wedlock.

Before that, "doubt and mystery shrouded the paternal lineage of Elizabeth Blaesing for almost 100 years," family members, not including Peter and Abigail Harding, explained to the court.

According to court filings, Peter Harding's interest was sparked by reading "The President's Daughter," Britton's 1927 book, "and concluding that the man described in its pages resembled the author of love letters written to Ms. Carrie Phillips." The Library of Congress opened those letters between Harding and Phillips, another lover, to the public in 2014.

Ohio History Connection, which manages the Harding home and memorial, takes no position on the family dispute. Spokesperson Emmy Beach said the nonprofit accepts the 2015 DNA results "as fact" and plans a section of the new museum "on Harding's relationship with Nan Britton and their daughter, Elizabeth Ann Blaesing."

However, Ohio History Connection has told the court it must consider a host of issues before disrupting the Harding Memorial's sealed sarcophagus.

The crypt also holds the remains of first lady Florence Kling Harding in another sarcophagus, and the nonprofit argues her relatives deserve a say. Further, to protect the site, the nonprofit said it will have to employ experts to assure the president's body could be disinterred and reinterred without damaging the

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tomb, a striking white marble temple encircled with Doric columns.

The openings of the renovated historic sites in Marion and of the Warren G. Harding Presidential Center have been indefinitely delayed due to the coronavirus pandemic, Beach said. She said the disinterment request has not affected the timetable.

## **Paulette rolls toward Bermuda; Sally threatens Gulf Coast**

MIAMI (AP) — Residents of Bermuda were urged to prepare to protect life and property ahead of Hurricane Paulette, while Tropical Storm Sally threatened to intensify into a hurricane as it approached the U.S. Gulf Coast.

Paulette gained hurricane status late Saturday and was expected to bring storm surge, coastal flooding and high winds to Bermuda, according to a U.S. National Hurricane Center advisory.

Bermuda's government announced that L.F. Wade International Airport would close Sunday evening, and government buildings would be closed on Monday and Tuesday. It opened several shelters for evacuees.

Paulette had maximum sustained winds of 80 mph (130 kph) as the system moved along a curved course toward Bermuda, forecasters said. The biggest threats were strong winds, storm surge, up to 6 inches (15 centimeters) of rain and life-threatening surf and rip currents.

The storm was 240 miles (385 kilometers) southeast of the territory Sunday and was moving northwest at 14 mph (23 kph). It's the strongest in terms of winds of six disturbances the center was tracking in the Atlantic Ocean and Gulf of Mexico.

New Orleans and surrounding areas, meanwhile, were in the crosshairs of Sally, which was expected to become a hurricane on Monday and reach shore by early Tuesday - bringing hurricane conditions to a region stretching from from Morgan City, Louisiana, to Ocean Springs, Mississippi. Tropical storm conditions were expected in the region by Monday.

Louisiana Gov. John Bel Edwards declared a state of emergency Saturday, and officials in the New Orleans area issued a mandatory evacuation order for areas outside of levee protection.

The tropical storm had maximum sustained winds of 60 mph (95 kph) with higher gusts, forecasters said.

Storm surge from Sally was forecast to reach dangerous levels, due in part to the tide. Up to 11 feet (3.4 meters) of water was predicted from the mouth of the Mississippi River to Ocean Springs, Mississippi, including Lake Borgne.

A slow moving storm, Sally could produce rain totals up to 20 inches (51 centimeters) by the middle of the week, forecasters said. The system was moving west-northwest at 13 mph (20 kph) early Sunday. It was centered 135 miles (220 kilometers) west of St. Petersburg, Florida, and 280 miles (450 kilometers) east-southeast of the mouth of the Mississippi River. Heavy rain was battering the southwest coast of Florida, the Hurricane Center said in its 11 a.m. advisory.

Once a tropical storm, Rene was forecast to become a remnant low Monday. Tropical Depression Twenty was expected to strengthen this week and become a tropical storm by Tuesday, forecasters said.

A low pressure system near the Cabo Verde Islands had a high chance of formation, while a disturbance in the Gulf had a low chance of formation. The Hurricane Center also reported a tropical depression in the central Atlantic that did not appear to threaten land.

## **Central American refugees stopped by Trump, then by pandemic**

By GISELA SALOMON and CLAUDIA TORRENS Associated Press

MIAMI (AP) — After years of waiting in countries marred by violence, Central Americans who were finally cleared to reunite with their families in the U.S. are facing a major obstacle: the coronavirus pandemic.

Only about 338 — or 12% — of 2,700 people approved to come to the U.S. through a small refugee program have arrived since a court settlement more than a year ago, according to the latest government data. President Donald Trump has shut down the program, but a judge said those already cleared could travel.

After navigating legal snags and rigorous checks requiring they show they're in danger in Central America,

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the refugees faced more delays as the pandemic grounded flights, canceled interviews and closed clinics that conduct needed medical exams.

And when they finally do arrive, they have a temporary status they must keep reapplying for, face long waits for work permits they might not get and fear being separated from family as Trump cracks down on legal and illegal immigration.

"We feel that at any given moment, someone can knock at the door and say, 'You are leaving,'" said Lupe, a 24-year-old Salvadoran who arrived in New York in July to reunite with her father after seven years of waiting. "There is a lot of anxiety that comes with that."

Lupe, who didn't provide her last name because she fears for relatives threatened by gangs in El Salvador, came to the U.S. through the Central American Minors program, or CAM.

Created by President Barack Obama in 2014, it allows parents in the country legally to request refugee status for their children who show they're in danger in Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras, where gang violence and poverty is widespread.

The Trump administration shut down CAM in 2017 during a series of executive orders tightening immigration controls. U.S. officials say Trump's policies are designed to confront a surge of Central Americans seeking asylum and reduce claims that lack merit.

Families sued and a settlement was reached last year, with a U.S. judge in California ordering the government to resume processing those who had been approved for the CAM program when it was terminated. The judge said the government was causing harm by preventing the plaintiffs' children from escaping danger.

Lupe completed a medical exam for the CAM program in January, but the virus canceled commercial flights two months later. She waited four more months, until she could get on a repatriation flight primarily bringing American citizens and lawful permanent residents back to the United States.

"The pandemic delayed that a lot," she said.

Now, Lupe wonders if she will be able to work to help her family back in El Salvador. U.S. officials decide whether to approve work authorization for people like her who come on humanitarian grounds, and there is a risk it could be denied.

Meanwhile, many are still waiting in Central America. Those who have cleared all the hurdles hope for space on a repatriation flight like Lupe. The pandemic also put fingerprinting appointments and interviews on hold, according to a quarterly report done by the U.S. government as part of the court settlement.

A 56-year-old woman who owns a boutique and a small car sales business in Santa Ana, in western El Salvador, has been trying to join her husband in the U.S. through CAM since 2016. The woman, who didn't provide her name because she says gangs have threatened her, got into the program when it expanded to include some relatives of people in the U.S. despite age.

Her daughter managed to join her father in Maryland in 2017 before Trump shut down the program. The Salvadoran mother hasn't seen her husband in 20 years and got her hopes up when she was told to take her medical exam in January. But the clinic closed because of the pandemic. She finally was able to get an exam in late August and now awaits a travel date.

"I have felt very frustrated, very sad. I want to be with my family," she told The Associated Press by phone.

She said she was terrified when she began receiving death threats in 2013. Men with tattoos would come to a car wash she used to own to demand "monthly compensation" for letting her operate. She says she's received many threats since — through calls, text messages and social media.

"It has been very hard. I had to face everything alone," she said.

Opening a new chapter with her family in the U.S. is her dream.

"I prayed God to be with my family, and he fulfilled it," she said.

Others have the same hopes. U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services had cleared nearly 1,000 cases for travel as of June 12.

Many applicants had to repeat medical exams that expired by the time the lawsuit was settled last year. Since March, 157 medical exams have expired because of limited staff and grounded flights during the pandemic, the government's report said.

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"We have families that were ready to go, were at the airport, and couldn't travel," said Rut Mendez, at Centro de Integración para Migrantes, Trabajadores y Trabajadoras, or CIMITRA, a group in El Salvador that helps CAM applicants.

The delays come as Trump targets other humanitarian programs. He cut the number of refugees resettled in the U.S. to no more than 18,000 this fiscal year, down from 85,000 the last full year of Obama's term. Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden wants to raise it to 125,000.

Trump also wants to end Temporary Protected Status, or TPS, the program that brought many parents of CAM applicants to the U.S. It benefits migrants from countries devastated by natural disasters, civil conflicts or other problems. The government argues that the original conditions caused by the disasters or conflicts no longer exist.

While lawsuits are challenging the effort to end TPS, more than 195,000 Salvadorans and over 57,000 Hondurans could see their permits expire in January, leaving them at risk of deportation.

The future also isn't clear for a 44-year-old Salvadoran woman and her son, who arrived through the CAM program in July. She lost her housekeeping job of 18 years at a Washington, D.C., hotel because of the pandemic. Her 24-year-old son has applied for a work permit but doesn't know when or if it will be approved.

The woman didn't provide her name because she says gangs have threatened her daughter in El Salvador, who wasn't able to finish her application before Trump ended the program.

"I had mixed feelings," she said. "I was very happy because my son was coming ... but terribly sad because my daughter was not."

Torrens reported from New York.

## Desperately fleeing the burning hills in Northern California

By DAISY NGUYEN and ADAM BEAM Associated Press

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP) — As the flames closed in on tiny Berry Creek in the Sierra Nevada foothills early Wednesday, Misty Spires and her boyfriend hooked a fire hose to a hydrant in a desperate attempt to defend their homes and the town's only laundromat.

They gave up around 4 a.m. when propane tanks began exploding and they were dodging embers "as big as my feet," she said. But traffic was snarled on the two-lane bridge leading out of town, forcing Spires and others to turn around and drive down a sandbar to escape the flames.

She helped another man load his motorcycle on the back of her pickup truck before sprinting to safety. "It was like a war zone, like standing in the breath of hell," she said.

For the second time in two years, fire has destroyed a mountain community in Butte County. Two years ago it was Paradise, where roughly 19,000 buildings were destroyed and 85 people died in the most destructive wildfire in state history.

This time, it was Berry Creek — an unincorporated town of about 1,200 people in the same remote, rolling heavily forested mountains that locals described as a peaceful, close-knit community.

Dozens of wildfires have been burning for weeks across California and the U.S. West, most sparked by lightning strikes. But the North Complex Fire in Northern California surprised fire officials by how quickly it spread after smoldering for weeks in a mostly unpopulated region.

Aided by strong winds, steep terrain and miles of dried out foliage, the fire — more than 8 miles (13 kilometers) wide — quickly roared into Butte County on Tuesday.

This time, Paradise was spared. Smaller mountain communities such as Berry Creek and Feather Falls were quickly overwhelmed. Firefighters scrambled to rescue more than 100 people on Tuesday and early Wednesday.

But they couldn't save everyone.

By Saturday, authorities said the fire claimed 12 lives and another 13 remained missing.

Millicent Catarancuic's 5-acre property in Berry Creek was a rescue shelter of sorts. She had at least four

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dogs and several cats, many of whom wandered into her yard and never left after finding a loving home. Her scattered family had seen much tragedy, but in recent years they had mostly settled at her compound in the hills, where it took a 30-minute drive to get anywhere. With her sister, Suzan Violet Zurz, and Phil Rubel, an uncle by marriage, the three lived in quietly, caring for animals and playing the card game FreeCell on a desktop computer.

They were not foolhardy with fires, having voluntarily evacuated for others. Tuesday, they had packed the car and were getting ready to leave when, about 7 p.m., they changed their minds. They were safe, they assured their families.

Authorities would later find Catarancuic's body near a car, along with those of two others. Zurz and Rubel are still listed as missing. But Zurz's son, Zygy Roe-Zurz, fears the worst.

"It's absolutely devastating to find out the people you love are suddenly and horribly gone," he said. "We lived all over the world and finally settled in a place. So much work and so much thought went into being there and it's, just, all gone."

Spires and her boyfriend, Jonathan Gonzales, were headed to the muddy sandbar north of Lake Oroville, the largest body of water in the area. Gonzalez knew the area was clear of trees and close to the water and told the drivers caught in the jam getting out of Berry Creek to follow him.

"He told the others, 'If you want to live instead of sitting on this bridge follow me,'" she said. "He saved a lot of lives."

Once there, Spires said most people stayed huddled in their cars. But others got out and consoled each other.

"There wasn't much that you can say in that situation but to say, 'I'm glad you're alive,'" Spires said.

While waiting for daylight, she saw horses and other animals run toward the lake as flames licked the hillsides.

Spires moved from Kansas City to Berry Creek two years ago, drawn to its verdant landscape, creeks and waterfalls that feed into the lake and the mild climate for her mother, who suffers from debilitating arthritis. Her loved ones all survived the blaze, but she mourned the loss of a town she had come to love.

She also mourned the loss of the Sugar Pine Saloon, a 1940s era bar where people in the community had signed their names in the rafters. Spires and her boyfriend were working hard to remodel and reopen it.

"It was a place where the whole community was involved in some way," she said. "The whole history is just gone."

Nguyen reported from San Francisco.

## **Bloomberg to spend at least \$100M to help Biden in Florida**

By JULIE PACE and ALEXANDRA JAFFE Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg is committing at least \$100 million to help Joe Biden's presidential campaign in the crucial battleground state of Florida.

Bloomberg's late-stage infusion of cash reflects Democrats' concerns about the tight race in a state that is a priority for President Donald Trump. A victory for Biden in Florida, the largest of the perennial battleground states, would significantly complicate Trump's path to reaching the 270 Electoral College votes needed to secure a second term.

Republicans, however, feel confident in their chances in the state, pointing to GOP wins in 2018 and stronger-than-expected turnout in 2016 as evidence the state is trending in their direction. They've invested millions in Florida focused on Latino outreach and boosting their field operation, and the state's size and diversity makes campaigns there expensive.

In a sign that Bloomberg's planned investment put Trump on alert, however, the president tweeted out his disdain for Bloomberg on Sunday morning, referencing the attacks the businessman received at a Democratic primary debate in February from Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren.

"I thought Mini Mike was through with Democrat politics after spending almost 2 Billion Dollars, and then



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giving the worst and most inept Debate Performance in the history of Presidential Politics. Pocahontas ended his political career on first question, OVER! Save NYC instead," he tweeted.

The billionaire Bloomberg launched his own campaign for the Democratic nomination late last year amid worries about Biden's strengths. Despite spending \$1 billion on his campaign, Bloomberg struggled and dropped out in March, quickly endorsing Biden.

One of the world's wealthiest men with a net worth estimated to exceed \$60 billion, Bloomberg promised throughout his campaign that he would help Democrats try to defeat Trump regardless of how his own White House bid fared.

He exited the presidential race pledging to spend "whatever it takes" to defeat Trump, and has already invested millions to support Democrats up and down the ballot. Bloomberg transferred \$18 million from his presidential campaign to the Democratic National Committee, and transferred its offices in six key swing states to the local Democratic parties there.

The businessman has contributed \$500,000 to Voto Latino to help register Latino voters, \$2 million to the group Collective Future to help register African American voters, and \$2 million to Swing Left, a group focused on electing Democrats in swing districts. One of the groups he has founded and funds, Everytown for Gun Safety, has committed to spending \$60 million on elections this cycle, and Bloomberg himself has pledged another \$60 million to support Democrats in House races.

Bloomberg's new spending is intended to boost Biden before the start of early voting in Florida, which begins on Sept. 24. A Bloomberg adviser said much of the money will go to television and digital advertising. Republicans are outspending Democrats by about \$8 million in the state in future television ad reservations, according to a review of Kantar/CMAG data by The Associated Press.

AP's Advance Voting guide brings you the facts about voting early, by mail or absentee from each state: <https://interactives.ap.org/advance-voting-2020/>

## Virus America, six months in: Disarray, dismay, disconnect

By TED ANTHONY AP National Writer

For years, Erin Whitehead has been a committed fan of the crisis-fueled medical drama "Grey's Anatomy." She has watched its doctors handle all manner of upheaval inside their put-upon hospital — terrifying diseases, destructive weather, bombs, mass shootings, mental illness, uncertainty, grief.

Today, she turns to the emotionally draining show as a salve, something to take her mind off of ... well, off of everything this jumbled year has delivered to her nation, to her society, to her front door.

"Sixteen seasons of 'Grey's Anatomy'. That's what the past six months of 2020 have been," says Whitehead, a podcaster and full-time mother in Pace, a town of 34,000 in Florida's panhandle. "We've all just been in triage. Nobody can sustain that level of stress."

On Friday, March 13, 2020, a COVID curtain descended upon the United States, and a new season — a season of pandemic — was born. Now we are half a year into it — accustomed in some ways, resistant in others, grieving at what is gone, wondering with great trepidation what will be.

New conflicts and causes have risen. Anger and death sit in daily life's front row. A sense of uncertainty reigns. Great chunks of the national emotional infrastructure are buckling. We are locked in a countrywide conversation about control — who has it and who should.

And as the most contentious of presidential elections approaches, the very notion of what it means to be an American — and to be the United States of America itself — is perhaps the biggest contention point of all.

"Six months in, we are in a different place," says Alicia Hinds Ward, an entrepreneur in Washington, D.C. "We don't want to stay in this place. It's ugly, it's dark and we know we have to change."

Nearly 200,000 Americans who were with us on March 13 are here no longer. A debate over pandemic policy has aligned itself in exacting fashion with already sharply drawn political lines. A reckoning on race in American life — one set off by a spate of Black Americans dying at the hands of police but with far

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deeper, more systemic roots — is unfolding vigorously.

School district by school district, neighborhood by neighborhood, sometimes house by house, those who are telling the American story to each other are spinning very different yarns about the country and its purpose.

“We are in a pitched battle between narratives,” says Evan Cornog, a political historian who has written about how presidents and candidates assemble and manage their storylines.

Uncertain times often produce uncertain people. But a strange paradox tends to emerge as well: In uncertain moments, human nature is to seek out certainty. That points to politics, where being absolutely sure is a feature, not a bug. This year, in this republic, that is no exception: In September 2020, the American earth is pocked with the marks of dug-in heels.

There is certainty that Donald Trump is right and has handled the pandemic adeptly, and that a Joe Biden victory in November would end America as we know it. There is equal certainty among others that the reverse is incontrovertibly true.

There is certainty that Black Lives Matter is on history’s and justice’s sides, riding a wave of much-needed change — and certainty, too, that those protesting are part of a violent leftist movement to undermine police, sow disorder and bring down the country.

In the middle of all that intransigence, Frederick Gooding Jr. sees an opportunity to understand. Gooding, an associate professor of African American studies at Texas Christian University, finds an irrefutable link between a coronavirus spring and a summer of protests against racial injustice.

The coming of COVID-19, he says, created an overlay of apprehension in millions of American lives — the fear of harm if you go out, the general unease built into daily life — that Black Americans have long found familiar.

“I think many people were able to experience what people of color were experiencing on a more frequent basis as normal interactions become exacerbated through the additional layers of anxiety and stress,” Gooding says.

This period of uncertainty “provides more connection points to other people,” Gooding says. “Perhaps this current time period can be leveraged as a time when more people can understand and appreciate where we want to push society forward when it comes to sustained racial progress.”

What’s more, for Black people, the weeks of sitting at home watching the virus disproportionately affect Americans of color — and then living through the killings of George Floyd and Breonna Taylor and the shooting of Jacob Blake — proved pivotal.

“In this particular year, when the pot’s simmering, it just blew the lid off the pressure cooker,” Hinds Ward says. “It galvanized folks into action, and the rage ensued.”

It’s difficult to document how these disparate but connected slivers of life — changed racial and cultural dynamics, changed schooling, changed work environments, changed interactions with the daily world — come together to alter an entire society.

But over and over, people unspool versions of the same lament: American life simply feels different. Grief, alienation, loneliness and anger seem everywhere. The country right now, under duress, is all in-the-moment tactics and very little long-term strategy. Virtual life helps us through our days, but restores only a sliver of what many crave.

“We’re connected, but there are these barriers. There’s a social piece of us that’s missing, and we’re grieving the loss of that,” says Cynthia M. Vejar, the program director of clinical mental health counseling at Lebanon Valley College in Pennsylvania.

“If I’m angry at a virus, and I’m angry at society, I don’t know where to aim that anger,” she says. “When these emotions are unstructured, we don’t know how to deal with that.”

Whitehead gets that. She labors, she says, “not to be angry and upset with other people” who approach this era’s challenges in ways she deems reckless and standoffish.

“I don’t like that feeling. I don’t want to feel that way about my fellow Americans,” she says. “But it’s really hard not to. Whether you’re Republican, Democrat, support Trump, not support Trump, I think a lot

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of us are struggling with how we feel about other people.”

Ultimately, as with science itself, it may be adaptability that determines how the American republic evolves as its people navigate this detour.

Have Americans reached the point where they've accepted the virus as a permanent interloper, and are acting accordingly? Will impatience doom us? Those answers will become clearer over the next six months under the COVID curtain — unless, and possibly even if, an effective vaccine is found and deployed with dispatch.

Until then, the United States remains a nation built on binary foundations — black/white, either/or, with us/against us — that is finding itself besieged with complex and intricate shades of gray.

Polarity and subtlety are, of course, uneasy partners. Right now, though, that is the hand that Americans have been dealt by the unsympathetic house that is the year 2020.

“We as a society want to wrap things up nicely and cleanly,” Vejar says. “But there’s a lot in life that can’t be wrapped up nicely and cleanly. So developing a relationship with uncertainty is something we should strive toward.”

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Ted Anthony, director of digital innovation for The Associated Press, has been writing about American culture since 1990. Follow him on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/anthonyted>

## Teacher departures leave schools scrambling for substitutes

By CASEY SMITH Associated Press/Report for America

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — With many teachers opting out of returning to the classroom because of the coronavirus, schools around the U.S. are scrambling to find replacements and in some places lowering certification requirements to help get substitutes in the door.

Several states have seen surges in educators filing for retirement or taking leaves of absence. The departures are straining staff in places that were dealing with shortages of teachers and substitutes even before the pandemic created an education crisis.

Among those leaving is Kay Orzechowicz, an English teacher at northwest Indiana’s Griffith High School, who at 57 had hoped to teach for a few more years. But she felt her school’s leadership was not fully committed to ensuring proper social distancing and worried that not enough safety equipment would be provided for students and teachers.

Add the technology requirements and the pressure to record classes on video, and Orzechowicz said it “just wasn’t what I signed up for when I became a teacher.”

“Overall, there was just this utter disrespect for teachers and their lives,” she said. “We’re expected to be going back with so little.” When school leaders said teachers would be “going back in-person, full throttle, that’s when I said, ‘I’m not doing it. No.’”

Teachers in at least three states have died after bouts with the coronavirus since the start of the new school year. It’s unclear how many teachers in the U.S. have become ill with COVID-19, but Mississippi alone reported 604 cases among teachers and staff.

In cases where teachers are exposed to the virus, they could face pressure to return to the classroom. The Trump administration has declared teachers to be “critical infrastructure workers” in guidance that could give the green light to exempting them from quarantine requirements.

Throughout Indiana, more than 600 teacher retirements have been submitted since July, according to state data. Although the state gets most of its teacher retirements during the summer, surveys suggest more retirements than usual could happen as the calendar year progresses, said Trish Whitcomb, executive director of the Indiana Retired Teachers Association.

“I’ve gotten more (teachers) calling me back saying, ‘Well, I’m going to go ahead and retire,’” Whitcomb said. “Some still wanted to go back in the classroom, but they didn’t think the risk was worth it. They looked at their grandkids and the life they have, and I think they’re saying, ‘I’m just not going to do it.’”

In Salt Lake County, Utah, the state’s most populated metropolitan area, more than 80 teachers have

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either resigned or retired early because of concerns about COVID-19 in schools. More than half of those happened in one of the county's five school districts, Granite School District. All of the district's teachers who left were fined \$1,000 for failing to give 30 days' notice.

Mike McDonough, president of the Granite Education Association teachers union, said the departures stem from frustration over how the schools have reopened. In Granite, most students will return to in-person instruction for four days a week, and there are few opportunities for teachers to instruct solely online.

Some teachers waited until the last minute, hoping that the district would change its reopening plan. But checking out of the classroom was "the only way to keep themselves safe," he said.

"Teachers are still scared and overwhelmed," McDonough said. "I have heard from teachers that are just heartbroken to leave the classroom, but they didn't feel safe going back. They don't want that level of risk, and they have no other choice but to get out."

Education leaders in states including Arizona, Kansas, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania and Texas have said they are bracing for worsening teacher shortages as the pandemic drives away some educators.

To try to maintain staffing levels in classrooms, the Missouri Board of Education made it easier to become a substitute teacher under an emergency rule. Instead of the previous requirement — 60 hours of college credit — eligible substitutes now only need to obtain a high school diploma, complete a 20-hour online training course and pass a background check.

Iowa responded similarly, relaxing coursework requirements and the minimum working age for newly hired substitutes.

In Connecticut, college students have been asked to step in as substitutes. Michele Femc-Bagwell, director of the teacher education program at the University of Connecticut, said the school has been getting requests to use fifth-year graduate students as substitute teachers. Heavy class loads and internship responsibilities, though, limit their availability to one day a week.

Many who work as substitutes are retired teachers such as 67-year-old Margaret Henderson, of Phoenix, who said she will not return as she had planned.

"I don't want to get called into a classroom where a teacher has called out because of the virus or to quarantine. ... And we know that's going to happen more and more," Henderson said. "There are still uncertainties about the safety of reopening the school buildings. Can you blame (substitutes) for not wanting to go in?"

In rural Iowa's Hinton Community Schools, Hinton High School Principal Phil Goetstouwers said the school is already down to a third of the substitute teachers it had last year. More than half of those are also willing to sub in other districts, he said, making it even more troublesome when teachers are absent.

Allen Little, who retired as a math teacher in Sioux City, Iowa, this past spring, said the "complexities" of teaching during the pandemic made him decide to retire three years earlier than he had planned. Although he anticipated returning to work as a part-time substitute this fall, fears about the virus are holding him back. He encouraged his son, who is studying to be a social studies teacher and who considered getting experience as a substitute, to weigh the risks carefully.

"We're thinking about students, our schools, our community with every decision we make," Little said. "But we also have to think about ourselves and our families. What's best for us, maybe more and more of us ... is not being inside the classrooms right now."

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Associated Press Writer Pat Eaton-Robb contributed to this report from Hartford, Connecticut.

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

## US election spotlight mostly bypasses mainline Protestants

By DAVID CRARY AP National Writer

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NEW YORK (AP) — The images were vivid: President Donald Trump brandishing a Bible outside an Episcopal church in Washington that had been boarded up amid racial injustice protests. Episcopal leaders reacted with outrage at what they deemed a cynical photo-op.

“He didn’t say a prayer. ... It was used as a matter of partisan politics,” said Michael Curry, the denomination’s presiding bishop.

That flare-up was notable for another reason. It’s one of the few times that a mainline Protestant denomination entered the national spotlight amid a volatile election year abounding in political news about evangelicals and Catholics.

There’s been a steady stream of news about certain evangelical leaders — their close alliance with Trump, their occasional defiance of coronavirus-related restrictions on worship services. Meanwhile, Trump’s Democratic rival, Joe Biden, is being assailed by some fellow Catholics, including bishops, for his support of abortion rights.

Rarely garnering national attention are the mainline Protestant denominations that dominated America’s political and civic leadership for much of its history, beginning in colonial times.

These denominations, including the Episcopal, United Methodist and Presbyterian (U.S.A.) churches, are now deeply engaged in campaigns against racism and voter suppression. Yet they haven’t generated controversies this year as headline-grabbing as those involving evangelicals and Catholics.

“Mainline Christians are often quieter in their public rhetoric,” said Florida-based Bishop Kenneth Carter, former president of the United Methodists’ Council of Bishops.

“But my experience has been, in every city I’ve lived ... that many mainline Christians do the heavy social lifting in their communities on issues such as homelessness and food insecurity.”

Carter noted that the United Methodists, the largest mainline denomination with about 7 million U.S. members, is politically diverse. Its members include Democrat Hillary Clinton, former presidential candidate, senator and secretary of state, and conservative Republican Jeff Sessions, a former senator and U.S. attorney general.

“In every mainline church, you’ll find members who are Republican and Democrat,” said the Rev. John Dorhauer, president and general minister of the 800,000-member United Church of Christ.

“What that means is that the pastor and church culture have created a setting where, no matter what your political view is, you’re free to worship here,” he said. “When a pastor crosses the line, you risk saying to a member of a church, ‘Your own beliefs are not valued here.’”

In general, mainline denominations discourage their pastors from making political endorsements from the pulpit, or from issuing voter guides the way some conservative churches do.

“We don’t endorse or oppose a particular candidate, but we do try to uphold moral principles and values that are key to our faith,” said Curry.

Through the mid-20th century, most Protestants in the U.S. belonged to mainline churches, but now they are outnumbered by evangelicals. Polls in recent years indicate that about one-quarter of U.S. adults identify as evangelical, and less than 15% as mainline Protestant. The collective membership of the seven biggest mainline denominations is now about 16 million.

The mainline churches have been politically active in a number of less-partisan ways, notably in registering voters and recruiting poll watchers. In many cases, they also have aligned with the widespread protests against racial injustice and police violence against Black people.

The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) launched a Rally for Justice march Aug. 28 from its headquarters in Louisville, Kentucky, the city where Breonna Taylor was fatally shot by police during a raid on her home in March. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America — the second-largest mainline denomination with 3.5 million members — sponsored a prayer service in Kenosha, Wisconsin, on Sept. 2 in response to outrage over the wounding of Jacob Blake by an officer who fired seven shots into his back.

At that service, Paul Erickson, bishop of the ELCA’s Greater Milwaukee Synod, denounced racism as “that toxic poison that is harming us all.”

Elizabeth Eaton, the presiding bishop of the ELCA, said whites make up 94% of the denomination — the biggest share among the major mainline denominations — and hopes it can prove its commitment to racial

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justice after periods in the past “where we did not engage.”

Among the relatively small number of mainline clergy with national prominence is a Disciples of Christ pastor from North Carolina, the Rev. William Barber, a long-time Black civil rights activist and leader of the Poor People’s Campaign who has been outspoken against systemic racism.

Three mainline denominations now have Black leaders holding the top clerical post — exemplifying a broader commitment in mainline communities to diversity and racial justice.

Curry became the Episcopalians’ first Black presiding bishop in 2015; the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) elected the Rev. Dr. J. Herbert Nelson II in 2016 as the first Black leader in its more than 300-year history; and the Rev. Terri Hord Owens became the first Black woman to head any of these denominations when she was elected the Disciples of Christ’s president in 2017.

“We’re seeing the emergence of leaders who not long ago wouldn’t have been heard from,” said Nelson.

Most mainline denominations have seen membership drop sharply in recent decades. The number of Presbyterians, for example, has fallen from about 2.5 million in 2000 to some 1.3 million today.

Some defections have come as several of the denominations moved to ordain LGBT clergy and recognize same-sex marriages, and the United Methodist Church faces a seemingly inevitable schism next year over those same issues.

Another challenge for the mainline churches is one confronting many other faiths: Persuading young people to participate.

“Young people want to be engaged with people who are doing stuff,” Owens said. “It’s not just what kind of music you play. It’s what are you doing to change and shape society.”

“We all recognize the declining numbers,” Owens added. “We have to be visible doing the work of justice. It’s hard work for all of us.”

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## Philippines deports US Marine in transgender killing

By JIM GOMEZ Associated Press

MANILA, Philippines (AP) — A U.S. Marine convicted of killing a Filipino transgender woman was deported Sunday after a presidential pardon cut short his detention in a case that renewed outrage over a pact governing American military presence in the Philippines.

Lance Cpl. Joseph Scott Pemberton said in a farewell message that he was “extremely grateful” to President Rodrigo Duterte for pardoning him and expressed his “most sincere sympathy” to the family of Jennifer Laude, who he was convicted of killing in 2014 in a motel northwest of Manila after finding out that she was transgender.

In his nearly six years of confinement, Pemberton said he spent “much time contemplating the many errors” he committed the night Laude died. “He wishes he had the words to express the depth of his sorrow and regret,” according to Pemberton’s message, which was issued by his lawyer, Rowena Garcia-Flores.

Virginia Suarez, the Laude family’s lawyer, said in a statement that she wishes Pemberton “peace of mind,” and hopes that he has learned “the value of life and dignity regardless of gender and nationality.”

Philippine immigration officers and American personnel escorted the 25-year-old Pemberton, who was in handcuffs and wearing a face mask, from his cell in the main military camp in Manila to the airport, where he boarded a military aircraft. He was put on an immigration blacklist and will be banned from returning to the country, said immigration spokesperson Dana Sandoval.

The U.S. Embassy said that “all legal proceedings in the case took place under Philippine jurisdiction and law,” and that “Pemberton fulfilled his sentence as ordered by Philippine courts.”

On Monday, Duterte granted an “absolute and unconditional pardon” to Pemberton in a move that caught many by surprise. The Philippine leader has long been a vocal critic of U.S. security policies while reaching out to China and Russia.

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Duterte's pardon was condemned by left-wing and LGBTQ groups.

Debate has brewed over whether the Marine, whose detention was arranged under the treaty allies' Visiting Forces Agreement, or VFA, can be covered by a Philippine law that grants shorter jail terms to ordinary prisoners for good conduct.

The Regional Trial Court in Olongapo city, which handled Pemberton's case, ruled that the law covers Pemberton and ordered authorities on Sept. 1 to release him early for good conduct. But Laude's family and the Department of Justice separately appealed, blocking his early release from a maximum prison term of up to 10 years.

Duterte said he granted the pardon because Pemberton was not treated fairly after his early release, which he said the Marine may have deserved, was blocked.

The court order rekindled perceptions that American military personnel who run afoul of Philippine laws can get special treatment under the VFA, which provides the legal terms for temporary visits by U.S. forces to the country for large-scale combat exercises.

Pemberton, an anti-tank missile operator from New Bedford, Massachusetts, was one of thousands of American and Philippine military personnel who participated in joint exercises in the Philippines in 2014.

He and a few other Marines were on leave after the exercises and met Laude and her friends at a bar in Olongapo, a city known for its nightlife outside Subic Bay, a former U.S. Navy base.

Laude was later found dead, her head slumped in a toilet bowl in a motel room, where witnesses said she and Pemberton had checked in. A witness told investigators that Pemberton said he choked Laude after discovering she was transgender.

In December 2015, a judge convicted Pemberton of homicide, not the more serious charge of murder that Philippine prosecutors sought. The judge said at the time that factors such as cruelty and treachery had not been proven.

The VFA could have been abrogated last month if Duterte had not delayed an earlier decision to terminate the pact after President Donald Trump expressed readiness to help the Philippines deal with the COVID-19 pandemic. The Philippine leader has said his country can survive without America.

If the VFA had been scrapped, it would have removed a legal basis for Pemberton's detention in the military camp and created pressure for him to be moved to one of the country's notoriously overcrowded and high-risk prisons.

## Greek PM demands more EU help to handle homeless migrants

By ILIANA MIER and DEMETRIS NELLAS Associated Press

LESBOS, Greece (AP) — Greece's prime minister demanded Sunday that the European Union take a greater responsibility for managing migration into the bloc, as Greek authorities promised that 12,000 migrants and asylum-seekers left homeless after fire gutted an overcrowded camp would be moved shortly to a new tent city.

Greek Prime Minister Kyriakos Mitsotakis blamed some residents at the Moria camp on the Greek island of Lesbos for trying to blackmail his government by deliberately setting the fires that destroyed the camp last week. But he said this could be an opportunity to improve how the EU handles a key challenge.

"It (the burning of Moria) was a tragedy. These images were bad. It was a warning bell to all to become sensitized. Europe cannot afford a second failure on the migration issue," Mitsotakis said Sunday at a press conference in the northern city of Thessaloniki.

Human rights activists have long deplored the squalor at the Moria refugee camp, which was built to house 2,750 but was filled with some 12,500 people who fled across the sea from Turkey.

Since the fires, which came after the camp faced a coronavirus lockdown, thousands of people have camped out in the open on highway near Moria under police guard. Many have protested the Greek government for refusing to allow the homeless migrants to leave Lesbos for the Greek mainland. Greek residents are also unhappy that their island is being used as a dumping ground for migrants.

Mitsotakis said he has been in touch with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor

Angela Merkel over the reallocation of at least some migrants from Moria, but he said there will be a new, permanent refugee camp on Lesbos.

The Greek army has been setting up tents at a former artillery range, about 4 kilometers (2.5 miles) from the old camp.

Migration Minister Notis Mitarakis said an estimated 1,000 Moria residents would be relocated to the army-built tent city late Sunday and that getting everyone housed at the new site would take several days.

"At the moment, it's happening on a voluntary basis," Mitarakis told Greek TV station Open TV.

Mitarakis said those entering the new camp would undergo rapid testing for coronavirus and that five new cases have been found so far.

At the Vatican, Pope Francis expressed solidarity Sunday with the migrants on Lesbos and called for "dignified" welcome for them. Francis had visited the Moria camp in 2016, bringing back to Rome with him 12 Syrian refugees.

Nellas reported from Athens, Greece. Vangelis Papandonis at the Moria camp and Nicole Winfield from Rome contributed.

## Former UK leaders unite to slam Boris Johnson on Brexit plan

By PAN PYLAS Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — Two former British prime ministers who played crucial roles in bringing peace to Northern Ireland joined forces Sunday to urge lawmakers to reject government plans to override the Brexit deal with the European Union, arguing that it imperils that peace and damages the U.K.'s reputation.

In an article in The Sunday Times, John Major and Tony Blair slammed the current British government for "shaming" the country with legislation that, in places, goes against the very deal it signed to allow for the U.K.'s smooth departure from the EU earlier this year.

Major, a Conservative prime minister from 1990 to 1997, and Blair, his Labour successor for a decade, said Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Internal Market Bill "questions the very integrity" of the U.K.

"This government's action is shaming itself and embarrassing our nation," they said.

The planned legislation, which will be debated by British lawmakers this week, has led to a furious outcry within the EU as it would diminish the bloc's previously agreed oversight of trade between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland if a U.K.-EU trade agreement isn't secured.

The British government has admitted that the legislation would break international law, but argues that it's an insurance policy for that potential 'no-deal' scenario. Johnson has said the legislation is needed to end EU threats to impose a "blockade" in the Irish Sea that the prime minister asserted could "carve up our country."

Britain's Justice Secretary Robert Buckland told the BBC on Sunday that the legislation was a "break the glass in emergency provision," if needed, and that he would resign if he believed the rule of law was broken in an "unacceptable" way.

"I don't believe we're going to get to that stage," he said.

EU leaders have furiously rejected Johnson's charge that the bloc is planning a major disruption to normal trade between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney told the BBC that the "kind of inflammatory language" coming from the British government was "spin and not the truth."

Still, with the British government showing no sign of changing course, there are real concerns that the talks on a future trade deal between the U.K. and the EU could collapse within weeks. If that happens, tariffs and other impediments to trade will be imposed by both sides at the start of 2021.

The U.K. left the EU on Jan. 31, but it is in a transition period that effectively sees it benefit from the bloc's tariff-free trade until the end of the year while a future relationship is negotiated. Even before the latest standoff, discussions between the EU's chief negotiator, Michel Barnier, and his U.K. counterpart, David Frost, had made very little progress.



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One major element of the Brexit withdrawal agreement is the section related to ensuring an open border on the island of Ireland to protect the peace process in Northern Ireland.

The issue proved thorny during the more than two years of discussions it took to get a Brexit deal done, as the border between Northern Ireland and Ireland is the only land link between the U.K. and the EU.

The EU wanted assurances the border would not be used as a back route for unlicensed goods arriving in Ireland from the rest of the U.K. — England, Scotland and Wales. As a result, the two sides agreed there would be some kind of regulatory border between mainland Britain and Northern Ireland.

Major and Blair, who both vociferously opposed Brexit, said the planned legislation puts the 1998 Good Friday agreement that ended decades of violence in Northern Ireland at risk.

The pair said the bill “negates the predictability, political stability and legal clarity that are integral to the delicate balance between the north and south of Ireland that is at the core of the peace process.”

It’s unclear whether the planned legislation will get through the British Parliament, with a number of Johnson’s fellow Conservatives uneasy at the prospect of the government breaching international law.

Tobias Ellwood is one lawmaker who has said he could not accept the legislation, arguing that the bill diminishes “our role-model status as defender of global standards.”

Follow AP’s full coverage of Brexit and British politics at <https://www.apnews.com/Brexit>

## As Trump played down virus, health experts’ alarm grew

By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Public health officials were already warning Americans about the need to prepare for the coronavirus threat in early February when President Donald Trump called it “deadly stuff” in a private conversation that has only now come to light.

At the time, the virus was mostly a problem in China, with just 11 cases confirmed in the United States.

There was uncertainty about how the U.S. ultimately would be affected, and top U.S. officials would deliver some mixed messages along the way. But their overall thrust was to take the thing seriously.

“We’re preparing as if this is a pandemic,” Dr. Nancy Messonnier of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention told reporters on Feb. 5. “This is just good commonsense public health.”

Trump, however, had a louder megaphone than his health experts, and in public he was playing down the threat. Three days after delivering his “deadly” assessment in a private call with journalist Bob Woodward, he told a New Hampshire rally on Feb. 10, “It’s going to be fine.”

Trump’s acknowledgment in Woodward’s new book “Rage” that he was minimizing the severity of the virus in public to avoid causing panic has triggered waves of criticism that he wasn’t leveling with the American people.

The White House has tried to answer that criticism by pointing to selected comments from U.S. health experts to suggest they were on the same page with Trump all along.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany highlighted comments from Dr. Anthony Fauci, the nation’s top infectious disease expert, to try to make the case that Trump didn’t lie to the public. She cited a Feb. 17 interview in which Fauci focused his concern on the seasonal flu then playing out.

But a day later, Fauci had spoken of alarming potential implications from the new virus, saying, “Not only do we not have an appreciation of the magnitude, even more disturbing is that we don’t have an appreciation of where the magnitude is going.”

Mixed safety messages added to confusion. There was considerable discussion about mask-wearing in the early days of the pandemic, with leading experts advising the public against it, saying to leave the masks for health care workers.

“Seriously people — STOP BUYING MASKS!” U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams tweeted on Feb. 29. Officials later recommended that people wear face coverings in public and around people who don’t live in their household, based on a review of the latest evidence.

People could find different takeaways within Fauci’s pronouncements. He told the USA Today editorial

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board on Feb. 17 that the CDC would be testing people for the coronavirus in five major cities when they showed up at clinics with flu-like symptoms.

If that testing showed the virus had slipped into the country in places federal officials didn't know about, "we've got a problem," Fauci said. Still, the headline put the spotlight on his remark that the danger posed by the virus was slight. It read: "Top disease official: Risk of coronavirus in USA is 'minuscule.'"

Larry Gostin, a professor at Georgetown University who has advised Republican and Democratic administrations on public health issues, said there should be no confusing honest mistakes and expressions of uncertainty from public health officials with Trump's effort to minimize the threat of COVID-19.

"It is irrefutable that he has played down the epidemic and sidelined trusted scientists, and in some cases, muzzled them," Gostin said.

He added: "I categorically deny the idea that there wasn't a strong consensus of public health experts at the time saying this was a very serious problem."

Trump himself told Woodward on March 19 that he had deliberately minimized the danger. "I wanted to always play it down," the president said. "I still like playing it down because I don't want to create a panic."

Critics have long noted how Trump's public comments failed to sync up with those of public health officials, contributing to confusion among Americans.

As Trump left for India on Feb. 23, he told reporters that the virus was "very much under control" and that the small number of infected people in the U.S. were "very well confined."

But two days later, the CDC's Messonnier told reporters, "It's not so much a question of if this will happen anymore, but more really a question of when it will happen and how many people in this country will have severe illness."

Stocks plunged following her remarks and, soon after, Trump appointed Vice President Mike Pence to lead the White House coronavirus task force. At the news conference announcing Pence's selection, Trump was asked if he agreed with the inevitability of COVID-19 in the United States.

"Well, I don't think it's inevitable. It probably will. It possibly will. It could be at a very small level or it could be at a larger level. Whatever happens, we're totally prepared," Trump said.

Sandra Crouse Quinn, a University of Maryland professor who researches crisis communications during public health emergencies, said it's critical not to overreassure people in a pandemic.

"You help the public anticipate what's coming," she said.

Dr. Howard Koh of Harvard's school of public health said unflinchingly communicating what's known as soon as possible helps build trust that will be necessary as the pandemic progresses.

Koh said the role of the White House in a pandemic is to galvanize national attention for public health officials and then step out of the way. But that hasn't been the case under Trump, said Koh, who was at the Department of Health and Human Services under President Barack Obama.

As the fallout played out last week, Trump got some backup from Fauci, who told Fox News that he didn't get the sense that Trump had distorted anything. But in an interview with MSNBC, Fauci noted the discrepancies between his own comments and the president's.

"As you know, there were times when I was out there telling the American public how difficult this is, how we're having a really serious problem, you know, and the president was saying it's something that's going to disappear, which obviously is not the case," he said.

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Associated Press writer Candice Choi in New York contributed to this report.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, Sept. 14, the 258th day of 2020. There are 108 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On Sept. 14, 1901, President William McKinley died in Buffalo, New York, of gunshot wounds inflicted by

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an assassin; Vice President Theodore Roosevelt succeeded him.

On this date:

In 1715, Benedictine monk Dom Pierre Perignon, credited with advances in the production of champagne, died in Hautvillers, France, at age 76.

In 1814, Francis Scott Key was inspired to write the poem "Defence of Fort McHenry" (later "The Star-Spangled Banner") after witnessing the American flag flying over the Maryland fort following a night of British naval bombardment during the War of 1812.

In 1836, former Vice President Aaron Burr died in Staten Island, N.Y., at age 80.

In 1847, during the Mexican-American War, U.S. forces under Gen. Winfield Scott took control of Mexico City.

In 1861, the first naval engagement of the Civil War took place as the USS Colorado attacked and sank the Confederate private schooner Judah off Pensacola, Florida.

In 1954, the Soviet Union detonated a 40-kiloton atomic test weapon.

In 1963, Mary Ann Fischer of Aberdeen, S.D., gave birth to four girls and a boy, the first known surviving quintuplets in the United States.

In 1972, the family drama "The Waltons" premiered on CBS.

In 1982, Princess Grace of Monaco, formerly film star Grace Kelly, died at age 52 of injuries from a car crash the day before; Lebanon's president-elect, Bashir Gemayel (bah-SHEER' jeh-MAY'-el), was killed by a bomb.

In 1994, on the 34th day of a strike by players, Acting Baseball Commissioner Bud Selig announced the 1994 season was over.

In 2001, Americans packed churches and clogged public squares on a day of remembrance for the victims of the Sept. 11 attacks. President George W. Bush prayed with his Cabinet and attended services at Washington National Cathedral, then flew to New York, where he waded into the ruins of the World Trade Center and addressed rescue workers in a flag-waving, bullhorn-wielding show of resolve.

In 2012, fury over an anti-Muslim film ridiculing the Prophet Muhammad spread across the Muslim world, with deadly clashes near Western embassies in Tunisia and Sudan, an American fast-food restaurant set ablaze in Lebanon, and international peacekeepers attacked in the Sinai.

Ten years ago: Sarah Shourd, one of three American hikers detained by Iran, was freed on \$500,000 bail after 410 days in prison. Reggie Bush announced he was forfeiting his 2005 Heisman title, citing a scandal over improper benefits while he was a star running back at Southern California; it was the first time college football's top award had been relinquished by a recipient. Dodge Morgan, who became the first American to sail around the world without stopping in 1986, died in Boston at age 78.

Five years ago: Ahmed Mohamed, a 14-year-old Muslim boy, was arrested after bringing a homemade clock to MacArthur High School in Irving, Texas, that was mistaken for a possible bomb; police declined to seek any charges. Rowan County, Kentucky, clerk Kim Davis returned to work for the first time since she was jailed for defying a federal court and announced that she would no longer block her deputies from issuing marriage licenses to same-sex couples. Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump renewed his campaign against illegal immigration, telling a cheering crowd of thousands in Dallas that "it's disgusting what's happening to our country." Fred Deluca, 67, the Subway co-founder who turned a sandwich shop he started as a teenager into the world's largest fast-food chain, died in New York.

One year ago: The White House announced that Hamza bin Laden, a son of the late al-Qaida leader, had been killed in a U.S. counterterrorism operation in the Afghanistan-Pakistan region; he'd become an increasingly prominent figure in al-Qaida. Drone attacks on the world's largest oil processing facility in Saudi Arabia and a major oil field sparked huge fires and halted about half the supplies from the world's largest exporter of oil; the Trump administration blamed Iran for the attacks.

Today's Birthdays: Actor Walter Koenig (KAY'-nihg) is 84. Basketball Hall of Fame coach Larry Brown is 80. Singer-actor Joey Heatherton is 76. Actor Sam Neill is 73. Singer Jon "Bowzer" Bauman (Sha Na Na) is 73. Actor Robert Wisdom is 67. Rock musician Steve Berlin (Los Lobos) is 65. Country singer-songwriter Beth Nielsen Chapman is 64. Actor Mary Crosby is 61. Singer Morten Harket (a-ha) is 61. Country singer

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John Berry is 61. Actor Melissa Leo is 60. Actor Faith Ford is 56. Actor Jamie Kaler is 56. Actor Michelle Stafford is 55. Rock musician Mike Cooley (Drive-By Truckers) is 54. Actor Dan Cortese is 53. Contemporary Christian singer Mark Hall is 51. Actor-writer-director-producer Tyler Perry is 51. Actor Ben Garant is 50. Rock musician Craig Montoya (Tri Polar) is 50. Actor Kimberly Williams-Paisley is 49. Actor Andrew Lincoln is 47. Rapper Nas is 47. Actor Austin Basis is 44. Country singer Danielle Peck is 42. Pop singer Ayo is 40. Chef/TV personality Katie Lee is 39. Actor Sebastian Sozzi is 38. Actor Adam Lamberg is 36. Singer Alex Clare is 35. Actor Chad Duell (TV: "General Hospital") is 33. Actor Jessica Brown Findlay is 33. Actor-singer Logan Henderson is 31. Actor Emma Kenney is 21.